Sponsored Editorial: Publisher Policy and Governance

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Introduction

This document sets out ACNR's policies and editorial governance arrangements as they specifically apply to sponsored editorial content. It is intended to provide transparency for commercial partners regarding how ACNR manages the commissioning, review, approval, and publication of sponsored content.

ACNR is a specialist journal addressing clinical neuroscience and rehabilitation, for qualified healthcare professionals. Our commitment to editorial integrity, scientific accuracy, and compliance with applicable codes of practice applies equally to sponsored and non-sponsored content.

This document should be read alongside ACNR's wider editorial policies available at acnr.co.uk/about-acnr/policies-and-forms and the specific terms set out in any signed agreement between ACNR/Whitehouse Publishing and the sponsoring organisation.

1. Editorial Independence and Separation of Functions

ACNR operates a strict separation between its editorial and commercial functions. Advertising revenue and sponsorship income have no influence over editorial decisions, including the commissioning, review, or approval of content.

- All editorial decisions are made solely by ACNR's editors and, where applicable, peer reviewers. The sponsoring organisation has no editorial control over the content of articles published in ACNR.
- Sponsored editorial is commissioned and managed by the Publisher (Whitehouse Publishing). The editorial team retains full and final authority over content that appears in ACNR.
- Advertising and sponsorship relationships are managed entirely separately from the editorial process.

> **Compliance reference:**
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> *ACNR's advertising and sponsorship policy is published in full at acnr.co.uk and complies with the ABPI Code of Practice and the Principles of Transparency and Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing (COPE/DOAJ/OASPA/WAME).*

2. Transparency and Labelling of Sponsored Content

All sponsored editorial content published by ACNR is clearly and prominently identified as sponsored.

- Sponsored articles are labelled 'Sponsored Editorial' in all formats.
- Sponsored content is clearly differentiated from peer-reviewed articles and independent editorial content, and appears in our Sponsored Editorials Archive.
- The sponsoring organisation is identified clearly in the published piece.

This ensures that ACNR's specialist clinical readership is never misled as to the provenance or funding of any content, in accordance with both ABPI Code requirements and ACNR's own editorial standards.

3. Editorial Sign-Off and Final Approval

ACNR's editors hold full and final authority for approving sponsored editorial content prior to publication. This mirrors the editorial authority held over all other ACNR content.

Process: Once content has been supplied by the sponsor, it undergoes review by the ACNR editorial team. The editors may request revisions to ensure the content meets ACNR's editorial standards, is factually accurate and is suitable for the journal's readership.

Final sign-off: Publication does not proceed without confirmation of editorial approval. The editors' decision is final.

Sponsor review: The sponsoring organisation is provided with an opportunity to review the final layout of the article in digital form prior to publication. ACNR will not publish content that the sponsor has not approved for publication.

No post-publication amendments: Once content has been published, any correction or amendment will follow ACNR's published Corrections and Retractions Policy (consistent with ICMJE guidance), and the sponsoring organisation will be notified accordingly.

4. Responsibility for Reference Accuracy

Scientific and clinical accuracy, including the accuracy and completeness of references, is a shared responsibility between the content author(s) and the sponsoring organisation.

- Authors (whether internal to the sponsor, independent medical writers, or independent clinical experts) are responsible for ensuring that all claims made in the article are accurately supported by cited references.
- The sponsoring organisation, through its Medical/Scientific and Legal & Compliance review processes, is responsible for verifying that all content, including references, complies with the ABPI Code of Practice and applicable regulatory standards before submission to ACNR.
- ACNR's editors will review the content for appropriateness for the audience but do not independently verify every reference against its source. Sponsors should not rely on ACNR's editorial review as a substitute for their own regulatory and compliance review.
- Where the editorial team identifies apparent inaccuracies, unsupported claims, or referencing inconsistencies, these will be raised with the sponsor prior to publication.

> Practical note:
> *ACNR recommends that sponsors provide a reference list in full at the point of submission, with copies of key references available on request, to facilitate editorial review.*

5. Liability

As set out in ACNR's Advertising Policy, the sponsoring organisation and any associated agency agree, jointly and severally, to indemnify and hold harmless Whitehouse Publishing (the Publisher), its officers, agents, and employees against:

- any claims, suits, or expenses (including reasonable legal fees) arising from the publication of the sponsored content;
- claims relating to libel, violation of privacy, copyright infringement, plagiarism, or breach of third-party intellectual property rights;
- any regulatory or compliance issues arising from the content, including non-compliance with the ABPI Code of Practice or applicable medicines advertising legislation;
- any inaccuracies in the content supplied by or on behalf of the sponsor.

ACNR and Whitehouse Publishing will not be liable for the accuracy of content supplied by the sponsor. The Publisher's liability in the event of any failure to publish accepted content is limited to a refund of fees paid or later publication, at the Publisher's discretion.

6. Compliance with Applicable Codes and Regulations

All sponsored editorial published in ACNR must comply with the following:

- The ABPI Code of Practice for the Pharmaceutical Industry (current edition), including requirements relating to the promotion of medicines to healthcare professionals, the provision of educational materials, and the distinction between promotional and non-promotional content.
- Applicable UK and European legislation governing the advertising of medicinal products to healthcare professionals (MHRA guidance).
- ACNR's own Advertising Policy, available at acnr.co.uk/about-acnr/policies-and-forms.
- The Principles of Transparency and Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing (COPE/DOAJ/OASPA/WAME).

