



the  
**Breastfeeding**  
network

# Conflict of Interest Policy

<b>Date of issue:</b>	01.03.2020	<b>Next review date:</b>	28.02.2022
<b>Version:</b>	V01	<b>Last review date:</b>	N/A
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<b>Approval Route: Board</b>			
<b>Approved By:</b>	<b>Date Approved:</b>		
<b>Links or overlaps with other strategies/policies:</b>			
Staff Handbook Volunteer Handbook Code of Conduct BfN Funding Policy			

***‘Conflicts of Interest happen when individuals find their judgement is tested because of competing interests whether this involves money, or other personal interests or because of divided loyalties’***

***(Richter 2005)***

**As an organisation The Breastfeeding Network does not accept funding (including sponsorship and other gifts) from sources which have a commercial interest in infant feeding. For example, we will not accept sponsorship from manufacturers or distributors of breast milk substitutes, feeding bottles, teats or dummies. This helps us to avoid conflicts of interest.**

## **Volunteers and Staff**

If you receive payments directly from families for services relating to pregnancy or early years you must keep this work separate from your work both voluntary and paid within the Breastfeeding Network. These roles may include baby massage instructor, antenatal birth preparation, sling consultant, pilates instructor, yoga teacher, doula or private breastfeeding support or work with another health or breastfeeding organisation.

This is because it can be very difficult for new mothers, who may be feeling tired and vulnerable, to distinguish between different roles when combined by one person. It is a particular concern when one of these roles requires payment directly from a family as boundaries can become blurred resulting in conflicts of interest (COIs). You must not use your registration or employment with BfN to make money from parents.

**To help mitigate this risk you must notify your Supervisor (voluntary role) or HR (paid employment) of all your relevant additional volunteering or paid roles.**

### **Keep your roles separate by:**

- Wearing your BfN badge and if available, your BfN clothing at all times when representing BfN to support mothers face to face.
- NOT wearing your BfN badge and/or clothing when in your other roles(s). It is important that your client is clear that the service they are receiving is not being offered by BfN.
- Keep your Supervisor (voluntary role) or HR (paid employment) informed of any changes to your roles, particularly those relating to doula or private breastfeeding support. Keeping clear boundaries is part of BfN supervision. Supervision, if required, should also be sought for these additional roles from within the relevant organisations.

### **You must keep your paid role separate from your BfN role on any advertising or social media:**

- Your BfN Registration must not be used in the promotion of any commercial products or services.
- BfN qualifications must not be used in advertising material or any websites relating to your paid role.
- Avoid advertising or talking about your other goods or services in the BfN Newsletter, or other BfN related materials, or when working in your BfN role or at any BfN event or breastfeeding drop-in. This includes advertising or seeking business from mothers via BfN or social media sites (such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter etc.) where you are also known in your BfN role. You can talk about your other roles to BfN colleagues.
- Do not use your business e-mail address or signature line in an e-mail or voicemail on a phone used for BfN activities. If you do not have a BfN e-mail address you may use your personal or a

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non-commercial e-mail address. If you have a BfN e-mail address this should be used in all BfN related correspondence.

Even if you can clearly separate your different roles in your own mind, it is important to avoid the possibility of parents or colleagues confusing which role you might be acting in. This is as much about mothers' perceptions not your own ability to separate roles.

### **Financial Interest**

If you, your partner or close family member have a financial interest in any manufacturer or distributor of breast milk substitutes, feeding bottles, teats or dummies you must declare this to your line manager or supervisor who may refer it to the Board who will then take a view on it and make a decision whether it constitutes a conflict of interest.

***See Appendix 1 below for Commonly asked Questions***

### **Paid Staff**

It is common for staff to have more than one paid role in BfN and this can be within the same project/team or over a number of projects/teams and can involve working for more than one line manager.

As detailed above, paid roles should be kept separate and it should be clear at all times which role you are working in dependent on job title and as detailed in your job description. You will have separate timesheets/annual leave forms/hours monitoring forms for each post.

- If you have more than one employed post within BfN make sure that all line managers are aware of your commitments within each post.
- If you are applying for an additional post, as a courtesy, you should let your manager know in order to avoid any conflicts.
- If you intend to apply for a post and are also the budget holder/recruiting manager, then you should pass the recruitment to another manager at an early stage to ensure a fair and consistent process

If you would like to discuss this or would like further clarification please contact

[CEO@breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk](mailto:CEO@breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk)

### **Please note:**

- Information discussed with your line manager, supervisor or at the Board relating to conflicts of interest and any decisions thereof will be recorded and filed confidentially at the central BfN office.
- Any serious breach of this policy may result in the termination of employment or volunteering

## Appendix 1 Common Questions about avoiding Conflict of Interest

### 1. Potential Conflicts involving selling products

**a) I work in a supermarket/shop/chemist and people buy baby items there. Does this mean I can't volunteer or work for BfN?**

It is not an issue to volunteer or work for BfN as you are neither promoting the item nor profiting from other people's choices. For further guidance about situations involving promotions or active marketing of products covered by the WHO code contact BfN via [CEO@breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk](mailto:CEO@breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk)

**b) I or my partner/close family member work for or have a financial interest or personal investment in a company which makes infant formula or baby feeding equipment**

The decision needs to be made by BfN directors as this depends on your level of responsibility within the company.

**c) I run my own business/act as a sole trader selling baby feeding products or breastfeeding products**

The decision needs to be made by BfN directors, BfN volunteers must avoid gaining financially from products which might be suggested as a way of overcoming a breastfeeding difficulty, or which might affect how a mother feeds her baby. This includes slings, pumps, nursing bras, milk boosting foods, breastfeeding reminder bracelets etc.

### 2. Potential conflicts when providing services

**d) I plan to work with another organisation as a BfN volunteer or I already work for the NHS/Children's Centre/Early Years/Local Authority. Services are free of charge to parents.**

Yes, you can volunteer or work in paid employment for BfN. BfN works with other organisations such as Homestart to provide breastfeeding support. You will be a BfN volunteer working within our Code of Conduct as well as that set by Homestart or other organisations.

**e) I receive payments directly from families for services related to breastfeeding**

This includes work in any role where you are paid directly by a family, or indirectly via another organisation which charges parents, for work related to breastfeeding, e.g. private lactation consultant, doula, private midwives, antenatal teacher or postnatal discussion leaders. This should be discussed with your tutor/supervisor before registering or re-registering as a BfN volunteer or staff member. There is more potential for confusion between these competing roles however, we have now piloted these dual roles and found that it is possible to keep the roles separate.

**f) I intend to work for another breastfeeding organisation**

This includes any role that you may combine working as a BfN registered volunteer/ staff member and work as a breastfeeding supporter within another organisation. This includes but is not limited to: ABM counsellor, LLL Leader, NCT breastfeeding counsellor or Families and Babies peer supporter. This should be discussed with your tutor/supervisor before registering or re-registering as a BfN volunteer or staff member to consider if it is possible to find ways to keep the two roles separate and whether there are implications of working within two different Codes of Conduct.