



Home-Start Network Conflict of Interest Policy



We
inspire
growth

We
prioritise
kindness

We
achieve
together

Title	Conflict of Interest Policy	Date
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Approver	Impact Sub Committee	
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1 Introduction

1.1 Scope

The conflict of interest policy has been developed in the interests of promoting honesty, integrity and accountability. The policy aims to set boundaries and support:

- Transparency and trust.
- risk reduction in decision-making, and avoid situations where a conflict of interest influences decision-making.
- Increased accountability of trustees, employers and volunteers.
- Effective decision-making by addressing and managing any conflicts that arise.
- Legal compliance and avoid legal liability.

A conflict of interest is where someone's personal interests interfere or conflict with their responsibility to act in the best interests of the charity. A conflict of interest may concern an **individual trustee or staff member or volunteer** or a **related party (or entity)** with a close relationship with an individual involved with the charity e.g. a family member of a staff member or business associate.

Conflicts of interest may be ongoing, for example a trustee who is related to a volunteer for the charity, or a 'one-off' situation, for example when a charity needs to contract an organisation to do some IT work and the manager's partner is asked to do this work without following due process.

Examples of conflicts of interest include:

- A trustee who is also a volunteer for the charity who takes part in a discussion and decision about whether volunteer expenses should be increased.
- A trustee who is related to a member of staff when there is decision to be taken on staff pay and/or conditions.
- Decisions about funding applications to a local trust when a trustee who is also a trustee of another organisation that is competing for the same funding.
- A trustee whose partner runs a business which is contracted to do some work for the Home-Start.
- A volunteer whose partner offers private tuition to older children of a family that the volunteer is supporting.
- A staff member who refers a family to another service because there is a personal connection to an employee of Home-Start.

1.2 Who does the Conflict of Interest Policy apply to?

This policy covers staff, trustees and volunteers who should be alert to actual or perceived conflicts of interest and avoid any conflict of interest between the interests of the Home-Start on the one hand, and personal, professional, and business interests on the other. This includes an **actual** conflict of interest as well as the **perception** of a conflict of interest.

Trustees have a personal responsibility to declare any conflicts of interest to fulfil their legal duty as trustees to act only in the best interests of the charity. In accordance with Section 175 of the Companies Act 2006, The Charities Act and the Charities Incorporated Regulation (General 2012) requires trustees and senior managers to avoid a situation in where direct or indirect interest conflict (or may conflict), with the interests of Home-Start in Suffolk.

1.3 Our Approach

A conflict of interest does not reflect on the integrity of the charity or individual as long as it is properly acknowledged and managed. Home-Start in Suffolk believe that by being open, acknowledging conflicts and recording potential conflicts, these situations can be explained, monitored and managed.

2. Procedures to manage a Conflict of Interest

Trustees are asked about any conflicts of interest as part of their recruitment and appointment process. Conflicts of interest are recorded on the Trustee Declaration of Interest Form (Appendix 1) which trustees are asked to sign annually. These interests are recorded on the conflict of interest register. The register will also be used to record new conflicts of interest including who/what was affected, when it was declared and how the conflict was managed.

Senior managers, staff and volunteers should be asked to declare any conflict of interest when they are appointed. If a manager, staff member or volunteer becomes aware of a potential conflict of interest when they are performing their role, they should notify their line manager/Chair of Trustees at the earliest opportunity. It is the responsibility of each trustee/senior manager/staff member or volunteer to inform trustees/managers of any changes in their circumstances which may create a new conflict of interest.

It is important to recognise where conflicts might be perceived, even if we feel confident that it won't affect our decision. **If a situation looks like a conflict of interest, it's best to treat it as one.** If in doubt as to whether there is a conflict of interest the individual should err on the side of caution and disclose to their line manager, volunteer coordinator or chair of trustees. These details will be kept on the register.

Trustees are asked at the start of board meetings to declare any conflict of interest. Remaining trustees will assess the impact of the conflict and determine whether a conflict exists and requires action. If no conflict of interest is noted this should be minuted.

The individual with a conflict of interest may be asked to excuse themselves from part of a meeting where a conflict has been declared. They should not vote on the matter as to whether a conflict exists or how to manage this and will not be counted in the quorum for this part of the meeting.

Minutes of trustee meetings and any committees where conflicts are raised will record the nature of the conflict and determinations regarding the conflict, the relevant trustee/senior manager's non participation with respect to consideration of the matter (as appropriate), any alternatives discussed and any other relevant information.

The declared conflict will be added to the register (if this has not already been done).

Home-Start in Suffolk may need to seek further guidance to establish if a conflict of interest exists and how to manage this by referring to the governing document, law or national charity regulator.

Breaching the Conflict of Interest Policy may lead to trustees being removed from their role and may amount to gross misconduct potentially leading to dismissal for staff.



Name ...Rob Thacker.....Signed.

Date: 18/07/24

Chair of Trustees

Appendix 1

Declaration of Conflict of interest form for trustees/senior managers/Staff/Volunteer

Submitted to board meeting date [] In relation to item [] on the agenda

A	Trustee/senior manager’s details	
	Name	
	Date of declaration:	
B	Details of Declaration	
	Please give details of any perceived conflicts of interest	
	Person to whom this declaration relates: e.g. you, a family member, friend or associate.	
	Name of any firm, business or organisation involved.	
	Details of any payment, benefit, transaction, contract, property or gift involved.	
	Details of any job applicant or other employment matter that is involved.	
C	Confidentiality	
	Is there any reason why this declaration should be regarded as confidential? If yes, please explain.	Yes/No

Signed:..... [Trustee/Senior manager]

Name:

Date:

Please return to the [office/chair]

Version Number	Summary of changes made	Authorised by	Date issued
	Previous versions of this policy were relevant to trustees and senior staff this has been widened to include staff and volunteers	Director of Network Impact	June 2024
	The policy gives more detail on recording conflicts of interest	Director of Network Impact	June 2024