

Conflict of Interest Policy and Procedure

LUPUS UK strives to maintain an atmosphere of openness throughout the organisation to promote confidence of the public, members, staff, charity regulators, Parliament and other stakeholders.

In order to foster this spirit of transparency and openness and prevent undue influence, Trustees and members of the charity's Council and committees should always declare an interest in any relevant matters under discussion at a meeting. These interests may be financial, or of influence or loyalty.

All members of any committee of the charity have a responsibility to act collectively in their joint responsibility for the charity's activities.

Introduction

This policy sets out procedures in relation to any issue concerned with conflict of interest of LUPUS UK's peer review panel. The aim of the policy is to protect both LUPUS UK and the individuals involved from any appearance of impropriety.

Conflicts of interest can occur when there is a direct financial gain or benefit to any panel member by payment of a grant to a panel member or relative. Where there is a benefit to a panel member this may be allowed as long as that member is not involved in the discussion or recommendation for funding. Panel members will vacate the room at the appropriate time, in order for there to be free and uninhibited discussion.

Procedure

Declaration of Interests/loyalties

1. Panel Members must fill in a `Declaration of Interests/loyalties` form that is kept by the secretary. This form needs to be updated at least once a year or when any change to the circumstances occurs.
2. The information provided will be processed in accordance with data protection principles as set out in the Data Protection Act 1998. Data will be processed only to ensure panel members act in the best interests of the charity. The information provided will not be used for any other purpose.

Conduct of Meetings

1. At the commencement of each meeting panel members must declare any conflict of interest/loyalty in relation to any item on the agenda or any further item discussed and this will be minuted.
2. When an item is discussed in which a member has declared a conflict of interest/loyalty, that member should withdraw from that part of the meeting/discussion. The same applies if a member faces a conflict of interest for any other reason.

Resolution of Conflict of Interest Issues

1. The constitution of the charity shall also be used for guidance in as far as it sets out the duties and responsibilities of Trustees/Panel Members in relation to conflicts of interest.
2. In the event of the panel having to decide upon a question in which a member 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. Panel members must leave the meeting if they have any application under discussion and may not vote on matters affecting their own application. The Charity's Trustees and the AMRC (Association of Medical Research Charities) can be approached if an issue requires further help for resolution
3. All decisions under a conflict of interest will be recorded by the Panel's secretary and reported in the minutes of the meeting.