

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS POLICY

OUR VALUES

We demonstrate the highest ethical and moral standards, which instils trust in what we do. We are courageous, even when it is hard, so we don't compromise on ensuring we do the right thing for people who use services, and for each other. We are clear about what we will do and how we will do it and take responsibility for our actions. We are open, honest, and transparent in all our work. We are objective and free from bias to ensure that our services are viewed as ethical, fair, and driven by a passion for doing the right thing.

WHAT DOES THE DECLARATION OF INTEREST AND RESOLUTION OF CONFLICTS POLICY REQUIRE?

All our workers recognise and disclose activities that might give rise to conflicts of interest or the perception of conflicts and ensure that any such conflicts are seen to be properly managed or avoided. This ensures we can protect the credibility of General Practice Support's (GPS) work and of the individuals who work for us.

The policy applies to GPS workers at all levels, full or part time, including employees, General Practice Specialist Associates (GPSAs), contractors, and temporary workers.

POLICY STATEMENT

GPS places great importance on ensuring its workers demonstrate the highest standards of conduct. Those engaged by the GPS must always maintain and publicly demonstrate high standards of professional conduct, impartiality, honesty, and integrity.

All GPS workers are required to identify and disclose activities and relationships that might give rise to conflicts of interest or the perception of conflicts and to ensure that such conflicts are seen to be properly managed or avoided.

If properly managed, an individual's activities can usually proceed as normal whilst at the same time upholding the person's obligations to GPS and protecting the integrity and reputation of the organisation. By contrast, conflicts which are not managed effectively may jeopardise consumer confidence in GPS and cause serious damage to the credibility of the organisation and of the individuals concerned.

This policy reflects the Standards of Business Conduct set out by the Committee on Standards in Public Life and known as the 'Nolan Principles' (see Appendix D for more information on the 'Nolan Principles').

SCOPE

The following GPS policies should be read in conjunction with this document: (Please note this list is not exhaustive)

- Disciplinary
- Code of Conduct
- Gifts and Hospitality
- Procurement
- Whistleblowing
- Counter Fraud
- Freedom of Information
- Knowledge and Information Management(KIM)

All GPS workers must familiarise themselves with all the above policies. The relevant policy and procedure would be used in any instance of misconduct and outcomes indicated in the policy would apply.

THE POLICY

On appointment to GPS and during their affiliation, every worker (in any of the roles set out in section1) must make a written disclosure of activities that might give rise to conflicts of interest or the perception of conflicts.

It is the responsibility of each individual to recognise situations in which he or she has a conflict of interest or might reasonably be seen by others to have a conflict, to disclose that conflict and to take such further steps as set out in this policy. If in doubt the individual should declare the activity or relationship in the interests of transparency and GPS will take a view on whether this constitutes a conflict.

If an individual is uncertain about how this policy might affect his or her activities or has any questions about its application, s/he should first discuss the matter with their line manager who may contact the Head of HR Advice and Guidance.

RECOGNISING A CONFLICT OF INTEREST

A conflict of interest arises where the commitments and obligations owed by an individual worker to GPS are likely to be compromised or may appear to be compromised. This may include:

- A worker has competing interests or loyalties that are, or could potentially be, at odds with each other.
- A worker's private affairs or financial interests (or those of a person with whom the person has a close personal relationship) *are in conflict or could result in a perception of conflict with those of GPS.
- A worker's actions could give rise to an appearance of bias or favouritism towards another person or body within or outside GPS.

There can be situations in which the appearance of conflict of interest is present even when no conflict exists. It is important for all workers when evaluating a potential conflict of interest to consider how it might be perceived by others.

Potential conflicts of interests can be external to an individual's affiliation with GPS (such as secondary employment, relationship between GPS staff and other providers) and internal (personal relationships within the organisation, recruitment, procurement, etc.). Conflicts of interest may be financial or non-

financial or both.

FINANCIAL CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

A financial conflict of interest, for the purposes of this policy, is one where there is or appears to be opportunity for personal financial gain, financial gain to immediate family (or a person with whom the person has a close personal relationship*), or where it might be reasonable for another party to take the view that financial benefits might affect that person's actions.

Financial interest means anything of monetary value, for example:

- Payments for services.
- Equity interests (e.g. stocks, stock options or other ownership interests).
- Intellectual property rights (e.g. patents, copyrights and royalties from such rights).

