



**COMMUNITY PRACTITIONERS'
AND HEALTH VISITORS' ASSOCIATION**

ETHICAL POLICY

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AMICUS/CPHVA ETHICAL POLICY

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1. Introduction

The aim of the policy is to ensure that the Amicus/CPHVA continues to work within an explicit ethical framework that will support all of its professional work.

This policy will set out and clarify the expectations of the membership with regard to:

- advertising
- sponsorship
- affiliation and partnerships with commercial organisations
- commercial consultancy
- the use of the Amicus/CPHVA logo
- Amicus/CPHVA endorsement
- research

It will give guidance to ensure that these relationships do not call into question the financial independence, professional judgement or standing of the Association. The Association is aware of the position of trust its membership has with clients and their interests, and this document gives detail to clarify the position.

The Amicus/CPHVA will at all times seek to pursue, support, affiliate and form partnerships with individuals and associations that support our aims, objectives and activities.

It will expand the professional network that we have access to, identifying the practice and research of other professionals, enabling broader exposure to a variety of information, practice and opportunities to develop as an organisation.

We will not engage in projects with external organisations if we find they are dishonest. For example, we are approached by a company/organisation wanting to use the Amicus/CPHVA's professional input or opinions to enhance its credibility and it falsely uses the name of another body that the Amicus/CPHVA works closely with in an attempt to seek our agreement. This information would lead to us terminating any communication or association.

Officers of the Amicus/CPHVA will work to this policy to the best of their ability. Where uncertainty arises, officers will consult others within the organisation appropriately.

The terms of this policy cover all staff, officers and members of the Association. It also covers all associations working jointly with the organisation where finances are involved. This includes commercial companies, public relations agencies, industry-wide marketing organisations, trusts funded by companies in particular industries and other organisations from the public, voluntary, education or charitable sectors.

2. Advertising

The Amicus/CPHVA accepts advertising and at times works with other agencies. This does not constitute support or endorsement of any of the products or companies. The Amicus/CPHVA will be mindful of its position and attempt to project balance between these companies by encouraging submissions from a range of organisations.

2.1 Advertising in the *Community Practitioner* journal

The aim is for these adverts to be relevant to the broad spectrum of community nurses who constitute our readership. The purpose of these adverts will be to educate and inform.

Advertising revenue is crucial if the *Community Practitioner* journal and the Annual Professional Conference are to maintain the professional content and quality which the membership have rightly come to expect.

The Amicus/CPHVA Lead Professional Officer, supported by her professional Amicus/CPHVA colleagues, will ensure, to the best of our knowledge, that certain criteria are met before advertisements are accepted from, or exhibition space is sold to, any commercial company.

The criteria are that:

- the company's main business is not the manufacturing of tobacco or alcohol
- the company does not use child labour (or is in partnership with an organisation who does)
- the company has a green environmental policy relating to its manufacturing processes
- the 1981 WHO International Code on the Marketing of Breast Milk Substitutes are applied to all baby milk advertising
- the commercial company meets the criteria in "Present Day Practice in Infant Feeding" and "Weaning and the Weaning Diet" (follows the WHO recommendation of exclusive breast feeding for 26 weeks) in their literature and/or company policy
- the company has an equal opportunities policy and is able to demonstrate its commitment to the same
- the pictorial content reflects the diversity of our population
- the products are not positively harmful to health
- the company does not trade with and support countries that contravene human rights or exploit its workforce especially vulnerable groups within it (Amnesty International)
- the company does not support other organisations that are involved in the unethical sale of arms or munitions including landmines.

When establishing new “ventures” organisations involved will be given the criteria and asked to agree and sign compliance to this.

Within the *Community Practitioner* journal the amount of advertising will not exceed 35% of the total content. The total advertising space includes loose inserts. The amount of infant formula advertising will not exceed 20% of that total advertising space in any one edition.

The advertisements themselves will be assessed against the following criteria:

- the company must meet the criteria previously stated above
- that any claim made regarding the product is backed by scientific evidence that is in the public domain and is clearly referenced
- the advertising is presented in a format designed to inform the health professional rather than the general public.

2.2 Exhibition space

Companies should meet criteria as outlined in 2.1. At exhibitions a maximum of 20% of the total exhibition space may be allocated to advertising by infant formula companies. The advertising for these events should not contain overt marketing of a company’s product. This will not preclude advertisements or stands that are clearly the responsibility of the sponsoring company. (E.g. It will not be an SMA Nutrition conference but there can be an SMA Nutrition stand).

Any arrangements made for exhibition space with large commercial companies should ensure that companies which are professional, charitable, campaigning, or other similar organisations may have access to appropriate facilities at a reduced cost where the company has similar aims to our own. For this purpose, there will be a separate pricing schedule.

