

Council member roles

Conflicts of interest: guidance for applicants

- 1 The NMC is an independent statutory body and a charity. Our role is to regulate the nursing and midwifery professions.
- 2 As a Council member, you will need to demonstrate high ethical standards and integrity, conducting yourself at all times in a way which promotes trust and confidence in the NMC and professional regulation.
- 3 As part of your application you are asked to declare any actual or potential conflict of interest or loyalty that could be perceived as relevant to the NMC. This is an important part of your application for the NMC; for the Professional Standards Authority who scrutinise the selection process we run to make sure it is robust; and for the Privy Council who need to be assured on this before making any appointment to the Council.
- 4 We know it is not always easy to identify actual or potential conflicts. This guidance note has been developed to help you and includes examples.
- 5 You could have a conflict of interest if any of your commitments, obligations or loyalties to other organisations or people could be seen to prevent you from participating in Council discussions impartially and making a decision only in the best interests of the NMC. Any conflict which might be relevant to the work of the NMC should be declared.
- 6 It is important to note that if you declare a conflict of interest or a potential conflict, this does not necessarily mean that you will not be considered for appointment. There are some conflicts that mean you could not be a Council member and the Selection Panel would not be able to progress your application. If we think this is the case, we will discuss this with you to ensure that we fully understand the situation before reaching any view.
- 7 To help you, we have given examples of some different types of conflicts in **boxes A and B below**.

Council Code of Conduct

- 8 A Council member is expected to demonstrate integrity and high ethical standards, as set out in [the Council Code of Conduct](#) including the seven principles of public life. The Code states that you would have a responsibility to:
 - 8.1 avoid being influenced by, or placing yourself under an obligation to, any individual or organisation which might affect, or be perceived to affect, your ability to act impartially and objectively as a member of the Council;
 - 8.2 declare any professional or personal interests which may conflict with, or be perceived to conflict with, your role as a member of the Council. This may include declaring the interests of family members or close associates.

Identifying a conflict of interest

- 9 It is important that you consider your own particular circumstances when applying to be an NMC Council member and identify any actual conflicts or any potential for conflicts to arise.
- 10 There can be situations where the appearance of a conflict of interest is present even when no actual conflict exists. When considering a potential conflict of interest, it is important to consider how it might be perceived by others, and whether your interests could lead to a perception of bias, even if none exists.
- 11 Conflicts of interest may arise in a number of different circumstances, including but not limited to:
 - 11.1 Professional roles or interests.
 - 11.2 Direct or indirect financial interests.
 - 11.3 Non-financial or personal interests.
 - 11.4 Conflicts of loyalty due to your role or connection with another organisation or person, for example your employer, another body of which you are a member or Trustee or if one of your family members has a role or interest that may influence or be seen to influence your decision-making as an NMC Council member.
- 12 It is essential that all our stakeholders have confidence in the independence and impartiality of both the Council as a whole and individual Council members. Even the perception of a conflict of interest in relation to a Council member could be damaging to public confidence in the Council. It is therefore essential that these potential conflicts are declared and explored, in the same way as any actual conflict.

Declaring a conflict of interest

- 13 If you are unsure if your circumstances constitute a possible conflict, **please raise this before you complete the Information form with Rhiannon Smith, at rsmith@hunter-healthcare.com or on 07860 773860.** Rhiannon will seek advice from the Secretary to the Council at the NMC, if necessary.
- 14 Any actual or perceived conflicts of interest either identified by you or by the NMC may be explored with you at any stage, including by the Selection Panel at any final interview.
- 15 Each case is considered individually. If you are shortlisted for interview, the Selection Panel will explore with you how far the conflict might affect your ability to contribute effectively and impartially on the Council and how this might be handled, if you were to be appointed. However, if, following the discussion with you, the Panel believes that the conflict is too great and would call into question the probity of the Council or the appointment, they can ask you to withdraw your application.

- 16 If in doubt please tell us about anything that you feel might present a conflict, or potential conflict, of interest, providing as much information as possible, so we can discuss this with you. Being open is key.

