**Conflict of Interest Guardian**

1. The approach of Southwark Clinical Commissioning Committee (SCCC) to managing Conflicts of Interest (CoI) of GP commissioners is set out in Appendix C of SCCC's terms of reference. This includes the role of a Non Executive Director (NED) of the PCT Board on a separate evaluation panel.

2. In addition SCCC has agreed that one of the PCT NEDs should act as a CoI "guardian". The role of the CoI guardian is to advise the SCCC on CoI issues and, where necessary, adjudicate.

3. There is a considerable amount of guidance from the Department of Health (DH) on handling CoI issues and also a guidance document from the SE London cluster. These provide clear statements of the principles of what constitutes CoI and how it should be dealt with. However sometimes the interpretation of these principles and their application to the details of a specific case is not completely clear-cut (the "devil in the detail") and there is therefore room for differing personal judgements. The purpose of the CoI guardian is to provide independent and authoritative judgement in such cases.

4. The scope of the CoI guardian's work is twofold:

    a. to judge whether there is a risk of a material CoI arising

    b. to advise how this risk should be eliminated

5. The CoI guardian operates in two modes:

    a. Reactively, when the SCCC as a whole or individual GP members seek his advice on a specific issue

    b. Proactively, when he himself identifies a potential CoI risk and acts on it. The CoI guardian is a voting member of the SCCC (as well as the PCT Board) and is familiar with the work of the SCCC and the roles of the GP leads. He is therefore in an informed position to identify such risks when they arise.

6. In either mode the CoI guardian discusses the issue with the GPs involved and any other relevant party and then issues written advice or judgment for the SCCC board.

7. The members of the SCCC, including all GP members, have agreed that they will accept the advice or judgement of the CoI guardian in such cases.