It should be made clear at all times whether an event or publication is targeted at the membership or their clients.

2.3 Amicus/CPHVA website

Commercial advertising will feature through the journal website (also Amicus/CPHVA website). With regards to other sites which are accessed via Amicus/CPHVA links, the Amicus/CPHVA hold responsibility for the opinions or content contained on these sites. This is because it is not feasible to vet all sites for all alterations in their content. Whenever possible, the original contents at time of link will be vetted by the IR department and also if feasible, with the relevant professional officer.

3. Working partnerships/collaboration and sponsorships

On occasion the Amicus/CPHVA will form partnerships with individuals, professionals, organisations and commercial companies. These partners will be required to support the aims, objectives and activities of the Amicus/CPHVA.

The Amicus/CPHVA will actively pursue partnerships where the goals and mission of the partner organisation are similar and overlap with our own. There will be a close, on-going and co-ordinated working relationship to further the aims of both parties. The organisation will also need to meet the criteria outlined in 2.1.

These partnerships will take the form of seminars, research, conferences or written publications.

These arrangements will be made by Professional Officers of the Amicus/CPHVA who will make use of the expertise of other officers and relevant Amicus/CPHVA committees and special interest groups for guidance and support. Where there is difficulty in coming to a decision the issue will be taken to the Executive Committee for a final decision.

Any partnership entered into with another organisation shall be for a fixed time period and will be confirmed in writing and agreed by all parties. Any such agreement will be subject to immediate cancellation in the event of a breach of a previously agreed condition.

The involvement of individual Amicus/CPHVA members or staff must be in line with the provisions of the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) Code of Conduct, April 2002.

Awards are an acceptable form of sponsorship. Where in operation they should be regularly updated to reflect rising costs and inflation in relation to the organisations involvement. The Amicus/CPHVA will retain control over any publicity or marketing that arise from such awards.

4. Affiliation or association with other voluntary organisations, professions and charities

4.1 Associations

The organisation will, on occasion, form associations with organisations or companies which have aims that are consistent with our own, and that will further our goals. These associations will be made with organisations that will enhance the standing of our organisation and increase our credibility. They must at all times be consistent with the current Amicus/CPHVA policies and regulations. These arrangements will be for the purpose of furthering a particular policy issue or to advocate a jointly agreed position.

The Amicus/CPHVA will retain control over the use of its name and logo and will reserve the right to veto the production of all material produced on our behalf. Whilst both parties will jointly agree the wording, we reserve the right to retain control over all copy and design for sole publications.

4.2 Affiliations

A decision to affiliate to a voluntary or professional organisation should be based on the following criteria:

- That involvement with the organisations will take into account:-
 - 1) the public interest
 - 2) the interests of the Amicus/CPHVA as a professional association and trade union
 - 3) the professional interests of health visitors, school nurses and all community practitioners.
- That the organisations are registered charities.

When requests are made for renewal of membership, the relevant Professional Officer at the Amicus/CPHVA reviews the benefits to the Association and our members. When approached by charitable organisations, which are unfamiliar or relatively new, The Memorandum and Articles of Association should be examined to ensure there is no conflict with the Amicus/CPHVA's principles and beliefs.

4.3 Information on products harmful to health

In fulfilling its responsibilities to the membership, the Amicus/CPHVA will always reserve the right to criticise the product of a company publicly, and call for the withdrawal of the product in question and ensure no advertising occurs in any of the mediums it controls.

5. Use of the Amicus/CPHVA logo and Amicus/CPHVA endorsement

The Amicus/CPHVA logo will never be used to endorse a particular commercial product.

The Amicus/CPHVA logo can be used on a jointly produced training pack or publication e.g.; Sainsbury's Infant Nutrition Pack.

Endorsement may be given to a particular publication that others have prepared e.g.; Children's Society – *When Feeding Fails* – 2000; HEA Smoking Cessation Guidelines for Health Professionals – 1999.

Criteria for decision:

- the officer responsible must be confident that the document is well written, researched and that sound scientific evidence that has been referenced is available. This is crucial as the endorsement of a subsequently faulty product may lay the Amicus/CPHVA open to legal challenges

- the publication must be professionally relevant to the membership. In cases where there is uncertainty of its value the issue will be taken or circulated to members of Executive Committee for guidance
- the organisation will seek only to endorse the work of other companies and organisations if it is demonstrated that it is in the interest of our members or the public
- the Association's involvement in any joint initiatives does not necessarily mean that endorsement is given to a product. Where relevant, a statement to this effect will be made e.g.; in the journal
- acknowledgement of financial support should be achieved by the use of the company name and logo, not by an individual product name. For example; Wyeth Nutrition rather than SMA Gold.

