

Ethical Sponsorship Policy

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Introduction

The NHS Confederation believes that it is legitimate for the organisation to receive sponsorship income. This revenue allows the Confederation to provide a wide range of services to its members. Without such income many valued member benefits such as publications, meetings and events, would either not be viable or result in higher charges to members. This document details the NHS Confederation's policy position regarding commercial sponsorship activities.

Position Statement

The NHS Confederation is the independent membership body for the full range of organisations that make up the modern NHS.

We work with our members to ensure the best health service for patients by:

- influencing policy, implementation and the public debate.
- supporting leaders through networking, sharing information and learning.
- promoting excellence in employment.

Our work is determined by our members. Our aim is to reflect the different perspectives as well as the common views of the many organisations delivering the new NHS.

The Confederation aims to provide the widest possible opportunity for the involvement of its members, and to provide a high level of service. It also seeks to develop innovative ways of providing members with more benefits and aims to improve standards and cost-effectiveness in all areas. In this context, the Confederation offers sponsorship opportunities to health related organisations as part of its income generating activities. All income generating activities are conducted in direct pursuit of the Confederation's mission. Opportunities are offered for dialogue and debate without compromising the independence of the Confederation. The Confederation places importance on developing and maintaining co-operative relationships with commercial companies.

General conditions concerning sponsorship:

- There must be strong grounds for believing a sponsorship initiative will result in benefits to the Confederation and its members.
- There must be no attempt on behalf of a sponsor to influence Confederation policy in any way, either explicitly or implicitly.
- The Chief Executive must be satisfied that the Confederation's reputation will not be harmed as a result of accepting funds from a sponsor.

Policy statements

Four general principles form the basis of this policy:

Maintenance of independence

Partnership approach
Mutual benefit for all concerned
Integrity and openness

Maintenance of independence

The Confederation is very careful when working with commercial organisations and their agents that its independent status is not compromised in anyway: If there is a possibility that this may be placed in jeopardy the charity will withdraw from any such initiative. The Confederation will not embark upon or continue with any sponsorship, co-promotion or collaborate on a venture which might damage its reputation.

Partnership approach

Where possible, relationships between the Confederation and commercial companies should be based on a partnership approach. Both sides should aim for a scenario where the two work together on practical initiatives (whilst preserving the Confederation's independence and credibility). Such initiatives might include, for example, a workshop to debate a shared issue of concern/interest, resulting in better representation of our members whilst generating income to cover the costs of such an event and contribute to the on-going work of the Confederation.

Mutual benefit for all concerned

The Confederation recognises that successful partnerships depend on both parties gaining something. Each should make efforts to understand the internal culture of and external pressures on the other. The broad benefits which each party expects to gain should be openly set out during initial discussions.

Integrity and openness

The Confederation aims to be transparent in its relationships with sponsors and associated activities.

To enforce the above principles, the following internal procedures are in place:

1. All potential sponsors are checked for their financial and ethical standing prior to any formal agreement being reached.
2. Any organisation that is or perceived to be associated with tobacco, the manufacture of alcohol or any other initiatives which have a detrimental affect on health and welfare are not acceptable for sponsorship.
3. In the event of an incident arising resulting in media or generating political attention, the sponsor must inform the Confederation immediately. The Confederation also has a duty to keep the sponsor(s) informed of relevant information. The Confederation reserves the right to take appropriate action to ensure its reputation is not adversely affected in anyway as a result of such incidents.
4. Sponsorship is considered a business arrangement, therefore all aspects must be clear and explicit to all parties involved. All agreements are exchanged in writing and sponsors are required to endorse and abide by the Confederation's ethical sponsorship policy.

5. The NHS Confederation should be consulted whenever and wherever its name is used by sponsors, for both internal and external communications. Approval must be sought for any copy produced which refers to a Confederation initiative supported/sponsored by a commercial organisation.
6. At no time can the Confederation's logo be used without express written permission for every occasion it is used.
7. At no time can press releases be issued which refer to the NHS Confederation without the charity's prior approval.
8. NHS Confederation staff and those working or acting on its behalf, including trustees, are required to follow a code of conduct whereby they:
 - act impartially in all their work
 - refuse gifts, benefits, hospitality or sponsorship of any kind which might be seen to compromise their personal judgement or integrity, or seek to exert influence to obtain preferential consideration.
 - declare and register¹ gifts, benefits, hospitality or sponsorship of any kind (provided that they are worth at least £20), whether refused or accepted. Staff should use their professional judgement in deciding the relevance of such items. Items of trivial character, or inexpensive gifts such as calendars can reasonably be excluded.
 - declare financial or personal interest in any organisation with which they have to deal, and withdraw from those dealings if required.
 - not misuse their official position or information acquired in the course of their official duties, to further private interests or those of others
 - beware of the potential for bias generated through sponsorship, where this might impinge on professional judgement and impartiality
 - maintain confidentiality at all times