

# Heartwood Conflict of interest Policy



## **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance and support to Heartwood Counselling and Psychotherapy Training (hereafter "Heartwood") employees, tutors, assessors and any other relevant individuals handling possible conflicts of interest that may arise, as a result of their roles within Heartwood. This policy applies to all employees, tutors, assessors or other individuals whenever they interact or potentially interact with Heartwood, in order to maintain the integrity of Heartwood, the qualifications it delivers and individuals it works with.

The most important feature of the policy, is the instruction that individuals should always disclose an activity if there is any doubt about whether it represents a conflict of interest. The aim of the policy is to protect Heartwood, any associated professional or awarding bodies and the individuals concerned from any appearance of impropriety.

## **Definition**

Conflict of interest can be defined as a situation/conflict between the official responsibilities of an individual (tutor, assessor, examiner, internal verifier) or organisation/centre/ relevant parties which could compromise or appear to compromise their decisions.

BACP Ethical Framework refers to conflicts of interest as 'Any professional or personal interests that conflict with putting a client's interests first will be carefully considered in consultation with a supervisor, an independent experienced colleague or, when appropriate, discussed with the client affected before services are offered.'

Conflicts of interest can arise in a variety of circumstances and are not exhaustive, for example:

A conflict of interest may generally be defined as a conflict between the official responsibilities of a tutor, assessor, and internal verifier and any other interests the particular individual may have, such as a relationship with the student outside of the training; as such could compromise or appear to compromise their decisions

## **Scope**

This policy applies to employees, tutors, assessors and any other individuals who interact or potentially interact with the work of Heartwood. This includes individuals involved with all aspects of our training or any other areas where conflict of interest may arise.

The individuals falling within the scope of this policy include full-time and part-time staff and any associate staff including external examiners

The content of the policy cannot cover every potential conflict and is not exhaustive, and must be interpreted in the light of the particular circumstances of each case. Staff have a responsibility to use their judgement and if in doubt, discuss their concerns and issues with the Centre Director.

## **Objectives**

- to ensure that any possibility of conflict of interest is disclosed immediately.
- to identify and minimise the risk of conflict of interest arising.
- to respond to any incident promptly and objectively;
- to standardise and record any incident to ensure openness and fairness;
- to protect the integrity of Heartwood, any associated professional or awarding body and the individuals concerned.

## **Declaration of a conflict**

If any person should declare a conflict of interest it must be done so in writing to the Centre Director (failure to declare interest may be subject to disciplinary action).

Any information provided when declaring an interest will be treated in accordance with data protection principles. Data will be processed only to ensure that relevant persons act in the best interest of Heartwood, the information will not be used for any other purpose.

## **Management of a conflict**

Once a conflict of interest has been declared/identified, an internal review of any activities which may be affected by the conflict will take place. Wherever possible, the relevant person will be withdrawn from any activities which may be affected by the conflict.

To ensure transparency, any activities affected by the conflict, will require additional consideration in conjunction with the appropriate ethical frameworks and the requirements of any awarding bodies, these will be documented by the Centre Director.