

## How we work with HCOs

**The pharmaceutical industry collaborates with healthcare organisations (HCOs) – hospitals and doctors’ surgeries for example, for a variety of reasons. All are aimed at improving treatment and care for people.**

A large majority of our work with HCOs is related to research and development, working with and in hospitals and healthcare trusts to carry out vital clinical trials that help to develop effective medicines (see ABPI’s resources page [‘How are medicines and vaccines discovered?’](#)).

The pharmaceutical industry also works with HCOs by providing **donations and grants** which collectively mean funds, benefits-in-kind, or services freely given for the purpose of supporting healthcare, scientific research or education with no consequent obligation on the recipient organisation to provide goods or services to the benefit of the pharmaceutical company in return. Donations and grants could include benefits to the organisation, its staff, the people that visit for treatment, or the family and friends of those receiving treatment.

Donations and grants to individuals are prohibited.

In addition, the **industry sponsors events** with HCOs to support the provision of education to healthcare professionals (HCPs) – keeping them up to date about the latest development and delivery of medicines.

In the UK, the pharmaceutical industry also engages HCOs to provide **contracted services** such as speaking at meetings or training on the use of a medicine, and works with HCOs to deliver initiatives referred to as **‘collaborative working’**, which has a specific definition under the [ABPI Code of Practice](#).

Read more about all these activities below.

### Donations

Donations are generally physical items, services, or benefits-in-kind, which may be offered or requested.

Companies provide donations to healthcare organisations for improvements and/or equipment and products that benefit everyone.

These types of benefits or services are usually to improve the quality and availability of healthcare, educate individuals, support those most at risk of health problems or improve knowledge in science medicine and health care. Examples of donations are:

- Medical equipment or books
- Free products, where permitted, to support disaster relief
- Charitable donations to improve waiting areas and/or wards for groups of patients or their families to ensure their treatment experience is as positive as it can be at a difficult time.

## Grants

There are two main types of grant (the provision of funds) provided to healthcare organisations. These are educational grants and research grants.

An *educational grant* is funding provided by a pharmaceutical company to an HCO to support independent educational programmes. Examples of activities for which an educational grant might be given include:

- Funding for an organisation to run independent education programmes, allowing doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and other healthcare professionals to develop their clinical practice and improve outcomes for patients.
- Funding to an organisation to support an individual HCP's fellowship and additional training.
- Funding a hospital's collective subscription to a medical journal.
- Funding for an HCO to produce a leaflet about a disease.

*Research grants* can take the form of funding, products, or other support offered by pharmaceutical companies to HCOs for the purpose of improving or developing medical or scientific knowledge and understanding. Examples include:

- Research into how a medicine works in a small group of patients with a specific type of a disease.
- Research into how patients are diagnosed and treated for a disease.
- Research into how patients are affected by a disease.

## Sponsorship of events

Companies specialising in particular therapy areas, diabetes or asthma for example, may provide funds directly to a healthcare organisation, or through a third-party event organiser, in order to support education for doctors, nurses, pharmacists and other healthcare professionals.

At these events HCPs have the opportunity to learn about the latest medicines available and keep up to date with treatment options through presentations and engagement with other HCPs.

### **Contracted Services**

Healthcare organisations may be contracted as consultants and advisors, whether in groups or individually, for services such as speaking at and chairing meetings, involvement in medical/scientific studies, training on the use of a medicine, or participation in advisory board meetings.

Fees and expenses to contracted organisations are disclosed separately.

*Package deals* are commercial arrangements whereby the purchase of a particular medicine is linked to the provision of certain associated benefits as part of the purchase price. These could include:

- apparatus for administration
- training on the use of the medicine
- services of a nurse to administer the medicine

The package deal transaction must be fair and reasonable, and the associated benefits must be relevant to the medicine involved.

Transfers of value made in the course of these package deals, for example, when a company employs a healthcare organisation to provide a fee for service, or other package deals which are not part of the ordinary course purchase, are disclosed in accordance with ABPI Code of Practice Clause 28.

The ABPI Code of Practice Clause 1.25 *exempts* package deals solely relating to ordinary course purchases and sales of medicines from the requirement to disclose.

### **Collaborative working**

Under the ABPI Code of Practice, 'collaborative working' refers to pharmaceutical companies working with other organisations to deliver initiatives which either enhance patient care, or are for the benefit of patients, or alternatively benefit the NHS and, as a minimum, maintain patient care.

Collaborative working, including its implementation, must have and be able to demonstrate the pooling of skills, experience and/or resources from all of the parties involved for the joint development and implementation of patient and/or healthcare centred projects.

There must be a shared commitment to successful delivery from all parties, and each party must make a significant contribution.

*Joint Working* is a limited acceptable form of collaborative working in which there is a formal arrangement between the NHS and one or more pharmaceutical companies. Projects carried out under Joint Working must always benefit patients, but it is expected that the arrangements will also benefit the NHS and the pharmaceutical company or companies involved. Examples of Joint Working projects include:

- Improving asthma care in partnership with NHS East Surrey CCG by standardising diagnosis and treatment across the CCG's 18 practices.
- Postal HIV testing in collaboration with Chelsea and Westminster Hospital Foundation Trust in order to ensure better access to services by hard-to-reach groups, ensuring early treatment which may be life- saving.
- Personalised acute coronary syndrome patient support programme with Bristol Heart Institute to address individual patient beliefs causing non-adherence to treatment and improve outcomes.