



CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY

Introduction

Improving Lives Plymouth is committed to delivering impartial, independent, and high-quality services. This policy exists to help identify and manage conflicts of interest to protect the integrity of our services and uphold our duty of care to service users, staff, volunteers, and trustees. Properly handling conflicts of interest minimises risks such as:

- Breaching our confidentiality duty towards service users.
- Compromising the impartiality and integrity of our services.
- Harming service users' interests.
- Damaging the reputation of Improving Lives Plymouth.

This policy applies to all staff (full-time, part-time, and voluntary), volunteers, and the Board of Trustees.

Definition

A conflict of interest arises when it is not possible to provide impartial and independent support to a service user due to competing interests. For advice and support to remain impartial, no external factors should influence decisions other than the best interests of the service user. Conflicts may arise in various forms, including:

- Assisting individuals or parties on opposing sides of a dispute.
- Situations where a service user has personal ties to a staff member, volunteer, or trustee.
- Cases where the service user's request conflicts with the interests of Improving Lives Plymouth, its funders, or other stakeholders.
- Situations where a staff member, volunteer, or trustee's personal interest may compromise their professional responsibilities.

Examples of Conflict of Interest:

- Providing support to both parties in a legal dispute.
- A case involving a staff member, volunteer, or trustee's family member or close associate.
- A case based on knowingly false information.
- A case that requires action against the organisation or a funder.

Responsibilities

- The Senior Management Team and Trustee Board will oversee and review the implementation of this policy.
- The Chief Executive holds overall responsibility for the policy's implementation and periodic review.

- Line managers are responsible for overseeing the implementation of this policy within their teams
- All employees, students and volunteers must adhere to this policy

Procedure

- **Board of Trustees** and committee members must declare any personal interests during induction, interviews, and as new situations arise.
Improving Lives Plymouth maintains a Register of Interests where all declarations are recorded.
Each Board meeting begins with an opportunity for members to declare potential conflicts of interest, which are recorded in the minutes.
- **Staff and Volunteers** must check for potential conflicts at the first point of contact with a service user and monitor for conflicts in follow-up interactions.
- **Line Managers** must ensure that conflict of interest checks are consistently reviewed during case file audits.

Handling Conflicts of Interest

If a conflict of interest is identified, the following steps must be taken:

- **Recording Conflicts:** All conflict of interest checks regarding service provision must be documented in the Charity Log case management system. The record must record the outcome of the check and include the date and the staff member responsible.
- **Decision Making:** Staff must assess whether the conflict prevents service delivery and make a note in the Charity Log system of the outcome of the check.

If a conflict exists:

- Service should be refused where impartiality cannot be maintained.
- Alternative sources of support should be identified and signposted where possible
- The service user should be informed that we are unable to assist due to a conflict of interest, while maintaining confidentiality regarding any other party involved.

If a conflict involves a staff member, volunteer, or trustee:

- The individual should not be involved in the service provision for that case.
- Additional measures such as restricted access to case records may be implemented where necessary.
- Any concerns regarding conflicts of interest should be escalated to senior management.

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning

At ILP, we are committed to continuously improving our practices through regular monitoring, evaluation, and learning. We take a constructive and solution-focused approach, ensuring that our policies remain effective, inclusive, and aligned with our organisational values.

Monitoring: Improving Lives Plymouth will regularly review conflict of interest policies and procedures to ensure they remain compliant with relevant regulations and aligned with best practices. This ongoing review process helps to identify any necessary updates and ensures transparency across the organisation.

Evaluation: We assess the effectiveness of our conflict of interest policy by reviewing its implementation and identifying any challenges that arise. Any breaches of this policy will be

carefully examined and addressed in accordance with our organisational procedures, ensuring a fair and consistent approach.

Learning: To promote awareness and understanding, training on conflicts of interest will be provided to all staff, volunteers, and trustees. By fostering a culture of integrity and accountability, we ensure that everyone is equipped to recognise and appropriately manage conflicts of interest.

By embedding continuous reflection and improvement, we ensure that our policies uphold trust, respect, and high-quality service delivery at ILP.

Original Policy Adopted: 1994

Policy Review & Compliance

In applying this policy, ILP upholds the principles of equality, diversity, and inclusion in line with the Equality Act 2010. An Equality Impact Assessment will be conducted to ensure fairness and accessibility for all employees and volunteers.

Signed: 

Policy reviewed on (date)	Reviewed by
April 2025	Mathew Cunningham