

Conflict of Interest Procedure – Employees and Clients

CPSN is committed to ensuring transparent and ethical approaches to its operations. This procedure is designed to be read in conjunction with the Conflict of Interest Policy. This procedure provides information about what conflicts of interest are, and how they should be reported, responded to, and managed.

This procedure applies to CPSN employees and clients, which includes any person employed or engaged in the organisation. For the procedure relating to CPSN Board members refer to the Conflict of Interest Procedure (Board).

Record of procedure development		
Version	Date approved	Date for review
Version 4	February 2026	February 2028

Responsibilities and delegations	
This procedure applies to:	CEO GM Service Delivery Managers Employees Clients Volunteers (excluding Board members) and Contractors
Procedure approval:	CEO

Review of Procedure Compliance	CEO
Specific responsibilities:	CEO GM Service Delivery Manager Human Resources Managers Employees/Volunteers/Contractors

Policy statement

This procedure describes how CPSN implements its Conflict of Interest Policy. The policy describes CPSN's intention and standard in relation to managing conflicts of interest.

The policy is provided below.

CPSN recognises that a conflict of interest can be financial or non-financial, direct, or indirect, potential, actual or perceived and can include conflicts in duties.

In relation to conflicts of interest generally, CPSN will:

- ensure that CPSN Board members, employees, clients, and volunteers understand types of conflicts of interest and how to identify a real, perceived, or potential conflict of interest
- ensure that CPSN Board members, employees, clients, and volunteers understand it is their responsibility (as well as that of CPSN) to identify, address and mitigate conflicts of interest (perceived or actual).
- adhere to the NDIS Code of Conduct
- prioritise equitable, transparent, and ethical approaches in all aspects of its operations.
- not treat any party more favourably than another as a result of the real, perceived, or potential conflict
- ensure that public duties and private interests and all real, perceived, or potential conflicts of interest are declared to the appropriate person(s)
- record declared conflicts on the Conflict of Interest Register
- manage identified conflicts appropriately in accordance with this policy and the associated procedure
- requires the Leadership Team and Board members to exercise good judgement in each case when assessing a declared conflict or a gift, taking into account relevant circumstances, including the character of the gift, its purpose, its appearance, the business context, and reciprocity.
- ensure gifts and benefits received are declared to the appropriate person(s) and handled appropriately in accordance with this policy, the associated procedure, and the Delegation of Authority Matrix.
- ensure any gifts or entertainment are not given or received to create an improper advantage to CPSN or CPSN stakeholders, including members, Board members, employees and clients.

In relation to conflict of interest in Service Delivery, CPSN will:

- ensure that potential and current members and clients are fully informed and empowered and receive transparent information about the organisation to enable them to make decisions that are in their own best interests and free from inducements or pressure.
- require staff, clients, family members and legal guardians to exercise good judgement, and adhere to their scope of duties, when a potential crossover of roles and responsibilities are related to employment, being a carer and support groups occur.
- treat all people accessing CPSN services equally, with no client given preferential treatment above another in the provision of support.
- act in the best interests of CPSN members and clients to ensure that they are informed, empowered, and able to exercise choice and control over their lives. Employees and volunteers will not (by act or omission) constrain, influence, or force decision-making by a person with a disability and/or their family, so as to limit that individual's access to information, opportunities, choice, or control.
- ensure that advice about support options (including those provided by organisations other than CPSN) is honest, impartial, and promotes choice and control.

CPSN recognises that there can be a real or perceived conflict of interest that arises from its role in providing both Support Coordination and support services including Innovative Choices and Telehealth services. In order to manage such potential conflicts of interest, CPSN will:

