

Conflict of Interest Protocol

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Purpose

The Diocese of Chester seeks to act with probity in their professional dealings and so aims to help employees and volunteers to follow (and be seen to follow) the highest ethical and moral standards in the course of their employment or volunteering.

All employees and volunteers should make appropriate declarations of, and seek appropriate permissions for, any conflicts of interest in the course of their duties.

Definition

A conflict of interest is a situation where an employee or volunteer is involved in multiple interests where serving one interest could involve working against another. Typically, this relates to situations in which the personal interest of an individual might adversely affect a duty owed to make decision for the benefit of the Chester DBF.

It is acknowledged that in the course of employment or volunteering there may be a link between the public duty of the individual and their private or personal interest. This may be evident, for example, in the recruitment process where a candidate may be a member of the same church congregation as a member of the interview panel or a relative or friend of a panel member.

If there is any doubt as to whether a conflict of interest exists, clarification must be sought from the Diocesan Secretary and / or the Director of Human Resources or the

Diocesan Safeguarding Team. They will be able to evaluate the situation objectively, answer any questions and advise on the way forward.

Conflict of Loyalty

A conflict of loyalty occurs when an individual's personal interests or biases may compromise their professional judgment. It arises when a person's allegiances to different stakeholders—such as employers, clients, or personal relationships—create ethical tensions. For example, an employee may face a conflict of loyalty if their loyalty to the organisation they work for conflicts with their loyalty to another person or organisation, potentially preventing them from making decisions in the best interests of the DBF.

Requirements and expectations

1. All employees and volunteers should bear in mind the necessity to protect the decisions of the Chester DBF from challenge or criticism on the grounds of prejudice and pay particular regard to the reputational risks involved in their own specific areas of business.
2. Employees and volunteers must not act so as to confer any benefit on any outside party if the benefit is of such value or frequency that it might reasonably be expected to cause the recipient to act in a manner which would or might conflict with any duties of the recipient to the Chester DBF.
3. Employees and volunteers must not accept a benefit from a third party which could reasonably be seen as making it difficult for them properly to perform their duties to the Chester DBF. Employees and volunteers should apply this test objectively, i.e. not simply ask themselves whether they feel compromised but should approach the question from the standpoint of a reasonably minded observer.
4. Employees and volunteers must not make recommendations or effect transactions for the Chester DBF if they have directly or indirectly a material interest of any description in the recommendation or transaction other than that arising solely from the Chester DBF's participation in it, or if they have a relationship with a connected person unless the interest or conflict has been disclosed to the Diocesan Secretary, Director of Human Resources or Diocesan Safeguarding Officer and their joint written consent is obtained.
5. Employees and volunteers need not declare involvement in church organisations (eg PCCs) unless this produces a conflict or potential conflict with the Chester DBF's interests.

6. Employees and volunteers who feel they may have a conflict of interest or loyalty should disclose it to the Diocesan Secretary, Director of Human Resources or Diocesan Safeguarding Officer and consider their involvement in relevant meetings, interviews and/or casework. Copies of all correspondence relating to conflicts of interest or loyalty should be given to the Diocesan Secretary.
7. Employees and volunteers should err on the side of caution in judging whether they have an interest and should consult the Diocesan Secretary, Director of Human Resources or Diocesan Safeguarding Officer if in doubt.