



Primary Care Respiratory Society

PCRS Statement on pharmaceutical industry funding

PCRS seeks to work in collaboration with any organisation, who shares its aims of improving respiratory care. This includes commercial companies and government as well as other professional societies / charities. PCRS's primary consideration in any collaboration is ensuring that its independence is not in any way compromised and it is free to act in the best interests of its members and what it considers to be in the best interests of people with respiratory conditions / the public good.

PCRS recognises the very significant influence, through innovation in technology and investment in marketing and education that the pharmaceutical industry has on the delivery of healthcare. Through collaboration with pharmaceutical companies, PCRS is able to gain access to expertise and resources to promote the Society and support its charitable priorities that it would otherwise not have access to.

The financial support provided by PCRS Corporate Supporters for the core activities of the Society allows the PCRS to make its services either freely available or at greatly reduced rates to its members. From time to time PCRS may also work in partnership with companies to support the development of pharmaceutical industry education programmes, which support its overall business priorities. By doing this, PCRS is able to influence the content of such programmes by providing clinical and primary care input, and independent review / scrutiny. PCRS will only endorse / put its name to programmes where it has driven and approved the content and where it believes it is securing a good return on its investment in terms of income / fees for professional services, marketing opportunities and charitable impact.

Professional Societies are generally primarily funded through membership subscriptions. As a primary care based Society, growing membership beyond a certain threshold has proven very difficult for PCRS as result of resistance within primary care to joining a specialist Society. Public fundraising is not a realistic source of funding for PCRS whose immediate beneficiaries of health professionals are not the public.

PCRS is currently reliant on pharmaceutical industry for a significant proportion of its income (circa 75%). Funding is secured from each of the major companies in the respiratory market. Our aim is that in any one year no company contributes more than 25% total funding to help ensure there is no bias to any particular company. In the event that the threshold was exceeded, steps would be taken to ensure that the funding was reduced in future years such that over a 5 year period it does not exceed 25%.

PCRS will not knowingly accept donations from any third party organisation that poses a risk to the charity's reputation or conflicts with the charitable objectives of the charity – e.g. donations arising from tobacco production. Tobacco use is one of the single greatest causes of respiratory disease causing an estimated 90,000 deaths and 35,500 cases of tobacco-related cancers each and every year. The tobacco industry has systematically lobbied against tobacco regulation and whilst smoking rates are falling in the UK, the industry continues to promote tobacco products aggressively to other new markets in low income countries. In line with many other health organisations, research bodies, medical journals, charities and professional medical associations, PCRS does not believe any form of association with the tobacco industry is acceptable. It is of enormous concern that a significant player in the tobacco industry, Philip Morris International (PMI), has taken over Vectura, a company that manufactures medications used in the treatment of COPD, asthma and other respiratory illnesses – causing a situation in which a tobacco company will directly profit from the illness that their product causes. As such PCRS has agreed that it will not enter into any relationship or accept funding from any company wholly owned by the tobacco industry. PCRS is aware that a number of companies are linked to companies owned by the tobacco industry, without intent, through third part agreements. Where this is the case, the Chair of the Executive Committee and CEO will consider the circumstances of each relationship and make a recommendation to the Trustee board on whether to enter into a relationship or not. Circumstances taken into consideration will include aspects such as whether the agreement is historical, what steps the company has taken to extricate itself from the relationship, if the agreement is time limited and whether any relationship with PCRS would inadvertently lead to PCRS potentially promoting products developed in whole or in part by companies owned by the tobacco industry.

Written agreements are in place for all funding received from the pharmaceutical industry. The sources of funding are declared and made transparent on the PCRS website and on all relevant materials.

PCRS recognises its credibility and independence as its greatest assets both in terms of its ability to influence and to secure support. It also recognises the potential conflicts that its reliance upon the pharmaceutical industry brings. PCRS has rigorous governance processes in place to ensure it operates independently and is not unduly influenced by any third-party body. This includes policies on managing conflicts of interest, endorsement and commercial partnerships (see <http://www.PCRS.org/company-papers>). The trustee board operates at arm's length from PCRS Corporate Supporters and has no direct contact with them. The large majority of the Board has no interest in the pharmaceutical industry. The [Trustee Board](#) is responsible for overseeing the activities of the Society, ensuring proper procedures and policies are in place to manage resources effectively to deliver charitable outcomes and to protect the independence and reputation of the Society.

Dated: January 2022