Conflict of interest policy

Introduction

Healthwatch helps people to speak up about health and social care services in England.

This is our **conflict of interest policy**.

A **policy** is a set of rules for all our staff and volunteers.

A **conflict of interest** is when you or someone you know is involved in something that could affect your work with Healthwatch.

It is OK to have a conflict of interest, but you must tell us.

We want everyone to know that you are working to help Healthwatch, not working to help yourself.

We want all staff and volunteers to be open about anything that they do that might affect their work with Healthwatch.

Conflicts of interest

A conflict of interest is when the things you are doing in your private life might affect the work you do with Healthwatch.

For example:

- You might also do some work for another organisation.

- You might also do some work with the local council, or be part of a neighbourhood group that works with the local council.

- You might be part of a group that campaigns to change something.

- You might have a friend or someone from your family who provide services to people.

- You might have friends or family who work for Healthwatch England or another local Healthwatch group.

- You might be part of a **political party**.

  A **political party** is a group of people who share the same views about how the country should be run.

It is also a conflict of interest if a friend or family member is wanting Healthwatch to do something or to pay for something.

Why tell us when you have a conflict of interest?

If you don't tell us when you have a conflict of interest, people might think:

- you are doing things for yourself, not for the good of Healthwatch

- you are putting some other organisation before Healthwatch

- you are not able to talk openly about why you are doing things.

Even if there isn't a conflict of interest, it is important to think about how it might look to other people.

The declaration of interest

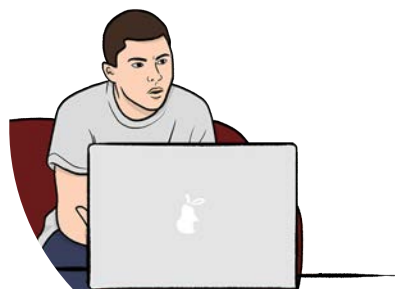When you join Healthwatch you will be asked to fill in a **declaration of interest** form.

A **declaration of interest** is where you tell us about anything that may affect your work with Healthwatch.

This includes anything that a friend or family member may be doing that affects your work with Healthwatch.

Your declaration of interest form will be reviewed every year.

Register of Interest

The information on your form will go on a list, called a **register of interest**, which can be seen by anyone in Healthwatch.

What to do if someone has a conflict of interest

If you are working for Healthwatch and you are at a meeting and you realise that you have a conflict of interest, you should:

- tell the meeting straight away

- leave the meeting until the **Chair** decides what to do.

The **Chair** is the person who runs the local Healthwatch meetings.

The Chair might say:

- you should leave the room for all or part of the discussion

- you can stay in the room but not take part in the discussion

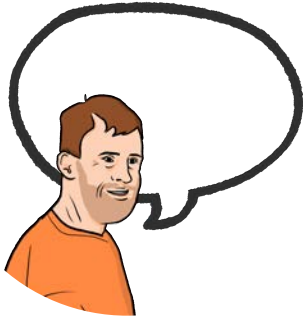- you can stay and take part in the discussion, but not vote

- you should not be allowed to see the papers from the meeting
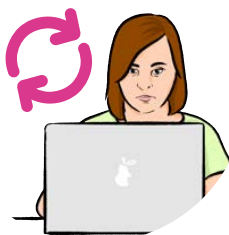
- it is OK and not do anything.

When someone has not said that they have a conflict of interest

You should speak up if you know that someone has a conflict of interest and they haven't told anyone.

Anyone that doesn't tell us about a conflict of interest has to explain why not in writing.

If it isn't serious, the Register of Interest will just need to be changed.

If it is serious, the person may have to stop working for us.

Protecting your information

The information you provide will only be used to make sure everyone does what is best for Healthwatch.

It won't be used for anything else.

Changing the rules

The Board will look at how well this policy is working from time to time.

The Board will decide if we need any changes to these rules.

If the rules are changed, a new version will be put on the website as soon as possible.