- inform potential clients that:
 - CPSN offers Support Coordination, as well as a range of other supports under the NDIS
 - the client has, at all times, the option to choose either CPSN or another service provider for their Support Coordination and/or other support and CPSN quotes are treated like those from any other organisation
 - there are many other registered NDIS providers, and they are listed on the NDIS website
 - even if an individual chooses to use CPSN as their Support Coordinator, they do not have to use any supports provided by CPSN
 - CPSN will offer supports to participants regardless of whether they self-manage their plan, use the NDIA, or any other registered plan manager.
- CPSN workers and volunteers will obtain confirmation that the above information has been disclosed to the participant in order to maximise individual choice and control
- if a participant indicates that they do not wish to be referred to other service providers, CPSN's employees will demonstrate and document that other options for supports have been explored, the client's choice is free from influence, and the client had full choice and control in the decision-making process.
- to reduce the risk of harm, abuse, or neglect, CPSN will ensure that:
 - clients who receive all their services from CPSN regularly receive information regarding the other service organisations available to them
 - Support Coordinators will work to connect with other service provider organisations, without interrupting or leaving gaps in the services they receive
 - The GM Service Delivery is responsible for auditing client plans to ensure that the risks arising from clients who receive all their services from CPSN are managed effectively and clients are informed of their options.
- in order to avoid the risk of (or actual) conflict of interest, the organisation will maintain a separation between the service delivery team/s, the Support Coordination team/s, and records are not able to be accessed between the teams.

Definitions

The following definitions apply to this Procedure and its associated Policy:

Conflict of Interest – conflict of interest can be potential or real and occurs when a worker or a NDIS provider is in a position to exploit their own professional capacity for personal or corporate benefit. Conflicts of interest may include conflict of a financial, business, or personal nature, including any financial and/or corporate interest or relationship the NDIS provider may have with other entities, including businesses and organisations, or of a personal nature, including but not limited to cultural, religious, or social relationships.

The following types of conflicts of interest are recognised:

Private interests that could improperly influence, or be seen to influence, decisions, or actions in the performance of public duties - this is the general explanation and definition of a conflict of interest.

Real, potential, or perceived conflicts of a financial or non-financial nature - conflicts of interest should be declared whether they are determined to be real or present.

- Real: a real conflict of interest occurs when an individual has two competing interests, one of which interferes or undermines the ability to fulfil their CPSN responsibilities.
- Potential: arises where an individual has an interest or obligation, whether personal or involving a third party, that could conflict with the individual's duties and responsibilities to the organisation.
- Perceived: exists where it could be reasonably perceived, or give the appearance, that a competing interest could improperly influence the performance of an individual's duties and responsibilities.

Conflict of duty - this will arise when a person(s) within the organisation is required to fulfil two or more roles that may, potentially, or be perceived to be in conflict with each other e.g., a person working in Support Coordinator and Innovative Choices roles.

Conflict of roles – this may arise for persons employed within CPSN and who participate as clients and/or representatives with CP, and /or family members.

Giving or receiving of gifts and entertainment, whether tangible or intangible gifts or entertainment - any gift, gratuity, favour, benefit, discount, forbearance, item having monetary value for which the recipient does not pay fair market value. This can be tangible or intangible. A gift also includes meals, drinks, entertainment, and recreation (tickets, passes, etc.), services, training, transportation, discounts, promotional items, lodging, gift cards or door prizes. Gifts to employees of \$20 or above are included. In addition, it is expected that any gifts would be infrequent. For example, it is not acceptable for a support worker to be accepting a gift of a cup of coffee at a café from a client on a weekly basis.

This does not include reasonable pre-approved work-related expenses.

Public duties and private interests - public duties are the official tasks performed in the role as employee or manager. A private interest means anything that can influence an employee or manager. Private interests may be direct or indirect, and financial or non-financial.

Direct interests - includes an employee or manager's own personal, family, professional or business interests.

Indirect interests - includes the personal, family, professional or business interests of individuals or groups with whom the employee or manager is or was recently closely associated with.

Financial interests - involves an actual, potential, or perceived financial gain or loss. Money does not need to change hands for an interest to be financial. People have a financial interest if they (or a relative, or close associate) own property, hold shares, have a position in a company bidding for government work, receive benefits such as concessions, discounts, gifts, or hospitality from a particular source related to the public sector organisation, or can benefit financially from a decision significantly influenced or made by the organisation.

Non-financial interests, including relationships, nepotism, or favouritism - these arise from personal or family relationships, or involvement in sporting, social or cultural activities. This includes any tendency toward favouritism or prejudice resulting from friendship, animosity, or other personal involvement with another person or group. If personal values are likely to impact the proper performance of public duty, then these can also lead to a conflict of interest.

Procedure

Purpose of this Procedure

This procedure guides the management of conflicts of interest by outlining how the CEO, Leadership Team, employees, volunteers (excluding Board members) and are expected to manage potential conflicts of interest. It promotes consistency and good practice, as well as providing an accountability tool against which people's actions and compliance with the procedure can be measured.

The Conflict of Interest Policy outlines the roles and responsibilities for the implementation of the policy. These roles and responsibilities are embedded within this procedure.

Procedure

The sequence of steps and specifically what tasks need to be performed (including by whom and when) to undertake the management of conflicts of interest are outlined below:

1. Identifying a Conflict of Interest

CPSN employees and Leadership Team should consider whether an actual, perceived, or potential conflict of interest is a conflict.

The following questions can help identify whether a situation or relationship is a conflict of interest:

- are there personal or private interests that may conflict, or be perceived to conflict, with public duty?
- could there be benefits now or in the future that could cast doubt on the independence of objectivity?
- how will the involvement in a decision or action be viewed by others? Are there risks associated with the person or organisation?
- does the involvement in the decision appear fair and reasonable in all circumstances?
- what are the consequences if the conflict of interest is ignored? What if the involvement was questioned publicly?

- have promises or commitments in relation to the matter been made? Does anyone stand to gain or lose from the proposed action/decision?

2. Reporting and recording Conflicts of Interest

Once a real, perceived, or potential conflict of interest is identified, it must be reported to the CPSN Leadership Team or CEO as appropriate. Where the conflict relates to the CEO, the Board should receive the report.

The conflict should be submitted in writing by the person declaring their real, perceived, or potential conflict of interest. The declaration should include:

- description of the issue
- description of public duty
- consideration of whether a conflict-of-interest situation exists
- identification of the conflict of interest
- identification of the type of conflict of interest
- proposed strategy for resolution or management of the conflict situation.

The Leadership Team or CEO will respond to the person within 14 days to acknowledge the declaration. They may then consult with other Leadership Team members and will respond to advise if a conflict does exist, if they require an alternative strategy or process to manage the conflict, or if the conflict does not exist.

If a conflict does exist, it will be documented on CPSN's Conflict of Interest Register by the CEO. Where conflicts of interest relate to services and supports for CPSN members or clients, the conflict will also be recorded in the relevant party's records.

If a conflict does not exist, the declaration will still be recorded on the Conflict of Interest Register and documentation supporting the outcome decision will be documented and saved.

If a CPSN stakeholder suspects that someone has failed to disclose a conflict of interest, they should discuss the suspected conflict of interest with the person in question and notify their Line Manager or the CEO. The Line Manager or CEO will need to take appropriate action from here, which may include discussing the perceived conflict of interest directly with the staff member and assessing whether a conflict of interest is apparent.

Considerations in Managing Conflicts of Interest

In assessing a conflict of interest, CPSN will consider:

- whether the conflict needs to be avoided or simply documented
- whether the conflict will realistically impair the person's capacity to impartially participate in decision making
- alternative options to avoid the conflict
- CPSN's purpose and resources
- the possibility/probability of creating an appearance of improper conduct that may impair confidence in, or the reputation of CPSN.

Managing Conflicts of Interest

Depending on the situation relating to a conflict of interest, CPSN Leadership Team may utilise a range of strategies to manage the conflict including:

- **Restrict/Recuse**
Involvement in the matter may be restricted. For example, the staff member may need to be restricted from accessing or being involved in a matter, or information relating to a particular area may be restricted. An employee or manager may recuse themselves from an investigation or situation where a conflict may be present.
- **Replace / Outsource / Monitor**
If impractical to restrict involvement in a matter, an alternate party may be able to take on the relevant role(s), or an independent third party may need to be engaged to participate in, oversee, or review the integrity of the decision-making process. Regular monitoring of a situation by an objective party, particularly where the decision or action is periodical and not frequent, maybe an appropriate method to manage some conflicts of interest.
- **Relinquish**
Relinquishing the personal or private interest which prompted concerns about the conflict of interest may be a suitable strategy. For example, this could be the relinquishment of shares or membership in a club or association.

Managing Conflicts of Interest arising from the Support Coordinator role

In addition to the requirements of all CPSN employees related to conflict of interest, employees providing support coordination roles, have additional responsibilities outlined below.

CPSN recognises that there can be a real or perceived conflict of interest that arises from its role in providing both Support Coordination and support services including Innovative Choices and Telehealth services. In order to manage such potential conflicts of interest, CPSN will:

- inform potential clients that:
 - CPSN offers Support Coordination, as well as a range of other supports under the NDIS
 - the client has, at all times, the option to choose either CPSN or another service provider for their Support Coordination and/or other supports and CPSN quotes are treated like those from any other organisation
 - there are many other registered NDIS providers, and they are listed on the NDIS website
 - even if an individual chooses to use CPSN as their Support Co-ordinator, they do not have to use any supports provided by CPSN
 - CPSN will offer supports to participants regardless of whether they self-manage their plan, use the NDIA, or any other registered plan manager
- CPSN employees and volunteers will obtain confirmation that the above information has been disclosed to the participant in order to maximise individual choice and control
- if a participant indicates that they do not wish to be referred to other service providers, CPSN's employees will demonstrate and document that other options for supports have been explored, the client's choice is free from influence, and the client had full choice and control in the decision-making process.
- to reduce the risk of harm, abuse, or neglect, CPSN will ensure that:
 - clients who receive all their services from CPSN regularly receive information regarding the other service organisations available to them
 - Support Coordinators will work to connect other service provision organisations, without interrupting or leaving gaps in the services they receive
 - the GM Service Delivery is responsible for auditing client plans to ensure that the risks arising from clients who receive all their services from CPSN are managed effectively and clients are informed of their options
- in order to avoid risk of (or actual) conflict of interest, the organisation will maintain a separation between the service delivery team/s, the Support Coordination team/s, and records are not able to be accessed between the teams.

Gifting

Where the conflict of interest relates to a one-off gift or entertainment, the appropriateness of the gift will be assessed by CPSN Leadership Team and a decision on whether the party may appropriately retain the gift will be made. Where it is impractical or difficult to return a gift without offending, the gift may be used for a charitable purpose or shared amongst team members at the Leadership Teams' discretion.

It is inappropriate to give or receive a gift to create an improper advantage for CPSN.

All expenditures for gifts and entertainment provided by CPSN must be accurately recorded in the accounting records and comply with the limits set in the Delegation of Authority Matrix.

Gifts should not be approved or accepted where a contract or tender is being re-negotiated, during a period of four months prior to the cessation / renewal / commencement of the contract.

Review of Procedure

This procedure will be reviewed by CEO upon any of the following events occurring:

- a review of the Conflict of Interest Policy
- changes in accepted practice standards
- changes in external requirements such as legislation
- staff identifying gaps or problems in implementing the procedure
- service user feedback.

Training plan

Prior to implementing this procedure, employees should be fully aware of and committed to acting in accordance with the:

- Conflict of Interest Policy
- Code of Conduct

Prerequisites

Prior to implementing this procedure, employees are required to have read and understood the following:

- Conflict of Interest Policy
- Code of Conduct

Maintaining appropriate records

- The CEO will maintain, update and report on the CPSN Conflict of Interest Register – Employees and Clients.
- Records of conflicts of interest will also be recorded on FoundU for relevant employees.
- Records will be kept for seven years.
- CPSN records are maintained using cloud-based technology systems, covering HRIS, CRM and Operational documentation.

Forms that apply to this procedure

Conflict of Interest Register – Employees and Clients

Document Revision History

This document is only valid on the day it was printed.

Who	Version	Date	Description of review
CEO	V1,2	Unknown	
CEO	V3	June 2024	Scheduled Review
CEO	V4	February 2026	Scheduled Review incorporating role changes re organisational restructure.