

# RCP partnerships, advertising, sponsorship and internal lettings policy for accepting external events

## *Introduction and commentary (February 2017)*

*What follows is a formal statement of RCP policy and procedure which was first published in December 2016. However following feedback since it was published we thought it would be helpful to add some notes at the start to assist the reader.*

*The policy is effectively intended to group potential external event organisers, RCP sponsors, or partners into three categories:*

- *The first, which are always going to be refused because they directly conflict with RCP values.*
- *The second includes organisations where there may be cause for concern given the RCP's values but further consideration will clarify the situation and lead to approval or rejection.*
- *The third group is organisations where there is clearly no conflict with RCP values.*

*This will enable RCP administrative staff to deal with the vast majority of requests without referring them to senior RCP staff, as they will fall into group 3 provided that they meet the stated criteria.*

*The policy differs from previous guidance primarily and significantly because, and following specific concerns that were raised by some fellows, we have greatly expanded the categories where there needs to be careful consideration of organisations to ensure that their events do not conflict with RCP values. We have also improved the mechanism for doing that. Such cases will be considered on their merits, and may be approved based on the particular situation and facts. However applications from organisations in this group will automatically be reviewed by someone senior at the RCP, so that an informed decision can be made. As an example, an event by an arms manufacturer to promote weapons would be refused. However the same company or another division of it might also make medical equipment; and an event based on that is likely to be approved. Other situations could be speculated about but the policy is intended to allow flexibility as situations may be more complex than they first appear.*

*The policy is still new and will be monitored over time. The RCP needs funds to be able to provide the wide range of charitable activities it carries out in support of medicine, but our principles and values are important to us so there has to be a balance. However in the modern world commercial relationships are often complicated so the overall aim is for informed decisions to be made, ultimately by senior RCP officers, in the best interests of the RCP.*

## **Background and Key principles:**

This document outlines for the Royal College of Physicians (RCP) the key principles and specific criteria that should be applied when assessing the acceptability of external events requests and outlines the main guidelines applying to third party partnerships, advertising and sponsorship.

The RCP is an independent charity which aims to improve patient care and reduce illness. Patient-centred and clinically led, the organisation drives improvement in the diagnosis of disease, the care of individual patients and the health of the whole population, both in the UK and around the world.

Developed for its own meetings purposes, the RCP has created a conference and events centre overlooking Regent's Park in the heart of London. These facilities are marketed as a venue to external organisations for conferences, meetings, dinners and training. The income that is received from external events is important and contributes directly to the funding of RCP work.

Within this context and within our values and independence as a charitable medical membership body, the RCP seeks to develop external business from a range of organisations. It seeks to work with organisations that wish to hold events at its London venue, or are interested in advertising, sponsorship, joint ventures and partnerships. A principal objective of this work is to raise income to contribute to the RCP's wide range of charitable activities and the following principles and criteria will be used to assess and accept external events or relationships as described here.

#### **Activities covered by this policy**

- Letting or hire of RCP premises by external organisations
- Funding/sponsorship of awards
- Funding of research projects
- Use of identifying material from a sponsor or partner at RCP events
- Use of identifying material from a sponsor or partner on RCP educational material
- Advertises (electronic & print) on the RCP website and RCP publications
- Use of commercial exhibition stands at RCP conferences & events
- Funding to attend meetings and lectures

#### **Key principles**

- The RCP will not host events, accept money, or enter into partnership, advertising or sponsorship arrangements with any of the following organisations:
  - Alcoholic products
  - Alcohol companies
  - Brewers and pub chains
  - Tobacco companies
- With the exception of the organisations above, partnerships, advertising opportunities, sponsors, and hire of RCP facilities are reviewed on a case by case basis. In this context, collaborations should meet the following criteria;
  - They should not affect, in any way, the independence of the RCP as an organisation and its values, goals and ethos (see below).
  - They should support, directly or indirectly, the charitable work of the RCP.
  - They should be transparent and clearly outline the benefits gained by each party.
  - Collaborations should be with organisations where there is a match between the values of the RCP and the 3<sup>rd</sup> party, their products, services, customers and beneficiaries. Where practical, consideration would also be given to the wider activities of subsidiaries or parent companies.

