



Guidance on Responding to Commercial Influence in Consultation Processes

Purpose

This document provides guidance for BSG/ Guideline members on how to respond if approached by commercial companies, which could be attempting to influence responses to consultations that inform clinical guidance.

Core Principles

1. Maintain independence and objectivity
2. Prioritise patient welfare and public health
3. Uphold professional integrity
4. Ensure transparency

Guidelines for Responding to Commercial Contact

1. Document All Interactions

- Record the date, time, and nature of any contact from commercial entities.
- Note the name of the company and the individual(s) making contact.

2. Maintain Professional Boundaries

- Politely but firmly decline any offers of gifts, hospitality, or financial incentives.
- Avoid informal or private meetings with commercial representatives regarding consultations.

3. Redirect to Proper Channels

- Inform commercial representatives that their input should be submitted through official consultation channels.
- Direct them to publicly available information on the consultation process.

4. Preserve Objectivity

- Base your consultation responses solely on clinical evidence and professional judgment.
- Disclose any potential conflicts of interest in your consultation response.

5. Seek Guidance

- If unsure about how to handle a situation, consult with the British Society of Gastroenterology Guidelines Lead or their Deputy.
- Report any concerns about undue influence to the appropriate regulatory body.

Reporting Concerns

If you believe a commercial entity has attempted to inappropriately influence the consultation process:

1. Document the incident in detail.
2. Report it to [Appropriate Authority/Department].
3. Cooperate fully with any subsequent investigation.

Remember: Your professional integrity and the quality of clinical guidance depend on maintaining independence from commercial interests. When in doubt, err on the side of caution and seek advice.