The level of financial interest is not the determining factor as to whether a conflict should be disclosed. What might be 'not material' or 'not significant' for one person might be very significant for another.

NON-FINANCIAL CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Non-financial interests can also come into conflict, or be perceived to come into conflict, with a person's obligations or commitments to GPS. Such non-financial interest may include any benefit or advantage, including, but not limited to, direct or indirect enhancement of an individual's career or gain to immediate family (or a person with whom the person has a close personal relationship*).

Guidance on managing conflicts of interest is set out below and further examples of possible conflicts of interest are set out in Appendix A. If in any doubt, individuals should discuss the issue with their line manager who can consult the HR Advice and Guidance Team.

DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this policy the following definitions apply:

- 'Immediate family' is defined as follows: spouse or civil partner, unmarried partner, parent, son, daughter and grandparent.
- 'Close personal relationship' extends to the following (this is not intended to be an exhaustive list), brother, sister, grandchild, mother-in-law, father-in-law, sister-in-law, brother-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, the (unrelated) child of an unmarried partner, as well as adopted, half and step members of immediate family and close personal friends.

PROCEDURE

This section of the policy sets out when and how a Declaration of Interest should be made and how to deal with Conflicts of Interest.

All GPS workers will be required to submit an annual declaration of interests using the form set out at Appendix B, which will be considered, and counter signed by the relevant line manager. A record of all written disclosures will be reported to the relevant Directorate Head and kept on file within the HR Department. All workers will be expected to update their disclosure annually and a workers manager shall oversee the process.

Those involved in activities will also be required to complete an appropriate declaration of interest before or at the start of any assignment. This may be a detailed declaration, for example in the case of GPSAs, or a short confirmation that the information previously provided in their Declaration of Interest has not changed and that no conflicts exist in relation to that specific provider.

It is the responsibility of everyone to inform their line manager as soon as possible if a conflict first arises, or it is recognised that a conflict might be perceived.

Many situations will require nothing more than a brief written record of the declaration, which will be signed off by line management and stored on the HR records system.

Some instances will, however, need to be dealt with by agreeing with the line manager how the conflict will be managed and, where appropriate, further advice can be obtained from the Head of HR Advice and Guidance and the Director of Legal Services. The approach adopted must be documented and a copy placed in the individuals HR file.

LINE MANAGERS

It is the responsibility of individuals to report any interests to their line manager in the first instance. The line manager should proactively take steps to manage any potential conflict in line with this policy, taking advice as necessary, document and report the outcome to their Directorate Head.

Line managers participating in a recruitment and selection process will be responsible for considering declarations of interest submitted by candidates during pre-affiliation screening, in consultation with the Welcome Team. Any declarations will be considered in line with this policy.

Line managers should include a specific assurance question in annual appraisals and mid-year reviews to ensure active consciousness of this policy and its importance.

ACTION

Failure to disclose any potential conflict of interest may lead to an investigation under the Disciplinary policy and formal disciplinary action, where the outcome could include dismissal. This also applies to newly appointed workers who must declare the conflict of interest during the pre-appointment screening process. Failure to do so could result in the offer of appointment being withdrawn

MANAGING CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

All workers

In the course of their work all workers should take all reasonable steps to avoid any suggestion of bias or favoritism in any of their dealings with service providers and other stakeholders, commercial or otherwise.

GPS workers may find that private matters will impinge on their duties and must be aware it is not appropriate or acceptable for any individual to use his or her position or GPS resources to deal with private matters or to pursue private interests.

GPS acknowledges workers may be appointed to GPS specifically for their expertise gained through their employment by other organisations and in that case, such interests need not normally debar them from participating in discussions on particular issues.

- **Individuals will not ordinarily be allowed to attend a service they have been previously engaged with or commissioned for a period of five years.**

After this period a decision will be made at Directorate Head level as to whether any further conflict may exist and therefore whether the individual can work directly with that organisation. Individuals who have held senior roles of providers will not normally be able to work with that organisation whilst affiliated with GPS.

Other Occupations

Workers must not engage in any paid or unpaid activity that would conflict with GPSs independent role, including activity in the voluntary and charity sector. No restriction is placed on other work outside normal working hours providing the work for the GPS is not at detriment and the reputation of the organisation is not compromised. You may do unpaid work for voluntary or other organisations. We welcome this involvement in community affairs. However, your unpaid service must not affect your job or our reputation and you must inform your manager and get approval beforehand.

