

Conflict of interest policy

1. Who this policy affects

This policy applies to National Health Action Party ('Party') officers, voting members of the executive committee, paid employees, and cooptees. These individuals shall be collectively referred to as 'central party members' hereafter.

2. Why we have a conflict of interest policy

Central Party members have an obligation to act in the best interests of the Party, and in accordance with Party's constitution, and to avoid situations where there may be a potential conflict of interest. This applies both to paid staff and to volunteers.

Conflicts of interests may arise where an individual's personal or family interests and/or loyalties conflict with those of the Party. Such conflicts may create problems; they can:

- inhibit free discussion;
- result in decisions or actions that are not in the interests of the Party;
- risk the impression that the Party has acted improperly.

The aim of this policy is to protect both the organisation and the individuals involved from any appearance of impropriety.

3. The declaration of interests

Accordingly, we are asking central Party members to declare their interests, and any gifts or hospitality offered and received in connection with their role or roles in the Party. A declaration of interests form is provided for this purpose, listing the types of interest you should declare. To be effective, the declaration of interests needs to be updated at least annually, and when any material changes occur.

If you are not sure what to declare, or whether/when your declaration needs to be updated, please err on the side of caution. If you would like to discuss this issue, please contact the Party secretary for confidential guidance. This register of interests shall be used to record all gifts of a value over £30 and hospitality over £30 received by the central Party members.

Interests and gifts will be recorded on the Party's register of interests, which will be maintained by the Party secretary. The register will be made publicly available on the Party's website.

4. Data protection

The information provided will be processed in accordance with data protection principles as set out in the Data Protection Act 1998. Data will be processed only to ensure that central Party members act in the best interests of the Party. The information provided will not be used for any other purpose.

5. What to do if you face a conflict of interest

If you believe you have a perceived or real conflict of interest you should:

- declare the interest at the earliest opportunity;
- withdraw from discussions and decisions relating to the conflict.

The Party secretary should take special care to ensure that minutes or other documents relating to the item presenting a conflict are appropriately redacted for the person facing the conflict. A balance needs to be made to ensure that the person still receives sufficient information about the activities of the Party generally without disclosing such sensitive information that could place the individual in an untenable position.

If you fail to declare an interest that is known to the Party secretary and/or the chairperson, the Party secretary or chair will declare that interest.

6. Decisions taken where a central Party member has an interest

In the event of the board having to decide upon a question in which a central Party member has an interest, all decisions will be made by vote, with a majority required as defined by the executive committee standing orders. A quorum must be present for the discussion and decision; interested parties will not be counted when deciding whether the meeting is quorate. Interested central Party members may not vote on matters affecting their own interests.

All decisions under a conflict of interest will be recorded by Party secretary and reported in the minutes of the meeting. The report will record:

- the nature and extent of the conflict;
- an outline of the discussion;
- the actions taken to manage the conflict.

Where a central Party member benefits from the decision, this will be reported in the annual report and accounts. All payments or benefits in kind to central Party members will be reported in the Party's accounts and annual report, with amounts for each central Party member listed for the year in question. Where a central Party member is connected to a party involved in the supply of a service or product to the Party, this information will be fully disclosed in the annual report and accounts.

Independent external moderation will be used where conflicts cannot be resolved through the usual procedures.

7. Managing contracts

If you have a conflict of interest, you must not be involved in managing or monitoring a contract in which you have an interest. Monitoring arrangements for such contracts will include provisions for an independent challenge of bills and invoices, and termination of the contract if the relationship is unsatisfactory.

Appendix I - National Health Action Party Declaration of Interests Form

I employee/executive member (delete as appropriate) have set out below my interests in accordance with the organisation's conflict of interest policy.

Please give details of the interest and whether it applies to yourself or, where appropriate, a member of your immediate family, connected persons or some other close personal connection.

1. Current employment and any previous employment in which you continue to have a financial interest.

2. Appointments (voluntary or otherwise) e.g. trusteeships, directorships, local authority membership, tribunals etc.

3. Membership of any professional bodies, special interest groups or mutual support organisations.

4. Investments in unlisted companies, partnerships and other forms of business, major shareholdings and beneficial interests.

5. Gifts or hospitality offered to you by external bodies and whether this was declined or accepted in the last twelve months.

6. Do you use, or care for a user of the organisation's services?

7. Any contractual relationship with this organisation.

8. Any other conflicts that are not covered by the above.

To the best of my knowledge, the above information is complete and correct. I undertake to update as necessary the information provided, and to review the accuracy of the information on an annual basis. I give my consent for it to be used for the purposes described in the conflicts of interest policy and for no other purpose.

Signed:

Position:

Date: