



Conflict of Interest Policy Sidney Cooper Arts Trust

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1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that decisions made by Sidney Cooper Arts Trust (“the Charity”) are, and are seen to be, in the best interests of the Charity and its beneficiaries. Trustees must act with integrity and avoid situations where personal or external interests could conflict with their duty to the Charity.

2. Principles

- Transparency: All actual or potential conflicts must be declared
- Accountability: Trustees must act solely in the Charity’s best interests
- Fairness: Decisions must be free from undue influence
- Compliance: Adherence to Charity Commission guidance and UK charity law

3. Definition

A conflict of interest arises when a trustee’s personal interests, or those of a family member, friend, or organisation they are connected with, could improperly influence their decisions or actions as a trustee.

Examples include:

- Financial gain (contracts, payments, expenses)
- Non-financial gain (prestige, access, influence)
- Loyalty conflicts (between the Charity and another organisation)

4. Declarations

- Trustees must complete an annual Register of Interests
- Trustees must declare any conflict at the start of each meeting
- Declarations must be recorded in the minutes

5. Managing Conflicts

- Trustees with a conflict must withdraw from discussion and decision-making on the matter
- The Chair ensures conflicts are managed appropriately
- Where necessary, independent advice may be sought
- If a conflict cannot be managed, the trustee may be asked to step down from that decision or role

6. Recording

- All conflicts and actions taken must be minuted
- The Register of Interests is maintained by the Secretary and reviewed annually

7. Register of Conflicts of Interest

The Charity will maintain a Register of all reported Conflicts of Interest which will contain, as a minimum, the following information.

- a. The date on which the Conflict of Interest (Col) was first reported, supplemented where appropriate by the dates on which any changes to the Conflict of Interest were reported, including the date on which the Conflict of Interest ceased to be an issue.
Note: once reported, a Conflict of Interest will remain “on the record” for a minimum of 3 complete reporting years after the Conflict of Interest ceases to exist (eg: if the individual concerned, or any connected persons, ceases to be involved with the charity);
- b. The name of the individual involved and, in the case of a Conflict of Interest involving one or more connected persons, the names of those connected persons and their relationships;
- c. The position/role/responsibilities within the charity of the individual involved;
- d. The type of Conflict of Interest (eg: personal benefits, family involvement, business involvement, other);
- e. Details of the Conflict of Interest, including its potential impact on the Charity;
- f. Mitigation of the Conflict of Interest – ie: the steps taken by the Trustees to ensure that the Conflict of Interest does not adversely influence the charitable activities of the Charity.

This register of interests shall also be used to record all gifts of a value over £20 received by the trustees, staff, associates and volunteers.

The register will be accessible to all the Trustees of the Sidney Cooper Arts Trust.

Although the Charity is not governed by the Freedom of Information Act, the register will also be accessible to the Members of the Charity under the same principles as apply to requests under the Freedom of Information Act, namely:

- the Trustees reserve the right not to disclose details of declared Conflicts of Interest where such disclosure would compromise the right to privacy of the individual(s) concerned;
- the Trustees reserve the right not to disclose details of declared Conflicts of Interest which involve commercially sensitive information;
- requests from Members must be for specific information in pursuit of a legitimate concern and not casual enquiries just to see what the register contains.

8. Breaches

Failure to declare or manage a conflict may be considered misconduct and could lead to removal as a trustee, in line with Charity Commission guidance.

9. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by trustees and updated in line with best practice.