

SIGN & ABPI Concordat – August 2007

ABPI & SIGN

ABPI Scotland and SIGN agree to work together in the spirit of partnership to support the implementation of SIGN guidelines and to promote the use of evidence based healthcare across NHSScotland for the benefit of improving patient care in Scotland. To facilitate this:

- Senior SIGN representatives will work with senior ABPI Scotland representatives to ensure that all such activities are transparent and to benefit patient care in NHSScotland
- Senior SIGN representatives will work with senior ABPI Scotland Industry groups to determine the most appropriate means of supporting implementation of specific SIGN guidelines
- All joint working initiatives will be governed by the principles and values set out in the SEHD 2003 document '*A Common Understanding: Guidance on Joint Working between NHSScotland and the Pharmaceutical Industry*' (attached).

VALUES

Conduct: There should be an absolute standard of honesty and integrity which should be the hallmark of all personal conduct in decisions affecting patients, employees/independent contractors and suppliers, including the use of information acquired in the course of NHSScotland duties and in dealing with the assets of NHSScotland.

Accountability: Everything done by those who work in NHSScotland must be able to stand the test of parliamentary and public scrutiny, including judgements on propriety and professional codes of conduct.

Openness: NHSScotland should be open about its activities and plans in order to promote confidence between the NHS Boards and Trusts or other health organisations and their employees/independent contractors, patients and the public.

PRINCIPLES

- All joint working between the Pharmaceutical Industry and NHSScotland must be for the benefit of patients.
- Pharmaceutical companies have a desire to improve health and healthcare whilst maintaining probity.
- All patient identification should be removed from data in line with the Data Protection Act to respect and preserve patient confidentiality.
- Clinical aspects of care, including the development of guidelines and protocols, should be under local/national NHSScotland control.
- Work should proceed on a project-by-project basis. This does not preclude a strategic overview to allow effective planning.
- Reports or information pertaining to joint working should not be used or published without explicit permission given by all partners entering the agreement.
- The joint working agreement should not be seen as an endorsement or promotion of a specific medicine or technology.
- The interests of individual patients must be protected, e.g. to guard against the exclusive use of any single product to the exclusion of other brands or products from within the same therapeutic class.
- The joint working should not undermine or conflict with the ethical requirements of any healthcare professional, including the duty of clinicians to provide the treatment they consider clinically appropriate.
- The Pharmaceutical Industry must comply with the relevant Code of Practice at all times.
- All NHSScotland employees/independent contractors involved must comply with NHS (and relevant professional bodies) codes of conduct.
- Pharmaceutical company size (turnover) will not dictate involvement with NHSScotland.
- The Pharmaceutical Industry has to show clear demarcation between research and development interests and marketing operations.
- If joint working involves research then best research practice should be applied and the relevant Local Research Ethics Committee should be consulted.
- All joint working projects must promote and enhance equitable access to evidence-based health care.