

Declaration of Interests and Conflict of Interests Policy

Background

The purpose of the Register of Interests is to ensure that the decision making process at Healthwatch Telford and Wrekin (HWT&W) is publicly accountable.

The policy applies to all active members of HWT&W. It aims to ensure that there is transparency within HWT&W and that HWT&W can demonstrate to the local community that HWT&W is not unduly influenced by people with undeclared interests in Health and Social Care.

Policy Statement

HWT&W is committed to implementing the Nolan Principles of Public Life and has devised a code of conduct based on these principles.

HWT&W strives to ensure that its work represents the varied and broad issues and interests of communities using Health and Social Care services in Telford and Wrekin. We recognise that people who become involved with HWT&W may have other interests of relevance in Health and Social Care services and their commissioning and delivery which may lead to a conflict of interest. Such other interests should not prevent people from being involved with HWT&W, but it is important that checks and balances are put in place. This policy sets out the framework for declaring and assessing interests and how conflicts will be dealt with in terms of Healthwatch work.

What is an interest?

The real question to ask here is not whether a member of HWT&W thinks they have an interest to declare, but rather whether another member of HWT&W, a member of HWT&W staff or a member of the public would think there is an interest to declare.

Interest is defined as being of self, partner, family and relatives, in Health and/or Social Care within Telford & Wrekin, such as:

- Employment
- Volunteering
- Placement
- Business
- Receipt or gift of hospitality with an estimated value of £25 or more
- Other beneficial interest
- Other involvement in agencies and organisations

Membership is defined as being of:

- A voluntary organisation or community group including as Trustee or Director
- Any NHS body, agency or contractor
- Local authority body or contractor
- Independent health or care provider
- Any other agency or group concerned with health and/or social care

Sensitive Information

If a member of HWT&W considers that information about personal interests is of a sensitive nature, they do not need to include it in the public register but it should be included in the confidential disclosure (Appendix B).

Information of a sensitive nature would be information that, if available for public inspection, would create or is likely to create a serious risk to that member or any person who lives with them.

Conflicts of Interest

Interested Board members may not vote on matters affecting their own interests or those of a member of staff with whom they have a close relationship (such as when the member of staff is a relative or partner). They must absent themselves from the discussion or may participate in the discussion but not the decision-making process at the discretion of the Chair.

If a Board member fails to declare an interest that is known to the Chair, the Chair will declare that interest.

Staff, volunteers and members of HWT&W should not be involved in HWT&W decisions that directly affect a service that they, or any person they care for, receive(s). They should declare their interest at the earliest opportunity and withdraw from any subsequent discussion. They may, however, participate in discussions from which they may indirectly benefit, for example where the benefits are universal to all users, or where personal benefit is minimal.

Managing contracts

If a HWT&W Board member has a conflict of interest, they must not be involved in managing or monitoring a contract in which they 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 B

Register of Personal and Business Interests

Name of Personal or Business Interest	Description of Interest	Date Notified	Sensitive

Name of Member: _____

Role within HWT&W: _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____

