

## Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance for the Register of Interest process. The Register of Interest process is part of the [Code of Conduct](#) which applies to staff and is an important tool to maintain confidence in the impartiality of public services. The responsibility for reviewing Registers of Interest is with Directors. If a Director wishes to make a delegation, it should be recorded in their sub-delegation scheme.

## Background

Register of Interest forms are sent annually, but only to staff whose posts are deemed to be “high risk”. Posts are classified as “high risk” based upon their duties and responsibilities in terms of advising people, taking decisions, purchasing and grade (all JNC posts). Guidance for identifying “high risk” posts can be found on the intranet under [Register of Interests](#). General reminders are also sent to prompt all employees to register potential conflicts of interest, even if they are not in posts deemed to be “high risk”.

The responsibility for data collection of Register of Interest forms is with the Business Support Centre (BSC) who send out annual declaration forms for staff in “high risk” posts to complete. Shortly after the BSC send these forms they will send each of the Directors and Assistant Chief Executives (ACE):

- Lists of “high risk” post holders who have made a return, made a nil return or not responded at all. Where a post holder has declared interests, details of those interests will be included.
- Lists of any other employees who have made a return, including the details of their returns.

The information will be broken down by service area in case the Director/ACE wishes to delegate the actual checks.

## Checking declarations

When a Director/ACE receives the list of declarations they should:

- Note the non-returns and take appropriate action to ensure that employees in “high risk” post do complete and return a register of interests declaration.
- Ensure that nil-returns are credible. If they are not credible then an appropriate manager could meet the employee, clarify the rules and invite them to make a new declaration.
- Ensure that appropriate line manager
  - is aware of any interests that have been declared
  - assesses whether the declared interest may create a potential perception of a conflict of interests
  - if there is a potential conflict then take steps to address this
  - in all cases maintain an awareness of the interest and address any potential conflict that may arise, for example if the employee’s duties or outside interest change
  - ensure – if the employee’s management changes – that the new manager is aware of the declared interest

Directors/ACE/managers are strongly advised to keep a written note of any action they take in regard to an individual’s declaration of interests. In most cases, where there has been a discussion with the employee, this could be kept with other support/supervision notes.

Any register of interest forms received by the BSC throughout the rest of the year are logged and sent on to Directors/ACE within one working day of receipt. On receipt of any further returns, Directors should review them as above.

**Reminders and non-returns**

When employees in “high risk” posts do not send a form to the BSC they are sent a reminder. Two weeks after reminders are sent out, the BSC send an updated list of declarations to Directors/ACE, including information on all “high risk” posts but with any updates highlighted.

Directors should review new declarations as before. The BSC do not send out further reminders, so Directors may need to use line management channels to pursue non-returns with individual members of staff.

**Delegating the checking of declarations**

If the Director/ACE does delegate the checks, they should take care to ensure that details of individuals' register returns are not shared more widely than is necessary to respond to those declarations, for example a head of service would only need details of declarations for their own service.

Directors/ACE/managers should not – unless the employee invites them to do so – share information about declared interests any more widely than is required to ensure adequate monitoring of potential conflicts and/or steps taken to address potential conflicts.

**Additional information**

The BSC are not responsible for checking the nature of any declarations that have been made but they are responsible for sending them to the appropriate Director in a timely manner.

The [employee code of conduct](#) contains more information on the Register of Interest. HR Business Partners can assist with any further queries.