

Policy No: OPR/P3

Principles for Partnership with the Pharmaceutical Industry

Introduction:

The East Hants PCG had considered at some length the relationship that it wishes to have with the Pharmaceutical Industry. The emergent proposal was based on the Health Authority policy and provided the basis for an agreement which was felt to be both ethically acceptable and applicable in practice. Since that time the PCG/T has met with senior representatives of the industry who have been made aware of the PCT's view and have accepted this approach in principle.

The PCT is now asked to consider the following proposals and, if in agreement, endorse this approach and the principles detailed later in this paper.

Proposal:

There are three elements which the PCT is asked to consider:

- The PCT should develop a code of conduct for managing sales representatives' visits to practices. The PCT is not in a position to enforce this but the code should be offered to practices as a 'best practice' guide in order to encourage a considered approach to the pharmaceutical industry.
- The PCT should develop a code of conduct for involving the pharmaceutical industry in educational meetings.
These codes would be consistent with DOH guidelines [Commercial Sponsorship – Ethical Standards for the NHS, Nov 2000]
- The PCT should apply the principles below to itself in its dealings with the Pharmaceutical Industry and use them to guide the associated operational policy.

Proposed Operational Principles:

The following principles should be followed:

- The PCT will only seek, or agree to, pharmaceutical industry sponsorship if the aims and proposed outcomes are consistent with the priorities described in the PCT's Business Plan.
- The PCT and the industry must be explicit about the expected benefits of any relationship and a review process will be an integral part of any agreement to ensure that neither party is exploited as a result of the agreement.
- Any pharmaceutical company entering into an agreement with the PCT will be expected to acknowledge the PCT's operational policy and agree to adopt it as a the basis for the relationship.
- The PCT will nominate a single point of contact for the pharmaceutical industry.
- Any agreement will be between the pharmaceutical company and the PCT, not with a practice or practices.

The process will be as follows:

- The PCT will consider a partnership with the pharmaceutical industry only if it is consistent with the PCTs business plan and where sources of funding have already been identified. Funding 'released' as the result of a partnership will be available to the PCT to be used non-recurringly for the duration of the agreement and will be made available again to 'pick-up' the service on termination of the agreement.
- Where potential partnership developments have been identified a specification will be drawn up against which at least two companies will be asked to express an interest. The tendering process will be undertaken in accordance with the PCTs standing orders and standing financial instructions.
- Monitoring and review arrangements will form an integral part of any specification, contract or agreement.
- The preferred model for partnership would be for at least one pharmaceutical company to contribute to a funding pool for a particular programme. Contributions will be attributed to the programme and not to individual staff or specific components of the service.
- Any staff employed through the partnership service development will be employed by, or seconded to, the PCT and will be bound by the terms and conditions and operational policies of the PCT.

The PCT Clinical Executive Committee and Board are asked to consider, and if in agreement, adopt this proposal as Trust policy.