

NFU Policy

Officeholder Policy and Procedure for Managing Conflicts of Interest

Written by:
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Valid from:

April 2023

To be reviewed by:

April 2024

The voice of British farming

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Background

As an NFU board member, you are under a duty to act in the NFU's best interests when making decisions.

If there is a decision to be made where you have a personal or other interest, this is a conflict of interest and you will not be able to comply with your duty unless you follow certain steps.

Examples of where a conflict arises are:

- You could benefit financially or otherwise from your position with the NFU either directly or indirectly through someone you are connected to.
- Your duty to the NFU competes with a duty or loyalty you have to another organisation or person.
- Being a farmer member does not automatically create a conflict, nor does being a councillor of your local council, however being a member of the CLA may do, for example.

Conflicts of interest are very common and are not automatically a problem so long as they are handled appropriately.

Failing to manage conflicts of interest appropriately can result in making decisions which subsequently have to be revoked, may damage the NFU's reputation and your personal reputation.

Policy and Procedure

For this policy and procedure to work board members must:

- Acknowledge any potential conflict or interest they may have;
- Be open with each other on any conflicts of interest they may have;
- Adopt practical solutions; and
- Plan ahead and agree on how they will manage any conflicts of interest which arise.

The following procedure should be adopted by each board:

1. Maintaining a register of conflicts of interest.
2. Annually reviewing this policy for managing conflicts of interest by inclusion in the board agenda once a year.
3. Maintaining a register of conflicts of interest which is reviewed regularly by the board. Board members are required to advise the board secretary of any changes to the register before the meeting or when the register is reviewed at the meeting.
4. Any board member who feels that they, another board member or advisor has a conflict of interest on a particular topic must advise the board Secretary or Chair prior to the meeting or state this clearly at the beginning of the meeting. The Chair should then decide whether the conflicted individual needs to leave the meeting during the discussion on the conflicted matter or, if a board member is to withdraw from voting on the conflicted matter. If the conflict is identified at a meeting the Chair will consult with the other board members prior to making a decision. In this way the conflict of interest and the action taken can be recorded in the minutes. If the conflict relates to the Chair, the Chair should discuss the conflict with the board secretary.