

Joint statement from the Chief Executives of statutory regulators of health and care professionals

Conflicts of Interest

This joint statement on 'conflicts of interest' sets out our expectations of health and care professionals in relation to avoiding, declaring and managing conflicts of interest across all healthcare settings. It is intended to support the standards or code for each profession and any additional guidance they may have. These professional standards, codes and additional guidance should be the over-riding consideration for professionals. We believe that given the increasing move towards multi-disciplinary teams, there is great value in working together for a consistent approach.

We will promote this joint statement to our registrants, students, and to the public, to ensure they all know what we expect. We will support this with case studies to illustrate the principles of the statement, and show how these issues might arise in different settings. We will encourage all registrants to reflect on their own learning and continuing professional development needs regarding conflicts of interest.

Handling conflicts of interest

Conflicts can arise in situations where someone's judgement may be influenced, or perceived to be influenced, by a personal, financial or other interest.

We expect health and social care professionals¹ to:

- Put the interests of people in their care before their own interests, or those of any colleague, business, organisation, close family member or friend.
- Maintain appropriate personal and professional boundaries with the people they provide care to and with others.
- Consider carefully where conflicts of interest may arise – or be perceived to arise – and seek advice if they are unsure how to handle this.
- Be open about any conflict of interest they face, declaring it formally when appropriate and as early as possible, in line with the policies of their employer or the organisation contracting their services.
- Ensure their professional judgement is not compromised by personal, financial or commercial interests, incentives, targets or similar measures.
- Refuse all but the most trivial gifts, favours or hospitality if accepting them could be interpreted as an attempt to gain preferential treatment or would contravene your professional code of practice.
- Where appropriate, ensure that patients have access to visible and easy-to-understand information on any fees and charging policies for which you are responsible.

¹ 'Health and care professionals' refers to those individuals regulated by one of the nine regulators overseen by the Professional Standards Authority. Social workers are separately regulated in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

CEO signatures (alphabetical by organisation)



Rosalyn Hayles
Chief Executive and Registrar
General Chiropractic Council



Ian Brack
Chief Executive and Registrar
General Dental Council



Charlie Massey
Chief Executive and Registrar
General Medical Council



Alistair Bridge
Director of Strategy
General Optical Council



Tim Walker
Chief Executive and Registrar
General Osteopathic Council



Duncan Rudkin
Chief Executive and Registrar
General Pharmaceutical Council



Marc Seale
Chief Executive and Registrar
Health and Care Professions Council



Jackie Smith
Chief Executive and Registrar
Nursing and Midwifery Council



Trevor Patterson
Chief Executive
Pharmaceutical Society NI

