



nras
National Rheumatoid
Arthritis Society

Framework for Working with Pharmaceutical Industry

The purpose of this document is to set down and make clear the position of the Trustees and the Management of the National Rheumatoid Arthritis Society (NRAS) in regard to any working relationships with the pharmaceutical industry.

The aim of NRAS is to work to achieve a better life for people living with Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA) and JIA Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis. NRAS recognises that working with pharmaceutical companies which manufacture drugs to treat these diseases can help us to achieve this aim.

It can be helpful to work with the pharmaceutical companies which manufacture and market medicines for Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA) and/or Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis (JIA). These partnerships give NRAS important and necessary background information and provide us with further opportunities to raise awareness of these conditions and the need to improve the quality of care for people RA and people living with JIA, including access to services and medicines.

As a charity, NRAS has to raise funds on a continual basis in order to exist and execute our charitable functions and we therefore receive funding from a variety of sources, which includes pharmaceutical companies. This can be in the form of sponsorship or educational grants or funding for particular activities undertaken by NRAS.

NRAS receives funding from pharmaceutical companies in two ways: for specific projects and as core funding to help provide its support for all those who live with RA and JIA. In either case, NRAS will exercise its independent judgement over whether to accept or decline an offer of funding on an individual basis.

Public concern about commercial interests influencing voluntary organisations in a negative way have to be taken seriously and therefore a code of practice which makes any such relationships clear and transparent is necessary.

NRAS has always worked to the highest ethical standards and wishes its financial funding arrangements with the pharmaceutical industry to be clearly defined, recorded and transparent.

NRAS views its relationships with the pharmaceutical industry as a two-way process. We view positively opportunities for NRAS to raise awareness of RA and JIA amongst pharmaceutical industry staff and projects where our expertise and knowledge may be harnessed to improve patient information and education materials and services being produced by industry, to the ultimate benefit of people living with RA and JIA.

Independence

NRAS is a totally independent organisation and no relationship will be entered into which could in any way jeopardise or compromise that independence.

It is standard policy not to promote, endorse or approve any particular product, service or brand whether this comes from the pharmaceutical industry or any other industry sector.

NRAS will only ever undertake projects which could benefit those affected by RA or JIA, directly or indirectly, or add value to the information, education and support it provides to those affected by these diseases.

NRAS will reject funding or sponsorship or any relationship which might be perceived to damage its reputation, independence or charitable status.

When collaborating on a written communication, publication or otherwise, complete editorial control will remain with NRAS.

NRAS will not allow the good name it has built up to be compromised in any way.

NRAS will maintain good working relationships with the pharmaceutical industry which benefit and are in the best interests of those affected by RA and/or JIA.

Trustees, officers, staff and anyone operating on behalf of NRAS will be expected to adhere to the policy and NRAS will make this policy available to any organisations it works with on joint projects to inform and guide these relationships.

Transparency

Where NRAS elects to work with a pharmaceutical company in relation to a specific project, the charity will acknowledge this publicly through openly declaring commercial sponsorship of a project where relevant in any media or PR work.

NRAS will also carry the sponsor's logo on all written communications associated with that project.

NRAS will publish a summary of its financial contributions from pharmaceutical companies in its annual report in line with Charity Commission accounting procedures.

NRAS will only work with a pharmaceutical company where it can ensure compliance with the ABPI Code of Practice for the Pharmaceutical Industry. Where a company is not a member we will require written assurances of compliance with these principles.

NRAS will ensure that no project sponsor has an undue influence over the charity in relation to the objectives or outcomes of any project.

Funding

Wherever possible NRAS funding requests are sought from a number of companies and NRAS will negotiate with all its sponsors on an equal basis to ensure no individual company is treated differently from any other in regard to funding of any particular project.

We will ensure that total income from pharmaceutical funded projects always falls between 10-15% of our total income and does not exceed 15% in any one year.

Funding can be directly paid to NRAS to cover the cost of a particular project, contribute to core costs, or be paid as an educational grant. Services provided in kind to the charity at a cost to the pharmaceutical company can also be provided where no direct funding is received by NRAS. Whilst we cannot influence the exact value ascribed to such activities by the pharmaceutical company we would expect it to be a fair and an accurate reflection of the cost of such work.

The total percentage of income from pharmaceutical companies in the financial year ending 31 December 2015 was 11%.