

THE ROYAL NAVAL BENEVOLENT TRUST CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY

STATEMENT OF INTENT

The Royal Naval Benevolent Trust (RNBT) is committed to the highest levels of integrity. Employees, Trustees and volunteers are expected to conduct their relationships with each other, the Trust, and outside organisations with objectivity and honesty.

Introduction

1. This policy applies to Trustees, staff and volunteers.
2. Trustees have a legal obligation to act in the best interests of the RNBT in accordance with the Royal Charter and to avoid situations where there may be a potential conflict of interest. Staff and volunteers have similar obligations.
3. A conflict of interest may arise where an individual's personal or family interests and/or loyalties conflict with those of RNBT. Such conflicts may create problems; they can:
 - inhibit free discussion
 - result in decisions or actions that are not in the interests of RNBT
 - risk the impression that RNBT has acted improperly
4. The aim of this policy is to protect both the organisation and the individuals involved from any appearance of impropriety.

Declaration of Interests

5. Accordingly Trustees, staff and volunteers are asked to declare their interests, and any gifts or hospitality offered and received in connection with their role in the RNBT. A declaration of interests form is provided for this purpose, listing the types of interest that should be declared.
6. To be effective, the declaration of interests needs to be updated at least annually, normally before the annual audit and when any material changes occur.
7. If there is any uncertainty regarding what to declare, or whether/when a declaration needs to be updated, Trustees, staff and volunteers should err on the side of caution. Discussions with the Chief Executive or Chairman are encouraged for confidential guidance.
8. The Anti-Bribery Policy details the rules regarding the offer and receipt of gifts and hospitality.

Data Protection

9. The information provided will be processed in accordance with data protection principles as set out in the Data Protection Act 1998 and UK General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). Data will be processed only to ensure that Trustees, staff and volunteers act in the best interests of RNBT. The information provided will not be used for any other purpose.

What to do if you face a conflict of interest

10. If there is reason to believe a perceived or real conflict of interest has arisen, the person should:
 - declare the interest at the earliest opportunity
 - withdraw from discussions and decisions relating to the conflict.
11. The minuting secretary should take special care to ensure that minutes or other documents relating to the item presenting a conflict are appropriately redacted for the person facing the conflict. A balance needs to be made to ensure that the person still receives sufficient information about the activities of the charity generally without disclosing such sensitive information that could place the individual in an untenable position.
12. If you are user of RNBT's services, or the carer of someone who uses RNBT's services, you should not be involved in decisions that directly affect the service that you, or the person you care for, receive(s). You should declare your interest at the earliest opportunity and withdraw from any subsequent discussion, unless expressly invited to remain in order to accordingly provide information. In this case you may not participate in, or influence, the decision or any vote on the matter. You will not be counted in the quorum for that part of the meeting and must withdraw from the meeting during any vote on the conflicted item.
13. There are situations where participation in discussions is allowed in which the individual could indirectly benefit, for example where the benefits are universal to all users, or where your benefit is minimal. This action will be agreed by the Chair and minuted accordingly.
14. If an individual fails to declare an interest that is known to the Chief Executive and/or the Chair of the Central Committee or other Trustee committee, the Chief Executive or Chair will declare that interest.

Decisions taken where a Trustee or member of staff or volunteer has an interest

15. In the event of the Central Committee or other Trustee committees having to decide upon a question in which a Trustee or member of staff 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 Central Committee or other Trustee committee members may not vote on matters affecting their own interests.
16. All decisions under a conflict of interest will be recorded by the 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
17. Where a Trustee benefits from the decision, this will be reported in the annual report and accounts in accordance with the current Charities SORP.
18. All payments or benefits in kind to Trustees will be reported in the charity's accounts and annual report, with amounts for each Trustee listed for the year in question.

19. Where a member of RNBT's staff or a Trustee is connected to a party involved in the supply of a service or product to the charity, this information will be fully disclosed in the annual report and accounts.

Managing Contracts

20. If an individual has a conflict of interest, they must not be involved in managing or monitoring a contract in which they have 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.

Note: Periodic review as determined by Trustees.