

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

1 Introduction

A conflict of interest may arise when someone is unable to maintain an independent stand in any decision making or judgement, because of involvement with another individual, group or service provider.

2 General Statement

2.1 Independence is one of OA's fundamental principles and is essential to the way that OA is run.

2.2 OA is responsible for ensuring that the work of the trustees, the staff and volunteers is free from any conflict of interest.

2.3 OA requires trustees, members, staff and volunteers to be aware of any conflict of interest actual or potential and to make this known, so that appropriate action is taken to avoid any compromise of independence.

2.4 OA is also responsible for taking any necessary action should any conflict of interest, which has not been acknowledged, be drawn to its attention.

3 Trustees

3.1 All Trustees are required to sign the Trustee Declaration which sets out the principles which are written to prevent any conflict of interest.

3.2 All new Trustees are required to declare any interest which may **directly** conflict with the work of OA.

3.3 Conflicts of interests which subsequently arise must also be declared.

4 Managing Conflict of Interest

4.1 Depending on the nature of the conflict:

4.1.1 Trustees will withdraw from any discussion or decision making on any issue which would present a conflict of interest

4.1.2 Trustees may be asked to resign if there is a persistent and genuine conflict of interest

4.2 Trustees who are not willing to comply with this requirement will not continue to serve as Trustees This will be fully discussed with them by the Chair or Vice-Chair.

4.3 If any conflict of interest, which has not been declared, is drawn to OA's attention this will firstly be discussed with the Trustee by the Chair or Vice-Chair and if it is deemed to present a direct conflict which would affect the independence of OA the Trustee will be required to resign.

5 Staff

5.1 As part of the interview process, the applicant will be required to make known any conflict of interest or potential conflict of interest. This will be discussed with the applicant by the Manager and/or the Chair or the Trustees and a judgement will be made as to whether the interest declared will prevent the applicant from fulfilling his/her role to the standards required by OA.

5.2 Staff wishing to take on secondary employment, including any membership of any relevant organisations, which may present a conflict of interest, should inform their line manager. If this is likely to present a conflict of interest this will be discussed with the line manager/Trustees and a decision will be made as to whether this makes the employee unable to fulfil the role required by OA.

6 Volunteers

6.1 Volunteer applicants will be required to inform the co-ordinator at initial interview, and subsequently of any conflict of interest or potential conflict which may hinder their ability to act as independent voices for their partners.

6.2 When a conflict of interest or potential conflict of interest arises for a volunteer they must notify the co-ordinator immediately. The situation will be fully discussed and the co-ordinator will also inform the line manager. If a conflict is identified then the advocate will be required to step down from this relationship and the co-ordinator will be responsible for making alternative arrangements for the partner wherever possible. The partner will also be fully informed of the situation, if possible by the volunteer concerned.

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