- **You must inform your manager and seek her/his written agreement if you want to do any other paid or unpaid work using the form at Appendix C.**

If your manager agrees that you can do other work or activities, you must take all reasonable steps to ensure it does not affect the work you do for us or affect your ability to do your job. It must not damage our reputation or have a negative effect on our duties or interests.

GPS workers must not use their experiences of using the GPS methodologies, practices and knowledge of service providers in order to assist their secondary work.

- **Relationships with persons or use of services registered with or seeking to be registered with the GPS.**

During the course of their work at the GPS, it will be likely that workers or their family and friends will use one of the specific providers that have commissioned GPS services.

Examples of which are:

- Integrated Commissioning Boards (ICBs)
- General Practices (GPs)
- Primary Care Networks (PCNs)

No preference or prejudice should be shown to providers that have been previously used by a GPS staff member (or a person with whom the person has a close personal relationship) * or services that engage individuals personally known to a GPS worker.

Any worker engaged in a provider who has used the service within the last five years must declare this and discuss with their line manager.

The same requirement applies where a member of the individual's *immediate family has used or has been involved in the service in the last five years.**

Where any relationship whether close friendship, personal or family develops or exists between a GPS worker and a service provider or their employees, the worker must declare the relationship to their line manager as soon as is reasonably practicable.

If an individual is concerned about sharing sensitive personal information on their annual declaration form, they can speak in confidence to their line manager, or Directorate Head.

RELATIONSHIPS WITHIN THE ORGANISATION

Where workers are in a close friendship, personal or family relationship or financial relationship, there may be a potential for conflict of interest or breach of confidentiality. Therefore, where such a personal relationship exists or develops the individuals should declare their relationship in confidence to their line managers. A meeting with each staff member and their line manager (or next level senior manager where the line manager is party to the relationship) may be held to determine what, if any, steps need to be taken. This meeting is solely to discuss and agree positive, constructive, and practical steps and is not to discuss the details of the relationship itself. Advice should be sought from the HR advice and guidance team if necessary.

GPS workers are expected to demonstrate high standards of professional conduct and impartiality and it may be necessary to arrange their work so as to avoid the possibility of favouritism, adverse treatment and to protect the interests of all individuals.

PROCUREMENT

Contracts must be awarded in accordance with GPS procurement policies. Favouritism must not be shown to businesses run by people with whom the individual has a close personal relationship. All workers must comply with GPS's Procurement procedures and ensure appointments are made on merit in fair and transparent competition.

- **If individuals are responsible for engaging or supervising contractors and have any personal or domestic relationship or investment interest with them, or have previously been employed by them, they must declare this in writing to their manager.**

The manager will decide whether this gives rise to, or could be seen to give rise to, a conflict of interest and therefore whether the individual should step back from the procurement process. The line manager may wish to consult the Procurement Team for advice.

SELECTION AND RECRUITMENT

All appointments must be made in accordance with our recruitment and selection procedures. All appointments must be made on merit and not for any other reason.

- **If an individual is related to an applicant or has a close personal relationship with them, they must declare this to the Chair of the recruitment panel or if they are the Chair, to their line manager.**

Individuals should not be involved in any recruitment and selection process involving family members or close personal friends.

ASSOCIATION WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS WHILST MAINTAINING GPS VALUES AND BEHAVIOURS

GPS's values and behaviours reflect its equality duty. This requires GPS, in carrying out its functions, to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination; to advance equality of opportunity between different groups; and to foster good relations between different groups. GPS therefore expects its workers to behave in a manner which is compatible with its values and behaviours both in and outside the workplace environment.

POLITICAL ACTIVITY

If a worker takes up a position as an office holder of a political party this will need to be communicated to their line manager and to the relevant Directorate Head for consideration in consultation with the Head of HR Advice and Guidance.

OTHER INTERESTS OR INVOLVEMENTS

Everyone engaged with GPS must always maintain and publicly demonstrate high standards of professional conduct, impartiality, honesty and integrity.

Outside interests or involvements which are not managed effectively may jeopardise confidence and cause damage to the credibility of the organisation and the reputation of the individuals concerned. Individuals are therefore expected to declare any interests or involvements that may indicate prejudice or pre-determined views in favour of, or against, a person or organisation which is relevant to their role within GPS.

GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY

Individuals working for GPS are required to ensure they do not abuse their official position for personal gain or to benefit their family or friends. They must also ensure impartiality and integrity in the course of their duties is not compromised, nor could be perceived as being compromised, by the acceptance of anything that could be perceived to be an inducement from providers, contractors, or other stakeholders. Any offers of gifts and hospitality must be declared in accordance with the Gifts and Hospitality Policy.

