

Conflict of Interest Policy

(Covering Trustees, staff and volunteers)

Introduction

Trustees, staff and volunteers have an obligation to act in the best interests of Dyslexia Cornwall, and in accordance with Dyslexia Cornwall's governing document.

Conflicts of interest occur in those situations where an individual trustee, employee or volunteer stands to gain directly or indirectly through engagement in activities which may potentially affect the Charity adversely. It will also occur if that individual is engaged with an organisation which has aims incompatible to those of the Charity.

Conflicts of interests also arise where an individual's personal, family and/or other loyalties conflict with those of Dyslexia Cornwall.

For the purposes of this policy, a related or closely associated person could be:

- Spouse, civil partner, or cohabiting partner
- Children, parents, or siblings
- Business partner or employer
- Any organisation in which the trustee holds a significant interest or role

However this list is not exhaustive.

Such conflicts may create problems; they can:

- Inhibit free discussion
- Which could lead to decisions that are not in the best interests of the charity and which are invalid or open to challenge
- Risk the impression that the charity has acted improperly and therefore damage the charity's reputation and/or public trust and confidence in charities generally

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

Declaration of interests

Accordingly, we are asking Trustees, staff and volunteers to declare their interests, and any gifts or hospitality received in connection with their role in the Dyslexia Cornwall. This includes any benefit received by a relative or person closely associated with the individual. A 'Conflict of Interests' form is provided for this purpose, and this asks several questions to do with the type of conflict of interest and asks for a statement of the action taken to avoid a conflict of interest. To be effective, the declaration of interests needs to be updated at least annually, and when any changes occur.

If you are not sure what to declare, or whether/when your declaration needs to be updated, please err on the side of caution. If you would like to discuss this issue, please contact the Chairperson or Secretary for confidential guidance. Interests will be recorded on the management committee's register of interests, which will be maintained by the Chairperson or Secretary. The register will be accessible by request to the Chairperson or Secretary subject to any required restrictions under the data protection act.

Data Protection

The information provided will be processed in accordance with data protection principles as set out in the General Data Protection Regulations 2018 (GDPR). Data will be processed only to ensure that Trustees, staff and volunteers act in the best interests of the Dyslexia Cornwall. The information provided will not be used for any other purpose.

What to do if you face a conflict of interest (Trustees, staff and volunteers)

If you are a user of Dyslexia Cornwall's services and/or a relative or closely associated person of a user you should not be involved in decisions that directly affect the service in a way that would directly affect you or that person personally, particularly if this is financial. You should declare your interest at the earliest opportunity and withdraw from any subsequent discussion.

The same applies if you face a conflict for any other reason. You may, however, participate in discussions from which you may indirectly benefit, for example where the benefits are universal to all users.

Trustees, staff and volunteers need to be mindful of potential conflicts of interest. These can occur if people use their position with Dyslexia Cornwall to:

- further their own financial interests e.g. by promoting their own services
- benefit a third party with whom they are associated e.g. recommend a tradesperson to whom they are related
- discriminate against a service user due to their political or religious views or allegiances
- refer people to agencies with whom they have a connection e.g. to a particular charity with whom you have an involvement
- unfairly benefit a service user to whom they are associated e.g. by applying a reduced charge for a service

OR

- are employed or engaged by an organisation in competition with the Charity
- are involved with groups whose values are in conflict with those of the Charity.

This list is not intended to be exclusive but is indicative of the kind of issues that can arise.

If you fail to declare an interest that is known to the Chairperson or Secretary, he/she will declare that interest.

Decisions taken where a Trustee, employee or volunteer has an interest

In the event of the trustees having to decide upon a question in which a Trustee, staff member or volunteer has an interest, all decisions will be made by vote, with a simple majority required. A quorum must be present for the discussion and decision; interested parties will not be counted when deciding whether the meeting is quorate.

Interested Trustees, staff or volunteers may not vote on matters affecting their own interests. They may participate in the discussion but not the decision-making process.

All decisions under a conflict of interest will be recorded by the Chairperson or Secretary and reported in the minutes of the meeting. The report will record:

- The nature and extent of the conflict
- An outline of the discussion.
- The actions taken to manage the conflict.

Independent external moderation will be used where conflicts cannot be resolved through the usual procedures through an independent arbitration service.

Managing related or closely associated Trustees

To avoid any undue influence or give the impression of undue influence, which could imply that the charity has acted improperly and therefore damage the charity's reputation.

In the event that there are two or more related or closely associated Trustees, these individuals will not be counted in a quorum if they collectively form the majority vote, nor can any one of these individuals form a majority vote by holding a casting vote.

Managing contracts

Where a contract is to be awarded to a member of Dyslexia Cornwall Trustees, staff or volunteers, that person, nor a relative or person closely associated, must not be involved in managing or monitoring a contract in which that person has 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.

Employing a Trustee

In the event of the Trustees having to decide to employ a Trustee, all decisions will be made by vote, with a simple majority required. A quorum must be present for the discussion and decision; interested parties will not be counted when deciding whether the meeting is quorate.

Charity Commission guidelines must be followed and permission will have to be granted by the Charity Commission.

Monitoring and review

The Trustees will regularly review the operation of this policy.

This policy has been approved and authorised by the Trustees of Dyslexia Cornwall.

Signed:



Name: Barbara Hewett-Silk

Position: Chairperson

Date: 30 March 2026

Next review due: March 2027