

Variety Ireland Conflict of Interest & Loyalty Policy

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to assist charity directors of Variety Ireland to effectively identify, record and manage any conflicts of interest in order to protect the integrity of Variety Ireland and to ensure that the charity trustees act in the best interest of their charity.

2. Objective

The Variety Ireland board (also referred to as the 'board of charity directors' and 'charity trustees' in this policy) aims to ensure that the charity directors are aware of their obligations to disclose any conflicts of interest that they may have, and to comply with this policy to ensure they effectively manage those conflicts of interest as representatives of Variety Ireland.

3. Scope

This policy applies to board members, senior paid staff members, paid consultants, unpaid volunteers and anyone who provides a body of work to Variety Ireland.

4. Definition of conflicts of interests

A conflict of interest is any situation in which a charity director's personal interests or loyalties could, or could be seen to, prevent the charity trustee from making a decision in the best interests of the charity. This personal interest may be direct or indirect, and can include interests of a person connected to the charity trustee. These situations present the risk that a person will make a decision based on, or affected by, these influences, rather than in the best interests of the charity and therefore must be managed accordingly.

5. Policy

This policy has been developed because conflicts of interest commonly arise, and do not need to present a problem to the charity if they are openly and effectively managed. It is the policy of Variety Ireland as well as a responsibility of its charity trustees, that ethical, legal, financial or other conflicts of interest be avoided and that any such conflicts (where they do arise) do not conflict with their obligations to Variety Ireland.

Variety Ireland will manage conflicts of interest by requiring charity trustees to:

- avoid conflicts of interest where possible
- identify and record any conflicts of interest
- carefully manage any conflicts of interest, and
- follow this policy and respond to any breaches.

5.1 Responsibility of the board of charity directors

The board is responsible for:

- establishing a system for identifying, disclosing and managing conflicts of interest across the charity;
- Prior to any meeting where any trustee is in attendance, trustees will be asked to declare any conflict of Interest that may prohibit them remaining in the meeting. Once a conflict of interest has been declared, said trustee must excuse themselves from the meeting, with the declaration and subsequent retirement from meeting recorded in the minutes.
- monitoring compliance with this policy; and
- reviewing this policy on an annual basis to ensure that the policy is operating effectively;
- The completion annually of the conflict of interest and loyalty declaration form and separate code of conduct form.

The charity directors should ensure they are aware of their legal obligations in the management and control of their charity and should refer to the Charities Regulator's 'Guidance for Charity Trustees' for further information on this: www.charitiesregulator.ie

5.2 Identification and disclosure of conflicts of interest

Once an actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest is identified, it must be entered into Variety Ireland's register of interests, as well as being raised with the board of charity directors. The register of interests must be maintained by the Company Secretary, who must record all information related to a conflict of interest (including the nature and extent of the conflict of interest and any steps taken to address it).

5.3 Confidentiality of disclosures

In accordance with GDPR, any personal data pertaining to a conflict of interest will remain confidential and only accessible to relevant parties: Chairperson, Company Secretary, board of directors and/or where Variety Ireland is required to disclose details of a conflict of interest for legal reasons.

6. Action required for management of conflicts of interest

6.1 Conflicts of interest of members of the board of charity directors

Once the conflict of interest has been appropriately disclosed, the board of charity directors (excluding the disclosing charity director and any other conflicted person) must decide whether or not a conflicted charity director should:

- vote on the matter (this is a minimum requirement),
- participate in any debate, or
- be present in the room during the debate and the voting.

In exceptional circumstances, such as where a conflict is very significant or likely to prevent a charity director from regularly participating in discussions, it may be worth the board of charity directors considering whether it is appropriate for the person with the relevant conflict to resign from the board of charity directors.

6.2 What should be considered when deciding what action to take

- In deciding what approach to take, the board of charity directors will consider whether the conflict needs to be avoided or simply documented
- whether the conflict will realistically impair the disclosing person's capacity to impartially participate in decision-making
- alternative options to avoid the conflict
- the charity's objects and resources, and
- the possibility of creating an appearance of improper conduct that might impair confidence in or the reputation of Variety Ireland.

The approval of any action requires the agreement of at least a majority of the board of charity directors (excluding any conflicted charity director) who are present and voting (if applicable) at the meeting. All details regarding the conflict of interest, including the action arising, will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

7. Compliance with this policy

If the board of charity directors has a reason to believe that a person subject to this policy has failed to comply with it, it will investigate the circumstances.

If it is found that this person has failed to disclose a conflict of interest, the board of charity directors may take action against the person. This may include seeking the person's resignation from the charity.

If a person suspects that a charity director has failed to disclose a conflict of interest, they must raise their concerns privately with the Chairperson. Should the charity director in question be the Chairperson, any concerns must be raised with the Company Secretary.

For questions about this policy or any concerns to be raised, please contact:

Chairperson: Derek O'Neill doneill@varietyireland.org
Company Secretary: Sharon Wright sharon@varietyireland.org