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| **Managing conflicts of interest in the NCL Medicines Optimisation Network** |

A ‘**conflict of interest**’ is defined by NHS England as “*a set of circumstances by which a reasonable person would consider that an individual’s ability to apply judgement or act, in the context of delivering, commissioning, or assuring taxpayer funded health and care services is, or could be, impaired or influenced by another interest they hold*.”1

Several committees within the NCL Medicines Optimisation Network (NCL MON), such as the Joint Formulary Committee (JFC) and Medicines Optimisation Committee (MOC), are classified as ‘*strategic decision making groups*’, and as such it is important that interests of those involved in these groups are transparent.

A declaration of interest is required of all committee members, support staff and regular attendees who preside over NCL JFC or NCL MOC – hereafter referred to as ‘**decision making staff**’. All decision making staff are required to make an annual declaration even if they have no interests to declare. Any change to the individuals conflicts of interest should be declared at the earliest opportunity (and in any event within 28 days).

Clinicians who make a request to add, remove or amend the formulary status of a medicine or novel formulation (by means of formulary application, appeal or guideline) – hereafter referred to as the ‘**applicant**’ – will also be required to make a declaration of interest.

An interest may be actual or potential. **The responsibility for identifying and declaring actual, potential or perceived interests rests with the individual. If you are in doubt as to whether an interest is material, you should declare it, so that it can be considered**.2 To make a declaration, please use the form on page 2 and send it to admin.ncl-mon@nhs.net. Please see the section on ‘[What is an Interest?](#Whatisaninterest)’ to help decide whether an interest applies to you.

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| **Declaration of Interest Form** |

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| Name |  |
| Position  |  |
| Employing organisation |  |
| Details of interest |
| Directorship (including a non-executive director) of any private companies or PLCs? | Yes / No *(if yes, please provide details including dates)* |
| Ownership or part-ownership in private companies, businesses or consultancies? | Yes / No *(if yes, please provide details including dates)* |
| Majority or controlling shareholdings? | Yes / No *(if yes, please provide details including dates)* |
| Position of authority in a charity or voluntary body? | Yes / No *(if yes, please provide details including dates)* |
| Connections with a voluntary or other body contracting or commissioning for services with the NHS? | Yes / No *(if yes, please provide details including dates)* |
| Connections with an organisation or company entering into, or having entered Into a financial arrangement with the NHS? | Yes / No *(if yes, please provide details including dates)* |
| Any of the above interests held by a partner, close relative, other close associate or personal friend?  | Yes / No *(if yes, please provide details including dates)* |
| Consultancies and/or direct employment within the past 2 years? | Yes / No *(if yes, please provide details including dates)* |
| Any other relevant interests you feel should be declared? Include non-personal interests (e.g. affecting a department you are responsible for) | Yes / No *(if yes, please provide details including dates)* |
| Comments (e.g., action taken to mitigate conflict) | *Enter comments here* |

I confirm that the information provided is a full, accurate and complete list of all my interests that require declaration to NCL MON. I acknowledge that any changes in these declarations must be reported to the Chair of the Committee as soon as they occur.

I will provide NCL MON with further details of any interest declared if required.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

When this form is complete, scan and send it to admin.ncl-mon@nhs.net

**What is an Interest?**

Interests fall into the following categories:

**Financial Interests:** Where you may get direct financial benefit\* from the consequences of a decision you are involved in making. This may be a financial gain, or avoidance of a loss.

This could include where you are:

* A board director, or senior employee, in another organisation which is doing, or is likely to do business with an organisation receiving NHS funding.
* A shareholder, partner or owner of an organisation which is doing, or is likely to do business with an organisation in receipt of NHS finding.
* Someone in receipt of a grant or other payments such as honoraria.
* Someone in outside employment or in receipt of a secondary income.
* Someone in receipt of sponsored research.

***Non-financial professional interests*:** Where you may obtain a non-financial professional benefit from the consequences of a decision you are involved in making, such as increasing your professional reputation or promoting your professional career.

This could include where you are:

* An advocate for a particular group of patients.
* A clinician with a special interest.
* An advisor for a national body for example the National Institute of Health Care Excellence.
* Someone in a research role.

***Non-financial personal interests:*** Where you may benefit personally in ways which are not directly linked to your professional career and do not give rise to a direct financial benefit, because of decisions you are involved in making in your professional career.

This could include where you are:

* A member of a voluntary sector board or a position of authority within a voluntary sector organisation.
* A member of a pressure group or equivalent with an interest in healthcare.

***Indirect interests:*** Where you have a close association with another individual who has a financial interest, a non-financial professional interest or a non-financial personal interest and could stand to benefit from a decision they are involved in making. This could include your close relatives, close friends and associates and business partners but could extend beyond to acquaintances with whom you have significant contact.

**Disclosure UK**

Both decision making staff and applicants are also strongly encouraged to give their consent to the relevant company/organisation for payments they receive from the pharmaceutical industry to be disclosed as part of the Association of British Pharmaceutical Industry (ABPI) Disclosure UK initiative. These “transfers of value” include payments relating to:

* Speaking at and chairing meetings
* Training services
* Advisory board meetings
* Fees and expenses paid to healthcare professionals
* Sponsorship of attendance at meetings, which includes registration fees and the costs of accommodation and travel, both inside and outside the UK
* Donations, grants and benefits in kind provided to healthcare organisations

The granting of consent to disclosure as part of the above does not negate the requirement to declare these payments in accordance with this policy.

**Decision making staff with a conflict of interest**

If a decision making staff member has an actual or potential interest, the Chair and/or Vice-Chair will consider an appropriate course of action; this could result in one of the following approaches. The reason for the chosen action will be documented in minutes or records:

* Requiring the member to not attend the meeting
* Ensuring that the member does not receive meeting papers relating to the nature of their interest
* Requiring the member to not attend all or part of the discussion and decision on the related matter
* Noting the nature and extent of the interest, but judging it appropriate to allow the member to remain and participate
* Removing the member from the group or process altogether

The default response will not always be to exclude members with interests, as this may have a detrimental effect on the quality of the decision being made. An example is the need for clinical involvement, when clinicians may hold and represent a diversity of interests. This also applies to applicants who hold a conflict of interest, who may be the most relevant subject matter expert in NCL. The composition of groups should be kept under review to ensure effective participation.

**Maintenance and publication of the declaration of interests register**

The JFC support team will collate and maintain up to date registers of interests for decision making staff only (conflicts declared by applicants will be detailed in the minutes of the relevant meeting). A register of interests will be included as a standing item on meeting agendas to prompt any relevant declarations or updates. An interest should remain on the register for a minimum of 6 months after the interest has expired. JFC Support will retain a private record of historic interests for a minimum of 6 years after the date on which it expired.

**References**

1. NHS England. Managing conflicts of interest in the NHS v1.4. Published online April 4, 2017. Accessed March 29, 2022. https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/managing-conflicts-of-interest-model-policy-content-for-organisations/

2. Director of Corporate Services, UCLH. Standards of Business Conduct Policy. Published online September 29, 2020.