Area Drug and Therapeutics Committee
Policy for open and transparent decision making in medicines governance

1.0 Introduction

NHS boards must ensure that they function with openness and transparency. This policy statement sets out roles and responsibilities for NHS board committees and individuals that are involved in making decisions relating to medicines governance. Medicines governance committees should refer to their NHS board procedures and guidance for good business conduct. NHS Lothian Procedures and Guidance for Applying the Principles of Good Business Conduct and Corporate Policies are available on the NHS Lothian Intranet.

1.1 Aim of policy

To ensure that the Area Drug and Therapeutics Committee (ADTC) and its subgroups, members and those contributing to the ADTC or subgroup are aware of the NHS Lothian policies relating to good business conduct.

1.2 Objective

To define the responsibilities of medicines governance committees with respect to open and transparent decision making.

1.3 Scope

This policy statement applies to members of the ADTC and its subgroups and to individuals contributing to ADTC or subgroups.

2.0 Roles and responsibilities

2.1 NHS Lothian

NHS Lothian provides clear direction and procedures to employees, non-executive directors and committee members to support compliance with the NHS Lothian Procedures and Guidance for Applying the Principles of Good Business Conduct.

2.2 ADTC and its subgroups

The ADTC and its subgroups must ensure that appropriate support is in place to enable their decision making processes to be robust, open and transparent and that members are made aware of the relevant NHS Lothian policies.

It is normal practice at the start of meetings for the chair to note requirement to declare interests. This can be included on agendas as a standing item. Any person having anything to do with the committee (as a member, attendee, someone submitting evidence) can declare interests. Interests can be declared verbally, and may also be reflected in the body of a paper or a presentation that has been prepared by a person with an interest. If a committee member has declared an interest at another time, and that interest has a bearing on what is discussed at the meeting, then the member should still declare the interest at the meeting.
Where there is a declared personal specific interest, the individual is not permitted to be involved in the discussion or the decision-making on that item. The chair may ask the person to leave the room when the item is being discussed. Where there is a declared non-personal interest, the chair can exercise judgement, based on the nature of the interest and the subject being discussed, as to whether the individual should have their involvement in the discussion limited.

The chair will be mindful of the need to preserve quorum, and will implement strategies to ensure quorate decision making.

If the chair has an interest, he/she should pass the role of chair of the meeting to someone else for the affected item of business. The chair’s interest must then be treated in the same way as any other declared interest.

Where an individual is seeking an addition or amendment to a board recommendation and declares an interest in a therapeutic agent, and is the only NHS Lothian specialist, the following steps will be taken:

- The committee will seek objective evidence from other sources.
- The chair will identify any potential conflict before the meeting, and may request expertise in the subject matter from a specialist from a different NHS board area who has no conflict of interest in the agent. That expert could attend the meeting to give evidence, but would not be a member.

Record the interests in pharmaceutical companies by providing a register of interests form (Appendix 1) to members on an annual basis.

The ADTC and its subgroups will publish their registers of interests on the ADTC membership page of the NHS Lothian internet.

Manage records and registers of interests in line with Scottish Government and board guidance and best practice.

2.3 Individuals

Individuals must:

- Adhere to the seven principles of public life as set down by Lord Nolan - honesty, integrity, accountability, leadership, openness, selflessness and objectivity.

- Read, understand and comply with the NHS Lothian Procedures and Guidance for Applying the Principles of Good Business Conduct procedures and guidance for good business conduct and recognise the duty of registering interests, and the duty of declaring interests.

- The following is intended as a guide to the kinds of interest which should be declared. It should be noted that if individuals have interests not specified in these notes but which they believe could be regarded as influencing their advice they should declare them.

- Complete a register of interests form (Appendix 1) on an annual basis, and provide an updated form to the ADTC and/or its subgroups throughout the year if required, if, and as soon as circumstances change.
Links to key documentation

- **NHS Lothian Safe Use of Medicines Policy**


- **Ethical Standards for Providers of Public Services – guidance. Committee on Standards in Public Life. December 2015.**


- **Policy on Declaration of Competing Interests. Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network (SIGN). 2015.**

- **Declarations of Interest. Scottish Medicines Consortium (SMC). August 2014.**
Appendix 1
Register of Interests Form for use by ADTC and its subgroups

Committee members are required to complete this on an annual basis. It should also be updated throughout the year if required, if, and as soon as circumstances change.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the individual and the position held in NHS Lothian</th>
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What is the nature of the interest being declared?
Please refer to [NHS Lothian Procedures and Guidance for Applying the Principles of Good Business Conduct](#) procedures and guidance for good business conduct and also to the definitions provided below.