BRIBERY AND CORRUPTION

The Bribery Act 2010 extends to any instance of the crime of bribery across the organisation in addition to offences concerning transactions involving service users, providers and GPS workers. It also creates a new offence of failing to prevent bribery. Under the Act it is an offence to:

- Offer, promise, or give a bribe.
- Request, agree to receive or accept a bribe.
- Fail to prevent bribery by those acting on behalf of the organization.

The offences under the Act carry criminal penalties. GPS maintains a zero-tolerance approach to this behaviour and breaches will be addressed under the GPS Disciplinary Policy which could potentially lead to dismissal.

FRAUD

It is the duty of all workers to report any suspected fraud by other workers either to their manager or Directorate Head as soon as possible. All information will be confidential. Further information can be

found in the Counter Fraud Policy.

EQUALITY STATEMENT

GPS is committed to ensuring all people management policies, and their application, are free from any form of discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, nationality, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

GPS will monitor this policy to identify whether it is having an adverse impact on any particular group of individuals and take action accordingly.

2022.

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APPENDIX A

Examples of possible conflict of interests

- Previous or current employment.
- Providers that are or have been used by a worker whose work involves that specific service. For example, a service user who has recently been receiving care or treatment at a GP provider. The same consideration would apply to members of their immediate family, eg an GPS workers grandparent is a service user of a GP provider.
- Services that employ individuals personally known to a GPS worker whose work involves that specific service. For example, a parent works in a GP that the individual is responsible for serving GPS functions.
- Consultancy positions advising organisations who operate in providers, whether paid or not.
- Participating in the appointment, hiring or promotion of a person with whom the individual has a close personal relationship.
- Negotiation of a contract between GPS and a company, where the worker or his or her family or a close personal friend has a financial or non-financial interest (e.g. a directorship) in that company.
- Voluntary or paid positions, such as trustees, elected and other public positions.
- Membership of organisations which campaign on service providers (excluding professional membership and validation bodies).
- Membership of mutual support organisations, ie the Freemasons.
- Any directorships of companies likely to be engaged with the business of the GPS client.
- Any financial interest in unlisted companies, partnerships, and other forms of business in the client provider.
- Gifts or hospitality offered to workers by external bodies and whether this was declined or accepted in the last twelve months.
- Position of authority in a charity or voluntary organization of GPS providers.

Full Name:

Current Post Held in GPS:

Directorate:

Location:

Line Manager:

Type of Conflict (refer to the Declaration of Interest and Resolution of Conflicts policy)	Description of interest including dates or if none exists, please state 'Nil' (Remember to state if the interest relates to you, a member of your immediate family or someone with a close personal relationship*)
Financial interests	
Non-financial or personal interests	
Services used by you or your immediate family in the last five years where you may be involved in GPS services	
Previous employment with GPS providers	

Any other interests GPS should be aware of	
I can confirm that above information is true and correct to the best of my knowledge Signed: Date:	
Line Manager to complete (If any action taken) Signed: Date:	

Note: For the purpose of this policy the following definitions apply:

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'Close personal relationship' extends to the following (this is not intended to be an exhaustive list), brother, sister, grandparent, grandchild, mother-in-law, father-in-law, sister-in-law, brother-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, the (unrelated) child of an unmarried partner, as well as adopted, half and step members of immediate family and close personal friends.

APPENDIX C

DECLARATION OF OTHER EMPLOYMENT

Name:	Directorate:
Location:	Job Title:
Nature and Description of Duties to be undertaken (Please include name and address of organisation)	
Hours of Work per Week:	Working Pattern:

Note: you may be eligible to pay income tax and National Insurance contributions according to your earnings with any secondary employment. Please check with your secondary employer about how these will be deducted, including frequency. Your local Inland Revenue office will also be able to provide guidance in relation to earnings from secondary employment.

SIGNED AND AGREED BY GPS WORKER

Signed: Name..... Date.....

SIGNED AND AGREED BY LINE MANAGER

Signed: Name..... Date.....

APPENDIX D

THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC LIFE

SELFLESSNESS

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

INTEGRITY

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

OBJECTIVITY

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

OPENNESS

Holder of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

HONESTY

Holders of public office should be truthful.

LEADERSHIP

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

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