**Declaring and managing interests for voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations.**

**Frequently asked questions**

The following questions reflect the issues that have been raised during implementation of NICE’s policy on declaring and managing interests for advisory committees in respect of voluntary and community sector organisations (VCS) It is not meant to be exhaustive, and the [policy for NICE advisory committees](https://www.nice.org.uk/about/who-we-are/policies-and-procedures) itself should be checked in the case of any query.

There is a separate [FAQ for committee members](https://www.nice.org.uk/Media/Default/Get-involved/Join-a-committee/Recruitment-pack/faqs-declaration-of-interests.pdf) (including lay members).

In this document, the word “technology” may refer to a medicine, medical technology, diagnostics technology, or interventional procedure.

The term “company” may refer to:

* The company marketing a medicine or medical technology
* The manufacturer of a diagnostics technology
* The manufacturer of a device used for an interventional procedure (where relevant).

**Voluntary and community sector organisations’ (often known as patient and carer organisations) declarations of interest.**

1. **Do VCS organisations need to declare interests for every evaluation (for example, technology appraisal, highly specialised technology or medical technology) they participate in?**

Yes. Each evaluation has a specific stakeholder list, which includes the company for the technology being evaluated and any relevant comparator companies. Because of this, VCS organisations may have different interests that need to be declared for different evaluations. When they complete the participation form for an evaluation, they will be asked what their interests are for that evaluation.

1. **When does a VCS organisation need to declare interests?**

There are several points during the evaluation process that VCS organisations need to declare interests, which are:

* When nominating individuals to act as patient or clinical experts for an evaluation.
* When completing a submission for an evaluation.

VCS organisations do not need to declare interests when making an appeal against the final draft guidance for an evaluation.

1. **What if a VCS organisation receives funding from the company whose technology (for example, medicine or medical technology) is being evaluated?**

VCS organisations generally can still participate in an evaluation if they have received funding from the company, including providing written submissions and nominating patient and clinical experts for the evaluation.

VCS organisations should declare any funding received in the previous 12 months at the appropriate stages (see question 2). VCS organisations should include the following information regarding the funding:

* Amount of funding
* Date funding received
* Whether it is ongoing
* Purpose of funding
* The technology to which the funding relates.
1. **What if a VCS organisation has received funding from other companies?**

VCS organisations generally can still participate in an evaluation if they have received funding from other companies, including providing written submissions and nominating patient and clinical experts for the evaluation.

VCS organisations need to declare any funding received in the previous 12 months from companies who are **comparators** for the technology being evaluated. The list of comparator companies can be found on the NICE webpage for the evaluation.

VCS organisations should declare this at the appropriate stages (see question 2). VCS organisations should include the following information regarding the funding:

* Name of comparator company
* Amount of funding received
* Date funding received
* Whether it is ongoing
* Purpose of funding.
* Technology to which the funding relates.

If VCS organisations are unsure what needs to be declared or cannot find the stakeholder list for the evaluation, they should contact the evaluation project team or the Public Involvement Adviser for the evaluation. This information can be found on the email with the invitation to participate in the evaluation.

1. **What if the VCS organisation’s interests change during their participation in an evaluation?**

VCS organisations should inform the evaluation project team using the team email address used in correspondence for the evaluation (for example, TATeam1@nice.org.uk or IP@nice.org.uk). VCS organisations may then be asked to update the declarations section of any form or submission provided for the evaluation. Alternatively, the project team may update this on behalf of the VCS organisation and then send it back to the organisation to check.

1. **How does a VCS organisation declare their interest(s)?**

For each of the stages listed in the response to question 2, there are templates which VCS organisations will be sent at the appropriate time. In each template there is a specific section relating to declarations of interest for VCS organisations to complete.

1. **What if an evaluation is delayed and/or takes longer than 12 months?**

If an evaluation is delayed, all stakeholders (including VCS organisations) will be informed by the evaluation project team of the delay and once new timelines are confirmed. If a VCS organisation’s declarations have changed during that time, then the VCS organisation should inform the evaluation project team following the procedure outlined in response to question 5.

*If you have a question that is not included in this FAQ, please refer to the policy and let us know (pip@nice.org.uk) so that we can consider it for inclusion in future updates to this FAQ.*