

POL17 – Conflicts of Interest Policy for Volunteers

Other relevant documents and assistance

This policy applies to volunteers. A separate, more comprehensive policy (POL27) applies to members of the Board and Board sub-groups or committees. APM staff are subject to the APM Staff Business Conduct Policy (POL64).

Volunteers should act in the best interests of APM, and in accordance with its governing documents and policies. A guidance note on 'professional Volunteering Standards' contains related points and can be reviewed. Advice should initially be sought from the Volunteers team and thereafter the Company Secretary.

Background - why we have a policy?

A conflict of interest is any situation in which a person has, or can have, a direct or indirect interest that conflicts, or may possibly conflict, with the interests of APM. Potential conflicts of interest may arise where an individual's personal, family, business or other interests and/or loyalties may conflict with those of APM. Note that this includes potential, as well as actual, conflicts. Any perception of impropriety may be damaging, irrespective of whether there is any actual wrongdoing.

Conflicts of interests are inevitable and should not be a problem if correctly and sensitively handled. However, undeclared or improperly handled, they can cause problems within a charity and can result in the probity of the charity being questioned. This policy is intended to protect individuals to whom it applies and APM from any impropriety or any appearance or perception of impropriety.

Conflicts of interests may arise where an individual's personal, family, business or other interests and/or loyalties may conflict or appear to conflict with those of APM. Such potential conflicts may create problems; they can:

- inhibit free discussion;
- risk the impression that an individual and/or APM has acted improperly; and
- result in decisions or actions that are not in the interests of APM or which may be challenged.

Examples might include:

- use of an employer product for volunteer activity or promotion of an employer event, course or product, or generally using an APM volunteer event, APM volunteer media or other volunteer connected activity to promote another organisation or its products/activities
- potential to gain some sort of benefit from a third party connected with volunteer activity
- use of volunteer activity to promote the aims of others

The aim of this policy is to protect both APM and the individuals involved from any appearance of impropriety. It is intended to ensure that there is transparency about any possible competing interests involved in any decision making, so that everyone who should know is aware of any potential conflict of interest.

The declaration of interests

We ask all volunteers to be mindful of any occasion where there may be a potential conflict of interest between their own interests and the interests of APM. If there is a potential conflict of interest in relation to any discussion or decision, the volunteer should:

- make this known to any member of APM staff with whom they are dealing in relation to that discussion or decision;
- make this known to any APM committee or decision-making body of which they are a member at the earliest opportunity, so that all members of the committee or decision-making body are aware of the potential conflict; and
- withdraw from any discussions and decision-making where the potential conflict of interest arises.

If you face a conflict of interest for any reason, you should declare your private interest in the relevant agenda item(s) at the beginning of meeting. When that agenda item is reached, you should withdraw from the discussion and any decision in respect of the item. Your declaration and withdrawal should be recorded on the minutes of the meeting.

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 APM staff contact has agreed that your benefit is minimal.

General points

To be effective, any declaration of interests needs to be updated when any changes occur (including any changes to the nature or extent of any interest). You should ensure that this is recorded in writing (for instance in meeting minutes or in an email to your APM staff contact).

If you are not sure what to declare, or whether/when your declaration needs to be updated, please err on the side of caution.

Version control

Author	Reason for revision	Version number	Date
JS	Amended as per CR#186	0.1	20/9/2012
JP	Formatted to BMS requirements & issued at version 1 on BMS	1.0	12/10/2012
PVD	Amended to apply to volunteers only as employees are covered by the policy in the Employee Handbook and QP043 applies to members of the board and board sub-groups	1.1	11/07/2014
Kéo-Mony Mith	Policy reference number and APM logo updated	2	26/11/2019
Mike Robinson	Minor drafting and reference update	2.1	7/12/2021
Mike Robinson	Minor drafting points and rebranding	3	11/4/2024