

**PCRS-UK Guidance for PCRS-UK affiliated Groups working in partnership with pharmaceutical partners to organise local meetings**

**Introduction**

PCRS-UK provides advice on the setting up and running of local group meetings in its ‘resource pack’ for affilited groups (<http://www.pcrs-uk.org/resource-pack-help-you-get-started>)

This document provides guidance for local groups specifically on working with pharmaceutical companies to help fund and organise local meetings. Pharmaceutical companies are not only a source of potential funding but also have much relevant expertise that can be invaluable in helping you to run your local group. The guidance in this document is intended to help you work with pharmaceutical companies locally and to ensure that:

* The independence and credibility of your local group is protected
* You comply with best practice guidance and regulations as specified in the ABPI code of practice which the all pharmaceutical companies are expected to adhere to
* The reputation of PCRS-UK is protected

See <http://www.pcrs-uk.org/sites/pcrs-uk.org/files/files/PI_funding.pdf> for PCRS-UK statement on pharmaceutical funding.

**Identifying which companies to work with**

The PCRS-UK Corporate Supporters (AstraZeneca UK Ltd, Boehringer Ingelheim Ltd, Chiesi Ltd, GlaxoSmithKline, Napp Pharmaceuticals, Novartis UK, Orion Pharma (UK) Ltd and TEVA UK Limited) provide funding centrally to PCRS-UK which helps us to support our core services. These companies are generally receptive to supporting local nurse led groups and are therefore good first points of contact.

In order to reinforce the independence and credibility of your group, PCRS-UK strongly recommends that local groups work with a number of different pharmaceutical companies. In some localities the pharmaceutical industry may have an established industry group which is willing to pool resources to support local nurse led groups. In other areas, it may be more practical to work with just one (or perhaps two companies) on any given meeting and to rotate round which company you work with.

**Regulations affecting how a pharmaceutical company can work with local groups**

The ABPI code of practice for the pharmaceutical industry (<http://www.pmcpa.org.uk/media/Documents/PMCPA%20Code%20of%20Practice%202015.pdf>) covers how pharmaceutical companies are allowed to promote their products and interact with health professionals. Clause 19 deals specifically with meetings, hospitality and sponsorship. Key points are:

* Meetings must be held in appropriate venues conducive to the main purpose of the event.
* Any hospitality (eg refreshments / subsistence) must be strictly limited to the main purpose of the event and must be appropriate and not out of proportion with the occasion – the cost involved must not exceed the level that recipients would normally adopt when paying for themselves
* When meetings are sponsored by pharmaceutical companies, that fact must be disclosed in all papers (eg invitations, agenda’s, minutes etc) related to the meeting

Each company also has its own more detailed policies and procedures for supporting local meetings and when planning a meeting / approaching a company you should build in time for the representative to seek approval from within his /her company.

Pharmaceutical company representatives may also refer to guidance on ‘*joint working*’. *‘Joint working’* is a term used to describe situations where for the benefit of patients, the NHS and pharmaceutical companies pool skills, experience and /or resources for the joint development of patient centred projects and share a commitment to successful delivery.‘ Guidance on joint working can be found at <http://www.abpi.org.uk/our-work/news/2012/Pages/140512.aspx>. The principles of joint working, in particular the value of a two way relationship and shared responsibilities and the need for a written agreement (terms of reference) setting out who is responsible for what are helpful in any situation where you are working with pharmaceutical industry. The detailed guidance however less relevant and is aimed at NHS and pharmaceutical industry partners running more complex projects

Each local CCG/Trust may also have its own guidance on pharmaceutical sponsorship of meetings that you need to be aware of.

### It is also important to be aware of the Bribery Act which came into force on 1 July 2012 and the responsibility on all organisations for ensuring they appropriate policies and procedures in place, including training of employees and others undertaking work on its behalf. The key area relevant to local nurse led groups is the provision and receipt of gifts, hospitality and entertainment. The PCRS-UK Bribery Policy can be found on the website <http://www.pcrs-uk.org/company-papers>

**Key points to agree when working with pharmaceutical companies**

The PCRS-UK check list for running meetings (<http://www.pcrs-uk.org/resource-pack-help-you-get-started>) provides a reminder of the points you need to consider when setting up and running a meeting.

When working with pharmaceutical companies (or indeed any partner) it is important to agree and confirm in writing the objectives of the meeting, who is responsible for what element of the meeting and what needs to be done by when.

For any meeting organised by a PCRS-UK affiliated nurse group we strongly recommend

* The content of the meeting (agenda/ speakers) are the responsibility of the local group (not the pharmaceutical company / sponsors)
* You agree how many representatives from the company/ies are invited to attend the meeting – we suggest one per company.
* You agree whether any promotion by the companies is allowed at the meeting – we recommend that promotion in general is not appropriate. Exceptions however may be agreed e.g. an exhibition stand may be permitted in a separate room at larger meetings

In addition you need to remember:

* An acknowledgment of the involvement of any pharmaceutical company in the meeting (including any funding received) must made at the meeting and must be included on all materials related to the meeting
* Personal details (including contact details) of any member of the local group or attendee at meeting, under the data protection act, must not under any circumstances be provided to a pharmaceutical company (or any other third party) unless you have permission from that individual to use his/her details in that way

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