**Additionally, events from any of the categories listed below will always be decided on a case-by-case basis, depending on the context and purpose of the event;**

- Adult industry
- Arms manufacturers (companies whose primary business is in the arms trade)
- Baby milk products
- Cosmetic surgery
- Cult groups

- Scientology
- Diet books, diet foods/drinks, diet products or diet services
- Food, food retailers and supermarkets
- Homeopathy, Homoeopathic medicines, herbal medicine, other complimentary medicine or therapies
- Nicotine replacement therapy including E cigarettes
- Products making scientific claims e.g. sports science drinks
- Pharmaceutical products/medical devices
- Political groups
- Private healthcare
- Products that have an adverse impact on the environment
- Religious groups

In the first instance the decision will be made by nominated members of the Strategy, Communications and Policy (SC&P) team, taking account of this guidance. If a decision is still unclear, it will be referred to the registrar as the officer responsible for professional matters, and he will liaise with other officers as necessary. A guiding principle will be to consider the organising company, the event participants and the event content in the first instance although, where practical, consideration should be given to the wider activities of subsidiaries or parent companies.

The RCP reserves the right to refuse any organisation/event that we deem to be unsuitable, for any reason.

#### **Supplementary information - RCP values, goals and ethos**

The values upheld by the Royal College of Physicians (RCP) over the last 500 years can be summarized as ensuring that the respect for, and the health care provided to patients, are of the highest standard. They are central to every aspect of physicianly professional activity and independent of any contrary negative external influence.

These values have been and continue to be promoted by the education and training of all physicians in the provision of excellent clinical medicine, the promotion of ever-improving standards of clinical care and advocacy for patient well-being and promotion of health at all levels of society and government. All physicians who are fellows or members of the Royal College of Physicians, both internationally and nationally, should strive to promote these values irrespective of country, source of funding, or organisation of health service provision: be it governmental, private, institutional or personal.

In principle and subject to specific circumstances, the RCP will partner with and support any organisation or individual physician, who commits to and espouses and upholds these values. There will be a standing sub-group of Council which will be a point of reference and audit for activities covered by this policy, and the sub-group will review the policy and report to Council on the College's activity every year. This in turn will be reported to fellows through the AGM.

#### **Supplementary information – concerns raised by fellows or members**

If any fellow or member is concerned about a specific case or situation then they are able to raise this and should do so by using the contacts page on the RCP website;

<https://www.rcplondon.ac.uk/contact>

The concern will be acknowledged initially and then referred on as appropriate to the circumstances of the issue but the registrar will be kept informed and will oversee the response and will reply in person once the position has been reviewed. If it is likely to take more than one week to resolve then the fellow or member will be kept informed. It will be open to the registrar to involve the sub-group of Council in reaching a final decision, and to consult as necessary.

#### **Supplementary information - obligations affecting the RCP and its partners, advertisers and sponsors (third parties)**

- All agreements should be exchanged in writing and third parties would be expected to endorse and abide by the RCP's partnerships, advertising and sponsorship policy.
- Third parties must inform the RCP as soon as reasonably possible of any matters which could affect the standing of the third party or the RCP. The RCP reserves the right to take any action, necessary to ensure that its reputation is not adversely affected.
- The RCP should be consulted in relation to any external or internal communications that refers to the RCP.
- Specific approval must be sought on each occasion, for press releases, use of the RCP logo and branding and/or any communication that refers to a specific RCP initiative.
- All parties to any collaboration will commit to confidentiality requirements at all times.
- Third parties entering into a partnership, advertising, or sponsorship collaboration with the RCP may not imply approval or endorsement by the RCP of their organisation, or any of its products, without the express written agreement of the RCP.

#### **Supplementary information - conflicts of interest**

When establishing a new collaboration both parties should endeavour to ensure that there are no conflicts of interest that cannot be safely managed. In this respect:

- The RCP gives no warranty that the deliverables of the collaboration will not contain material/communications which may be disadvantageous to its partner business, or area of work.
- The RCP gives no warranty that its ongoing work, which may fall outside the collaboration, will not contain material/communications which may be disadvantageous to its partner business or area of work. For example, policy statements.
- Partners, advertisers and sponsors will have no control over any of the RCP work activities.
- In the case of Joint ventures and partnerships, desired outcomes, aims and objectives must be agreed beforehand and be transparent.
- The RCP will discuss with partners, subject to its own contractual arrangements, other relevant collaborations with organisation working in the same area and would expect the same approach from its partners.
- The RCP will not grant direct access to its service users or fellows and members other than as generated by specific collaboration.

#### **Supplementary information - general points**

- The RCP reserves the right to refuse any collaboration with any organisation that they deem to be unsuitable, for any reason.
- All donations from partnerships, advertising and sponsorship, however small, from third parties to the RCP, must be declared in the RCP accounts.

Revised February 2017