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I declare that the information I have given is correct and complete.

I understand that if I knowingly provide false information this may result in disciplinary action and I may be liable for prosecution and civil recovery proceedings.

I understand this form is a public record, and it will be made available for audit or other inspection, or disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act.

Name ___________________________________
Signature ___________________________________
Date ___________________________________
Definitions of declared interests

The following is intended as a guide to the kinds of interest which should be declared. It should be noted that if individuals have interests not specified in these notes but which they believe could be regarded as influencing their advice they should declare them. Individual interests should be declared and examples are detailed below. It should also be noted that, in line with Standing Financial Instructions, the interests of a spouse/partner/cohabitee or close relative should also be declared, if known.

Personal interests
A personal interest involves payment to the individual personally, for example:

- Consultancies - any consultancy, directorship, position in or work which attracts regular or occasional payments in cash or kind.
- Fee-paid work - any work commissioned by the pharmaceutical industry for which the member is paid in cash or kind.
- Shareholdings - any shareholding in or other beneficial interest in shares of the pharmaceutical industry. This does not include shareholdings through unit trusts or similar arrangements where the member has no influence or financial management.

If a clinical expert is aware that a product under consideration is or may become a competitor of a product manufactured, sold or supplied by a company in which the expert has a current personal interest, he or she should declare an interest in the company marketing the rival product. (as per Declarations of Interest. Scottish Medicines Consortium (SMC). August 2014.)

Personal specific interests
A personal specific interest involves payments to an individual who has worked at any time on the product under consideration, or a direct comparator, and has personally received payment for that work, in any form, from the pharmaceutical industry.

Clinical experts should declare a personal specific interest if he or she has at any time worked on the product under consideration and has personally received payment for that work, in any form, from the pharmaceutical industry.

Experts should also declare a personal specific interest if he or she has participated on an Advisory Board arranged by the pharmaceutical company. If the interest is no longer current (last three years), the expert may declare it as a lapsed personal specific interest. (Note that a personal specific interest as a result of significant involvement in the development of a product, e.g. Chief Investigator or Co-Chief Investigator of a clinical trial, or through authorship of a core publication on the product, never lapses). (as per Declarations of Interest. Scottish Medicines Consortium (SMC). August 2014.)

Personal non-specific interests
A personal non-specific interest involves a payment to an individual from the pharmaceutical company concerned which does not relate specifically to the product under discussion.

Clinical experts should declare a personal non-specific interest if he or she has a current personal interest in the pharmaceutical company concerned which does not relate specifically to the product under consideration. (as per Declarations of Interest. Scottish Medicines Consortium (SMC). August 2014.)
**Non-personal interests**
A non-personal interest involves payment which benefits a department for which an individual is responsible, but is not received by the individual personally, for example:
- Fellowships – the holding of a fellowship endowed by a pharmaceutical industry.
- Support by the pharmaceutical industry – any payment, other support or sponsorship by the pharmaceutical industry which does not convey any pecuniary or material benefit to a member personally but which does benefit his/her position or department.

Individuals are under no obligation to seek out knowledge of work done for or on behalf of the pharmaceutical industry within departments for which they are responsible if they would not normally expect to be informed.

**Non-personal specific interests**
A non-personal specific interest refers to payments to the individual’s department, which has at any time worked on the product.

*Clinical experts should declare a non-personal specific interest if he or she is aware that the department for which he or she is responsible has at any time worked on the product but the expert has not personally received payment in any form from the pharmaceutical industry for the work done.* (as per *Declarations of Interest. Scottish Medicines Consortium (SMC). August 2014.*)

**Non-personal non-specific interests**
A non-personal non-specific interest refers to a department which is currently receiving payments from a pharmaceutical company concerned which does not relate specifically to the product under discussion.

*Clinical experts should declare a non-personal, non-specific interest if he or she is aware that the department for which he or she is responsible is currently receiving payment from the pharmaceutical company concerned which does not relate specifically to the product under consideration.* (as per *Declarations of Interest. Scottish Medicines Consortium (SMC). August 2014.*)