



# The Association of Directors of Public Health

## Ethical Collaboration and Sponsorship Policy

### About ADPH

The Association of Directors of Public Health (ADPH) exists to maximise the effectiveness and impact of Directors of Public Health (DsPH) as public health leaders.

We seek to improve and protect the health of the population by working to:

- Collate and present the views of DsPH on public health policy to national Governments, the media, and other organisations.
- Advise on public health policy and legislation at a local, regional, national, and international level.
- Facilitate a support network for DsPH to share ideas and good practice and support problem-solving.
- Identify and fulfil the development needs of DsPH where practicable and appropriate.
- In collaboration with others, further the development of comprehensive, equitable public health policies through relevant statutory and other bodies.

### Introduction

ADPH actively seeks opportunities to collaborate with external organisations to achieve shared objectives. We also seek opportunities for income generation through sponsorship.

Sponsorship<sup>1</sup> plays a central role in meeting ADPH's objective of maximising income to support and sustain our activities and ambitions. We recognise the need to conduct our sponsorship partnerships responsibly, mitigating potential reputational, financial, or actual risk that may result from this.

This Ethical Collaboration and Sponsorship Policy is designed to guide our interactions with potential sponsors, while safeguarding our commitment to ethical conduct, transparency, and the avoidance of conflicts of interest. We are mindful that even with these guidelines we will need to apply judgement in most cases.

This policy will remain independent regardless of who sponsors us.

### Guiding Principles

ADPH adheres to the following guiding principles in its approach to collaboration and sponsorship:

- **Mission alignment:** Collaborations and sponsorships align with our mission, values, and objectives related to public health, where possible.
- **Ethical conduct:** All interactions with potential sponsors and partners will be conducted with the highest standards of integrity and ethical conduct.

---

<sup>1</sup> Sponsorship is defined as collaborating with an external partner and does not include endorsement. For more information on the ADPH endorsement policy, contact the policy team.

- **Transparency:** ADPH will maintain transparency in all collaboration and sponsorship agreements, disclosing any potential conflicts of interest. A full list of corporate sponsors giving over £5,000 will be maintained on our website.
- **Independence:** ADPH will remain independent and will not compromise our core principles or programmes as a result of any sponsorship.

## Sponsorship Acceptance Criteria

ADPH is actively engaged in sponsorship opportunities and receives voluntary and corporate support from a variety of sources. We consider each sponsorship on its own merits. Sponsorship opportunities will be considered from businesses based on the following criteria:

1. **Mission alignment:** The business's products, services, or values align with ADPH's mission and goals related to public health, where possible.
2. **Ethical conduct:** The business must have a demonstrated track record of ethical behaviour, including compliance with relevant laws and regulations.
3. **Independence:** Sponsorship agreements will not compromise ADPH's independence or impartiality in driving forward the public health agenda.
4. **No harm to public health:** Sponsorships will not involve businesses engaged in activities that pose a significant risk to public health.
5. **No conflict of interest:** ADPH will assess any potential conflicts of interest arising from sponsorship agreements and take appropriate steps to mitigate them.
6. **Impact assessment:** ADPH will evaluate the potential impact of a sponsorship on its mission, reputation, and objectives.

## Sponsorship Refusal Criteria

There are occasions when it is not possible for ADPH to accept sponsorship. ADPH will refuse a sponsorship opportunity if:

- It would be **unlawful** to accept it, or acceptance could give rise to an interference of complicity with illegal activities.
- The conditions attached to accepting the sponsorship **outweigh its value** to ADPH.
- There is a **significant risk that acceptance may cause harm** to ADPH, and any such harm is likely to be disproportionate to the benefit ADPH will derive from acceptance of the sponsorship. Harm could arise where accepting a sponsorship:
  - Interferes with or has the potential to interfere with ADPH's ability to fulfil its charitable aims or statutory obligations.
  - Would substantially damage ADPH's reputation among its members, the public health community and/or the wider public.
  - Would jeopardise existing and future relationships with grant holders or ADPH members.
- Partnerships with companies are involved in any of the following activities:
  - criminal activity
  - weapons or weapons systems manufacture, sale, or distribution
  - tobacco or alcohol manufacture
  - gambling

- fossil fuels
- pornography
- human rights violation
- unacceptable environmental or ecological harm

ADPH **does not endorse or approve products or companies**, and a statement to this effect will be included alongside any branding or promotion associated with products.

## Due Diligence

Before accepting any sponsorship, ADPH will conduct a due diligence process, which may include:

- **Research:** Reviewing the business's history, practices, and reputation, and identifying how the business is funded. Note that we may not always know exactly how an organisation is funded, for instance if a company is taken over by a hedge fund or similar.
- **Assessment:** Evaluating the potential impact of the sponsorship on ADPH's mission, reputation, and public health objectives.
- **Consultation:** Consulting with relevant stakeholders to highlight any areas of concern.

## Sponsorship Agreement

All sponsorship agreements will be documented in writing, detailing the specific support offered and will be agreed by both parties. This document will include the following provisions:

1. **Mission alignment:** A clear statement of if and how the sponsorship aligns with ADPH's mission and objectives.
2. **Ethical conduct:** A commitment from the sponsor to adhere to ethical conduct and relevant laws and regulations.
3. **Transparency:** A disclosure of any potential conflicts of interest associated with the sponsorship.
4. **Independence:** An assurance that the sponsorship will not compromise ADPH's independence or impartiality in driving forward the public health agenda.
5. **Termination clause:** A provision allowing ADPH to terminate the sponsorship agreement if any of the above criteria are not met.

## Process and Oversight

A Sponsorship Panel made up of ADPH members will review complex sponsorship requests, as identified by ADPH staff, and will ensure compliance with this policy. How we convene the Sponsorship Panel, and its Terms of Reference, is covered in a separate policy.

The ADPH Sponsorship Panel must, under general principles of charity law, take a decision as to whether to accept or refuse sponsorship, in the best interest of ADPH. Panel members will not allow individual or collective views on political or ethical issues, not directly related to the interests of ADPH, to affect their judgement when making these decisions.

## Conclusion

ADPH is committed to upholding its mission and values while engaging in ethical collaborations with

businesses. This Ethical Collaboration and Sponsorship Policy will serve as a guiding framework to ensure that sponsorship aligns with our commitment to public health and ethical conduct while minimising conflicts of interest.

## Review and Revision

This document will be reviewed annually to ensure its continued relevance and effectiveness in promoting ethical collaboration and sponsorship practices.

Last reviewed date: February 2024  
Next scheduled review: February 2025  
Last Board approval: November 2023