**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.