

UK Hearing Conservation Association (UKHCA) Corporate Membership & Partnership Policy

1. Who we are

UKHCA is the umbrella body providing a collective voice for hearing health protection and raising awareness of the impact of noise on such in the UK. Our supporters represent suppliers of equipment and kit, consultants, professional service providers and their representative bodies, charities, not for profit organisations and academics.

UKHCA strives to prevent noise induced hearing loss, tinnitus and other hearing health conditions in workers and across wider society through practical, evidenced and cost-effective solutions. This is achieved through partnership with its membership and partnership organisations, communication strategies, identifying research gaps and promoting best practice.

UKHCA operates as a not for profit charitable organisation, maintaining an independent voice while working with industry and government partners. The operational and activity costs of the organisation are raised via annual membership fees and donations from supporting and partnership organisations. UKHCA seeks support for funding in order to build its core capacity and advocacy activities and to help to initiate new and expand existing activities. UKHCA has an open, transparent framework to guide its funding agreements as detailed below.

The UKHCA is governed by its members through a board of directors, known as the Council.

2. Purpose of this policy document

The purpose of this policy document is to provide a framework for how working with external organisations should be initiated, managed, and maintained with the intention of making sure that difficulties arising through inappropriate relationships is minimised, and to ensure that any such relationship is in line with the stated mission and objectives of UKHCA and its supporting organisations.

3. When to apply the policy

Membership applications, donations, external support, Corporate and Charitable Partnerships, or collaborations with an external organisation where resources are provided directly to UKHCA fall under the guidance of this policy. This includes, but is not limited to accepting corporate members, marketing, affinity, sponsorship, project, campaign or initiative funding, in-kind support and conference sponsorship. This policy also applies to advertising in any UKHCA online or other publications.

4. Policy implementation

It is the responsibility of all members of UKHCA; and primarily the responsibility of its Council to correctly implement this policy on every occasion that a relationship with an external organisation is implemented. All information passed to UKHCA should be held in strictest confidence and in line with GDPR. This will be achieved via Fitwise Management Ltd on behalf of the UKHCA

5. Core principles in working with industry supporters

5.1 Transparency

UKHCA strives to have clear processes for its work including its decision-making processes, utilising its website and other appropriate communication tools. This includes a 'how we are funded' section

of the website displaying our founding member organisations and Partners.

Specific figures detailing level of financial support are not required to be displayed publicly but are available by request to UKHCA.

The Directors will appoint a Treasurer who will oversee the organisation's finances and present this to the Council and members on at least an annual basis.

The finances will be controlled by the Treasurer and one other appointed Director and either of these will be responsible for signing off any spend or investment from the organisation, in consultation with the Council.

5.2 Strategic and editorial independence

UKHCA will produce a strategic plan of activities for the year(s) ahead with clearly defined objectives (e.g. policy to influence, action to be taken). Members and Partners may wish to support this plan in whole or in parts. They will contribute to development and delivery of the plan which may influence the strategic direction of the UKHCA. Annually the strategic plan will be presented to members and asked to be passed at the AGM. UKHCA will retain editorial independence on all UKHCA materials.

All sponsorship and collaborative efforts between UKHCA Members and Partners must advance the UKHCA mission, as assessed by the Council. UKHCA will not accept restricted or designated funds for activities that are inconsistent with the vision and mission of UKHCA and its strategic and other plans. By the same token, at no point may the Member or Partner veto what UKHCA decides or says or publishes.

5.3 Plurality

UKHCA will strive to have multiple companies supporting its activities to avoid the appearance of an alliance with any one company, its products, legislative agenda or regulatory concerns.

5.4 Principles of collaborative working

Any external relationship should be based on integrity, openness, transparency, independence, accountability, mutual respect and benefit for all concerned. Each party should be clear about its roles and responsibilities and the limits of these and these together with all material terms of the arrangement, should be consistent with these guidelines and must be set out in a written, binding agreement between the parties.

5.5 Ethical guidelines

UKHCA will not ally itself in any way with any organisation whose activities are likely to be seen as harmful to the health or safety of our working population, or prejudices the equality of those with current hearing loss, tinnitus or affected hearing function.

There will be situations where there is uncertainty about the suitability of collaboration with a company or association with a product. Caution must be exercised in all cases and due diligence (to allow an educated decision to be made) should be completed. The Council will be responsible for making final decisions in any areas of doubt.

UK HCA will not accept money from a source or activity that is

- Illegal;
- Unverifiable as to its source;
- Where the relationship will be counter-productive to UK HCA's objectives and mission.

5.6 Corporate Responsibility

It is vital that when UKHCA enters into a partnership with a company that there are no conflicts of interest that might arise and adversely affect any existing relationship.

Risks to be considered are:

- A company wanting an exclusive partnership – UKHCA will encourage multiple partners backing its activities. Exclusivity of funding for projects may only be considered for a specific and defined time period where it is of exceptional benefit to UKHCA.
- However, no partnership will be offered exclusively to any one product within a product category (for example, one hearing protection manufacturer to the exclusion of others) unless, as indicated, there is exceptional benefit to UKHCA.

5.7 Individual Responsibility

UKHCA's Council are obliged to disclose any conflicts of interest in order to avoid potential ethical conflict.

A conflict of interest is defined as involvement in activities that are contrary or may be perceived to be contrary to:

- the goals of the organisation
- the reputation of the organisation
- the independence of the organisation

5.8 Product Endorsement

UKHCA does not endorse companies, individual products or services. However, UKHCA will enter into a cause-related marketing agreement with a corporate partner, employing its name and logo on a commercial product under carefully controlled conditions which will be outlined in a contract. UKHCA will provide appropriate recognition of company sponsorship but such recognition should not be interpreted as endorsement of particular policies or products.

5.9 Use of UKHCA name or logo

UKHCA holds final approval of all uses of its name, logo and other identifying symbols. These symbols can be used by commercial entities only if their use furthers UKHCA's mission and only with the written consent of the UKHCA Director, or otherwise as part of their membership conditions.