Box A: Examples of conflicts which are likely to preclude you also being on the Council at the same time as holding this role

If you are due to move from this position before the date of appointment as a member of Council (likely to be in late 2026), then this may fall into the potentially manageable list in Box B below.

Please note that this list is not exhaustive.

- You currently or are soon to work directly for the Department of Health and Social Care, Welsh, Northern Ireland or Scottish Government; any of the four Chief Nursing Officers in any country, or for bodies whose remit is closely connected with that of the NMC such as NHS England workforce training and education, NHS Education Scotland, Health Education and Improvement Wales, or the Regulatory and Quality Improvement Authority, Northern Ireland. This could be full time, part-time or in an advisory or consultancy capacity.
- You are currently or are soon to be on the governing body/Board of, or directly employed by or connected with, the Royal College of Nursing, the Royal College of Midwives, Unison, Unite or any another body or union which represents the nursing and midwifery professions. **Please note this does not include normal membership of a professional body or union.**
- You are currently or are soon to be employed by or connected with any organisation or body whose objectives are in opposition or conflict with the NMC's role and purpose.
- You are currently or are soon to be a member of, or employed by or connected with, any organisation or body whose principal purposes include influencing public opinion or policy. This includes membership of 'think tank' or lobbying organisations.
- You are currently an NMC fitness to practise or registration appeals panel chair or panel member. ***If you were appointed as an NMC Council member you would have to give this up.***
- You are currently a Quality Assurance (QA) visitor (an individual appointed by our QA delivery partner, the Quality Assurance Agency or by our previous delivery partner Mott MacDonald, on behalf of the NMC to assist with quality assurance of education activity). ***If you were appointed as an NMC Council member you would have to give this up.***

- You are currently a Lead Midwife for Education (LME) or you are the named official correspondent with the NMC based at, and employed by, an Approved Education Institution providing pre-registration midwifery and/or nursing education. ***If you were appointed as an NMC Council member you would have to give this up.***

Box B: Examples of conflicts of interest which may be manageable, but which should be declared and explored

Please note this list is not exhaustive.

- You recently worked, or are soon to step down from working, directly for the Department of Health and Social Care, Welsh, Northern Ireland or Scottish Government; any of the four Chief Nursing Officers in any country, or for bodies whose remit is closely connected with that of the NMC such as NHS England workforce training and education, NHS Education Scotland, Health Education and Improvement Wales, or the Regulatory and Quality Improvement Authority, Northern Ireland. This could have been full time, part-time or in an advisory or consultancy capacity.
- You recently or are soon to step down from being employed by or connected with any organisation or body whose objectives are in opposition or conflict with the NMC's role and purpose.
- You recently or are soon to step down from being a member of, or employed by or connected with, any organisation or body whose principal purposes include influencing public opinion or policy. This includes membership of 'think tank' or lobbying organisations.
- You have been an NMC fitness to practise or registration appeals panel chair or panel member in the last five years.
- You have recently been a Quality Assurance (QA) visitor (an individual appointed by our QA delivery partner, the Quality Assurance Agency or by our previous delivery partner Mott Macdonald, on behalf of the NMC to assist with quality assurance of education activity).
- You are recently, currently or soon to be employed by a university or education institution that provides programmes of nursing and/or midwifery education.
- You are recently, currently or soon to be employed by an organisation or body that employs registered nursing and midwifery professionals, for example an NHS trust, an NHS health board, or a private hospital.

- You recently, currently or are soon to hold office, for example as a Non-Executive board member, in any health care related organisation in the public, private or third sector. This includes NHS trusts, NHS health boards, regulatory bodies, professional associations, learned societies, royal colleges and trade unions and charities, trusts and voluntary organisations.
- You have been, or are, involved in any business dealing or other financial transactions, including any contract to supply goods or services to the NMC, or to any person or organisation connected to the activities of the NMC.
- You have a relationship or close personal ties, past or present, to any existing NMC Council member, Associate, member of the Selection Panel or to members of the NMC's Executive team.
- **Any other interest which may be relevant and not covered by the above.** This could include any association through close family members or associates which might lead a fair-minded observer, having considered the facts, to conclude that such an interest might influence an individual's judgement in matters relevant to NMC activity.

August 2026
Nursing and Midwifery Council