6. Procedure for decision making

The decision to accept an association, partnership or endorsement may be taken to the Executive Committee by the professional team when their purpose is ambiguous.

Where the Amicus/CPHVA is involved in a new project or initiative, levels of staff and committee input should be identified and sponsorship sought to cover the finance required.

If a request is made to provide specialist advice for a specific project or initiative outside of the organisation, the Amicus/CPHVA will convene a panel of competent members, as appropriate, who will give specialist advice as required. Where a formal contract arises, reference will be made to any insurance liability and to payment of a professional fee and/or expenses where appropriate.

7. Committees board or panel membership

The officers of the Amicus/CPHVA are invited to sit on a variety of boards, committees, panels and steering groups by a range of organisations. The acceptance to participate will be prioritised in the following way:

- interests of the organisations members
- interests of the individual professions
- interests of public health

These requests must be considered on an individual basis and must depend on the time commitment and the perceived value to the membership. Participation should not be agreed unless the participant has the resources and time to fulfil that commitment.

8. Political context

This document will be regularly reviewed to ensure that it addresses the scope of the organisations activities, creating a working environment that is supported by a clearly defined ethical policy. In all of our work we will be able to demonstrate our commitment to ensure that all of our activities are in the members' interests.

In terms of political awareness, as an organisation, our intention is to lead by example. This can be borne out by the organisations we choose to work with.

The Amcius/CPHVA retains its political independence and remains non-affiliated to any political party.

The Amcius/CPHVA will ensure, where possible, that the importance we place on equity, equality and equal opportunity is demonstrated by organisations we work with by examining:

- their constitution
- their Articles of Association and
- their guidelines for commercial activity.

9. Commissioning

The Amicus/CPHVA will at all times follow practice that will ensure that efficient use is made of resources when commissioning work from external companies/organisations ensuring that best value for money is achieved. In most cases this will involve a tendering process, the successful company will be that which is able to demonstrate quality and cost efficiency and fulfil criteria in section 2.1.

10. Commercial consultancy

The Amicus/CPHVA will, at times, provide a consultancy service for commercial companies or other organisations. These arrangements will be subject to the companies fulfilling criteria outlined in section 2.1.

Any income generated will be used to fund additional professional activity.

11. Research

There may be occasions where the Amicus/CPHVA is approached by other organisations to collaborate in or endorse research projects.

11.1 The Amicus/CPHVA as research subject

Where the Amicus/CPHVA, as an organisation, is the subject of research and access to the membership database is required. When relevant these proposals should be scrutinised and agreed by the Executive Committee in discussion with the director or relevant professional officer on a case by case basis

11.2 Requests to participate in or support the development of research proposals

Providing the intended research is relevant to the aims of the Association and its membership, such requests will be considered on an individual basis. Participation by the Association will be agreed following discussion with the Education and Research committee or the Chair of that committee, the Director and the Professional Officer for Research and Practice Development. Where the Amicus/CPHVA will be making a financial contribution to the research, this must be agreed by the Director and the Associations' Chair. If a decision can not be reached the matter should be discussed with the Executive committee.

The ability to influence as an equal partner should also be discussed before any such participation is considered. The Association has limited resources to take an active role in research but should consider supporting the building of collaborative links between research active members and the researchers.

11.3 Request to support research proposals submissions for funding

Providing the methodology is relevant and robust and the application addresses an issue of concern to health visiting, community nursing or the associations membership the Amicus/CPHVA will consider writing a letter in support of the request for funding.

In the first instance the request will be screened by the professional officer for research and practice development and agreed with the director. Where there is uncertainty and the proposal will be sent to (two members of the research advisory panel) for peer review.

11.4 Requests for use of the membership database

This should not be given without the consent of the individuals concerned. The research body should pay the Amicus/CPHVA to write to members seeking their involvement with the research. When the Amicus/CPHVA commissions research it will inform its membership that they may be contacted by a researcher and the nature of the research so that they have time to consider whether they wish to participate.

11.5 Research funding

Any research funding given should be clearly stated with terms and conditions illustrated.

11.6 Requests to sit on advisory groups supporting specific research

These requests must be considered on an individual basis and must depend on the time commitment and the perceived value of the research to the membership. These requests usually require an additional amount of time from the professional officer or member taking up that seat therefore participation should not be considered unless the participant has the resources to be an equal and active partner.

12. Data Protection

There will be compliance with every aspect of the Data Protection Act 1998. Membership details will not be made available to any other organisation except for a stated purpose. This is usually where a one-off mailing or contact is involved for information to be used by the organisation, for example, the Health Visitor Omnibus. Our current publishers McMillan Scott who currently send out the Community Practitioner Journal mailing are entered on the Data Protection Register.

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