

Volunteer Cornwall Conflict of Interest Policy 2023

Why we have a Policy

Our trustees and staff have a legal obligation to act in the best interests of Volunteer Cornwall and in accordance with Volunteer Cornwall's governing document, avoid situations where there may be a potential conflict of interest.

Conflicts of interests may arise where an individual's personal or family interests and/or loyalties conflict with those of Volunteer Cornwall.

Such conflicts may create problems. They can:

- discourage free discussion.
- result in decisions or actions that are not in the interests of Volunteer Cornwall; and
- risk the impression that Volunteer Cornwall has acted improperly.

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

The Declaration of Interests

We ask trustees and staff to declare their interests and any gifts or hospitality received in connection with their role in Volunteer Cornwall.

The declaration of interests' form should be updated at least annually and when any changes occur.

The following types of interest should be declared:

- Any personal / family relationships with paid staff and volunteers or possible recruitment of any person known to the trustees or family member.
- Any gifts or hospitality received from any person or organisation connected to Volunteer Cornwall.
- A Trustee/member of staff renting property or lending money to Volunteer Cornwall.
- Any relationships with other groups that will affect your role as Trustee/member of staff – if you are a member of another organisation this needs to be declared as there may be a conflict, particularly if both organisation work in the same geographical area or have the same client / user groups.
- You are a councilor, employee, or board member of an organisation that Volunteer Cornwall may approach for funding or who is currently providing funding for Volunteer Cornwall.
- A Trustee/member of staff learns of an opportunity at a board meeting which the charity may or may not wish to exploit but which he / she wishes to take advantage of themselves or on behalf of another group.

Board of Directors/Trustees

It is important that the Board of Directors/Trustees is aware of the implications of conflicts of interest among individual directors. Any director who fails to declare a personal interest in a matter discussed by Volunteer Cornwall can subvert its objectives and cause its assets to be abused. It is also important to note that the mere perception of conflicts of interest can have an adverse effect on Volunteer Cornwall, even if the suspicions are unfounded.

All trustees are required annually to complete and sign a register of interests form which includes a disqualification certification. The Board has adopted the Code of Governance for Directors that includes sections on integrity, objectivity, openness, and conflicts of interest.

Data Protection

The information provided will be processed in accordance with data protection principles as set out in the Data Protection Act 2018. Data will be processed only to ensure that staff act in the best interests of Volunteer Cornwall. The information provided will not be used for any other purpose.

What to do if you face a Conflict of Interest

If there is a situation which could be a long-term conflict this should be discussed with other Members of staff (in particular, the Chair) at the earliest convenience and a decision made on how to proceed.

At the beginning of all meetings, you should declare immediately if there is an item on the agenda where they may be a conflict of interest. For example, if you are a user of Volunteer Cornwall's services, or the carer of someone who uses Volunteer Cornwall's services, you should not be involved in decisions that directly affect the service that you or the person you care for, receive(s). You should declare your interest at the earliest opportunity and withdraw from any subsequent discussion. You may, however, participate in discussions from which you may indirectly benefit, for example where the benefits are universal to all users, or where your benefit is minimal.

Disclosure in Accounts

Any income or benefits a Trustee/member of staff receives from Volunteer Cornwall during an accounting year must be disclosed. Where a member of Volunteer Cornwall's trustees/staff is connected to a party involved in the supply of a service or product to the CIC, this information will also be fully disclosed in the annual report and accounts.

Decisions taken where a Trustee/member of staff or Trustee/member of staff has an Interest

In the event of the board having to decide upon a question in which a Trustee/member of staff or Trustee/member of staff has an interest, all decisions will be made by vote, in line with the organisation's constitution.

Recording Disclosure of Interest

All decisions, including the declared conflict and the outcome should be reported in the minutes of the board.

Signed: 

Date: 31 January 2023

Ian Jones
Chief Executive
On behalf of Volunteer Cornwall

Review Date: 04/26