



The register of interests form, which is to be completed by ESPCF volunteers & staff, is on page 3 of this document

This policy and procedure is designed to ensure that any conflict of interest, or potential conflict, an ESPCF volunteer or member of staff might have in relation to their membership of any group or meeting which they attend on behalf of ESPCF, is declared and dealt with so as to ensure that ESPCF operates in line with best practice.

It should be stressed that there is nothing wrong with an ESPCF volunteer or member of staff being in any of these situations below – a problem only arises if the person is involved in any decision which could be seen to conflict with their interest, and fails to declare it. **A confidentiality policy and code of conduct also set out more broadly what is expected from volunteers and staff in relation to their role in ESPCF.**

The following are examples of when a conflict of interest may arise, where an ESPCF volunteer, i.e. rep, or steering group member, or member of staff (or their spouse or direct family member):

- Is connected to another organisation/company with similar objectives
- Is connected to another organisation/company which stands to gain financially or otherwise from decisions made by a group which the ESPCF volunteer or staff member attends on behalf of ESPCF
- Is also a member, trustee or employee of another group or organisation which enables them to influence strategic decisions in relation to children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities and their families in East Sussex
- Has brought a legal challenge against the local authority or NHS, e.g. through an appeal to the First-Tier Tribunal or a complaint to the Ombudsman

Responsibility of ESPCF volunteers or members of staff

It is always the responsibility of an ESPCF volunteer or member of staff to declare any interest referred to above. In order to help volunteers or members of staff to declare interests appropriately, ESPCF will:

- Ask volunteers or members of staff to declare any interests at the beginning of any meeting. This will routinely feature at the start of all meetings organised by ESPCF and will be encouraged at external meetings that ESPCF attends
- Discuss conflicts of interest issues when an ESPCF volunteer or member of staff is considering getting involved with ESPCF, especially when joining as a rep
- Provide new steering group members and reps with a form on which they will declare any interest which is likely to conflict with their role and maintain a register of interests
- If a volunteer or member of staff fails to declare an interest which is known to others, then they will declare it and ESPCF staff will follow up to explore any further action required

When a conflict of interest arises

- When a conflict of interest arises between a volunteer's interest, or a member of staff's interest, in the work of ESPCF and a personal or professional interest elsewhere, the person must declare that interest.



- Parent Carer representatives need to promptly inform the ESPCF engagement coordinator if a conflict of interest has arisen which may affect their ability to represent ESPCF at a group/meeting they attend on behalf of ESPCF. They should not wait until the next meeting of the group to declare their conflict of interest. This declaration will be passed to the ESPCF chair for a decision on continued participation. The chair can liaise with members of the steering group if necessary, e.g. if it is not clear whether something constitutes a conflict of interest.
- When it's been agreed with ESPCF that there is a potential conflict, when in a meeting, the volunteer/staff member should ensure the conflict is recorded in the minutes of the meeting in question. The onus is on the chair of that meeting to decide how the conflict of interest is handled.
- Often a volunteer or member of staff with a declared conflict of interest will not be allowed to vote on any item to which their conflict of interest relates. The volunteer or member of staff will not normally be asked to leave the meeting while the item in question is being discussed, but may be asked to withdraw if the chair considers that their presence may unduly influence the outcome of a decision.
- If a conflict of interest is observed by a third party, it should be reported to ESPCF. This will be recorded and ESPCF will aim to discuss it within five working days with the individual involved and the third party. This is so that the situation and different perspectives can be fully understood and a way forward agreed.
- The person will be required to abide by the decisions of the chair with regard to whether their participation in a meeting or group is affected by their conflict of interest.
- Volunteers or staff with a declared conflict of interest may be asked to temporarily stand down from a meeting or group they attend, if it is considered by the ESPCF chair that this is necessary; an example of this might be the period during which a family is attending a tribunal hearing. Once their conflict of interest has been resolved, or the immediate pressure points of this have passed, they will review their situation with the engagement coordinator or ESPCF chair before resuming their role.
- Any declaration of conflict of interest made by a volunteer or member of staff will be processed in line with the Data Protection Act, the General Data Protection Regulations and Amaze's Data Protection Policy which underpin ESPCF's operations.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the ESPCF steering group or earlier if matters arise demonstrating gaps in its effectiveness or in light of any relevant legislation change.

Signed off: March 2022

Last reviewed: March 2023

Next review due: March 2024



Register of Interests to be completed by volunteers and staff

Please include all appointments, paid work etc, not just those where you consider there may be a potential conflict of interest

		Please give details of the interest and whether it applies to yourself or, where appropriate, a member of your immediate family
1	Current employment and any previous employment in which you continue to have a financial interest	
2	Official appointments (voluntary or otherwise) e.g. trusteeship, committee member etc.	
3	Membership of any other groups, e.g. parent support groups	
4	Investments in companies, partnerships and other forms of business which ESPCF might work with	
5	Overview of any SEND services you/your family access that ESPCF might work with	
6	Any legal challenge against ESCC or NHS, e.g. Tribunal or a complaint to the Ombudsman	
7	Any other interests that are not covered by the above	