

## **Code of Conduct: questions about avoiding conflicts of interest March 2014**

BfN Registered Volunteers must not use their BfN registration to make money from the families who use our services. This is particularly true for any feeding choices they might make.

Conflicts of interest happen when individuals find their judgment is weakened because of competing interests, whether this involves money, or other personal interests or because of divided loyalties (Richter 2005).

This means that mothers and anyone you come into contact with needs to be entirely clear about which role you are acting in at any time. And parents should also feel confident that you will not gain from any feeding choices they may make.

If you are considering training with BfN please take some time to discuss any queries you might have about a conflict of interest. This could avoid the disappointment of finding you are ineligible to complete the course.

If you would like to discuss this further clarification please contact the Operations administrator at [admin@breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk](mailto:admin@breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk).

**The following questions will help you decide whether you can sign the Code of Conduct and register as a BfN volunteer.**

### **A) Potential conflicts involving selling products**

#### **1. I work in a supermarket/ shop/ chemist, and people buy baby items.**

##### **Does this mean I cannot volunteer with BfN?**

You can volunteer, this is not a problem as you are neither promoting the items nor profiting from peoples choices.

Further guidance about situations involving promotions or active marketing of products covered by the WHO code is covered in the BfN Guidance document.

#### **2. I work for a company which makes infant formula**

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

#### **3. I run my own business / act as a sole trader selling baby feeding products or breastfeeding products**

To find your nearest Breastfeeding Supporter call the **Supporterline 0300 100 0210**

*Calls provided by BT will be charged at 5 pence per minute. A call set-up fee of 3 pence per call applies to calls from BT residential lines. Mobile and other providers' charges may vary.*

This 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, breastfeeding reminder bracelets etc.

For business which are solely internet based, the decision will include assessment of whether you are identifiable on the website or include reference to your BfN qualification.

## **B) Potential conflicts when providing services**

### **Roles related to breastfeeding**

It can be very hard for new mothers, who may be feeling tired & vulnerable, to distinguish between different roles when combined by one person. It is a particular concern when one of these roles requires payment from the family, and conflicts of interest can arise.

#### **4. 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. BfN works with other organisations, such as Homestart, to provide breastfeeding support. You will be a BfN volunteer and working within our Code of Conduct as well as that set by Homestart, Barnardos or Birth Companions within a prison.

You can act in a similar role in another organisation as long as the breastfeeding support is provided free to families e.g. as parent engagement worker/ Children's centre worker. If you work for the NHS/ local authority within another peer support scheme, let your tutor know and she will contact the Directors to help work through the two different Codes of Conduct. This is to ensure your training and skills are acknowledged.

The points discussed in [7] may help you consider ways you can keep your work role separate from volunteering.

#### **5. I receive payments directly from families for services related to breastfeeding.**

It is not possible to be a BfN Registered Volunteer. The potential for confusion between these competing roles is too great. 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.

#### **6. I intend to work for another breastfeeding organisation.**

It is not possible to be a BfN Registered Volunteer 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 is because different ways of working within two different Codes of Conduct might prove confusing to you and the mothers you support.

## **Roles NOT related to breastfeeding**

### **7. I receive payments from families for services not related to breastfeeding?**

If you work in one or more role where you receive direct payments from parents or parents-to-be for services not related breastfeeding, you must keep this work separate from your work within BfN, e.g. a baby massage instructor, pilates instructor, yoga teacher or piano teacher.

#### **You should help to clarify your role by:**

- Wearing your BfN badge at all times when supporting mothers face-to-face when representing BfN.
- NOT wearing your BfN badge or BfN clothing when in your other role. It is important that your client is clear that the service they are receiving is not being offered by BfN.

#### **When advertising your paid role you should keep the two roles separate:**

- Your BfN Registration should not be used in the promotion of any commercial products or services.
- BfN qualifications should not be used in your advertising material or on any websites relating to your paid role.
- Avoid advertising or talking about your other goods or services in any BfN newsletter, or other BfN related materials, or when working in your BfN role or at any BfN event or Breastfeeding Centre/ Drop-In. This includes advertising to mothers via BfN facebook pages. You can talk about your other roles to BfN colleagues.
- Avoid using your business email address or signature line in an email or voicemail on a phone used for BfN activities. You may use your personal email or a separate non-commercial email.

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 about the mothers' perceptions not your own ability to separate roles.