

Pharma policy

Purpose

This policy document provides a framework by which the MS Trust will work with industry partners in a transparent manner, ensuring the integrity and independence of the MS Trust is maintained at all times. The MS Trust is aware that pharmaceutical industry partners operate within the ABPI's Code of Practice – the provisions of which in reference to relationships with patient organisations (Clause 27 of the Code) are reciprocated in the provisions below.

How we work with industry partners

The MS Trust exists to improve the lives of people with MS by providing accessible, evidence-based information to people affected by the condition and by working with MS specialists to ensure people with MS get the best care possible. We do this by providing high quality, up-to-date education for MS health care professionals, supporting them to evaluate and improve their services and funding MS nurses in the areas of greatest need. In order to meet its objectives, the MS Trust believes it is important to maintain cooperative relationships with all industry partners and stakeholders in MS, including the pharmaceutical, medical equipment and biotechnology companies and contract research organisations.

The best interests of people with MS are the priority of the MS Trust and, therefore, the MS Trust will not:

- Endorse, or be seen to be endorsing through use of the MS Trust name/logo, any specific product or service
- Be influenced by commercial pressure to promote a particular marketing agenda or objective
- Accept any attempts to influence its policy or content in return for funding
- Allow any one company to dominate an activity through its funding
- Allow its independent voice or objectivity to be constrained.

The MS Trust will

- Identify funding from industry partners on its website and in its annual accounts (where that funding totals more than £5,000 from any single industry partner within a financial year)
- Acknowledge funding received on agreed materials associated with the specific activity being funded if requested
- Seek funding from at least two industry partners for any fundable activity, to ensure a balance of interests is maintained.

This policy governs the relationship between all members of the MS Trust staff, including volunteers and trustees and representatives of industry partners, including consultants and agencies.

Parameters for seeking funding from industry partners

As a charity, the MS Trust must source income to fund its work. Industry partner funding will be considered so long as:

- The outcome of the project will benefit people living with MS
- The project fits within the MS Trust's strategic objectives

- A contract or grant agreement is in place outlining the arrangement and agreed objectives between the parties
- The MS Trust's name and/or logo is not used to imply approval or endorsement of any of the partner's products or policies without prior explicit permission.

The MS Trust will accept funding for a range of Trust activities, including professional development activities and information and engagement activities.

To avoid being aligned with any particular company, no more than 25% of the total pharmaceutical income for any given year should come from one industry partner.

Interaction with the Government, Medical Profession and other Stakeholders

The MS Trust and industry partners share certain objectives, such as the allocation of increased appropriate resources to the management of MS. There are therefore occasions when the Trust wishes to work with the Industry to influence the Government, the medical profession, or other groups. Cooperation would rely on objectives being agreed at the outset, the independence of the Trust not being compromised in any way, and total transparency in the relationship.

Signed off / reviewed by:	Date:	Comments:
Board	19 March 2015	New policy
Board	28 September 2016	
CEO	July 2018	
Remuneration Committee	October 2018	
Remuneration Committee	November 2019	
RAFT	October 2021	
RAFT	November 2023	
Next review:	November 2025	