ACNR reserves the right to decline or withdraw any sponsored content that, in the editors' judgement, does not comply with these standards, regardless of whether the content has been previously approved by the sponsor's internal compliance function.

It is the sponsor's responsibility to ensure that all content submitted for publication in ACNR has received full internal medical, legal, and regulatory sign-off before submission. ACNR's editorial review does not constitute regulatory approval.

7. Content Ownership, Copyright, and Permitted Use

Copyright licensing: Content published in ACNR is made available under the terms of the Creative Commons CC BY 4.0 licence. This permits sharing and reuse, including by sponsoring organisations, provided appropriate attribution is given and any reuse complies with applicable regulatory requirements, including the ABPI Code and MHRA guidance. Reuse must not imply

endorsement by ACNR or Whitehouse Publishing. ACNR branding, logos and journal design elements are excluded from the licence unless separately agreed in writing.

No changes post-publication: Reprinted or reproduced content must appear exactly as published in ACNR, including all labels, authorship disclosures, and sponsorship statements. No amendments may be made to published content.

Ownership of supplied materials: The sponsoring organisation warrants that it holds all necessary rights to any text, data, images, or other materials supplied to ACNR for inclusion in sponsored content, and that publication by ACNR will not infringe the rights of any third party.

8. Author Disclosure and Conflicts of Interest

All authors of sponsored editorial content published in ACNR are required to disclose relevant conflicts of interest, including any financial relationships with the sponsoring organisation (speaker fees, advisory board membership, research funding, employment, etc.).

- Disclosure information will be published alongside the article in accordance with ACNR's Conflict of Interest Policy.
- Authors must complete ACNR's author disclosure form, available at acnr.co.uk/our-authors/author-disclosure.

Where content is authored wholly or in part by an employee or contractor of the sponsoring organisation, this must be clearly stated in the published article.

9. Patient Data, Consent, and Research Ethics

Any sponsored content containing patient data, case studies, or personal clinical information is subject to ACNR's Patient Consent and Confidentiality Policy. A signed patient consent form must be submitted alongside the manuscript where applicable.

Sponsored content reporting clinical research must comply with ACNR's Research Ethics Policy, including adherence to the Declaration of Helsinki principles. Details are available at acnr.co.uk/about-acnr/policies-and-forms.

10. Sponsored Editorial: Process Overview

The following summarises the standard process for commissioning and publishing sponsored editorial in ACNR.

Step	Stage	Responsibility
1	**Agreement signed**	Commercial terms, scope, and timelines agreed between Sponsor and ACNR/Whitehouse Publishing.
2	**Brief/outline agreed**	Topic, format, target audience, and key messages agreed. ACNR confirms editorial suitability.
3	**Content developed**	Content written by author(s). Sponsor responsible for internal medical/legal/regulatory review.
4	**Submission to ACNR**	Final sponsor-approved draft submitted to ACNR editorial team, with author disclosures and references.

5	Editorial review	ACNR editors review content for accuracy, clarity, audience appropriateness, and compliance with editorial standards.
6	Revisions (if required)	ACNR may request revisions. Sponsor/author responds within agreed timeframe.
7	Editorial sign-off	ACNR editors provide final approval.
8	Sponsor sign-off	Sponsors are provided with a proof layout for final approval. Publication proceeds only at this stage.
9	Publication	Content published in ACNR as Sponsored Editorial, clearly labelled.

11. Frequently Asked Questions: Legal & Compliance

The following questions and answers address the most common queries raised by pharmaceutical company Legal and Compliance teams in relation to sponsored editorial content published in ACNR.

Question	ACNR Position
Who has final editorial sign-off on sponsored content before publication?	ACNR's editors hold full and final authority for approving all content published in ACNR, including sponsored editorial. The sponsor has the opportunity to review content for regulatory/compliance purposes before submission to ACNR, but sponsor approval does not substitute for editorial sign-off. Publication does not proceed without editorial approval.
Who is responsible for ensuring compliance with the ABPI Code of Practice?	The sponsoring organisation is responsible for ensuring that all sponsored content complies with the ABPI Code of Practice and applicable UK medicines advertising legislation before submission to ACNR. Sponsors should complete their full internal MLR (Medical, Legal, Regulatory) review prior to submission. ACNR's editorial review does not constitute ABPI Code compliance certification.
Who is responsible for the accuracy of references cited in sponsored content?	The author(s) and the sponsoring organisation are responsible for the accuracy and completeness of all references. ACNR editors will review content for plausibility and may query apparent inconsistencies, but do not independently verify all references. Sponsors should not rely on ACNR's review as a substitute for their own reference verification processes.

Will the content be clearly identified as sponsored?	Yes, without exception. All sponsored content in ACNR is labelled 'Sponsored Editorial' in all published formats. The sponsoring organisation is identified. Sponsored content appears in a dedicated section of the website, clearly distinct from peer-reviewed and independent editorial content.
Who holds liability for the accuracy and regulatory compliance of the content?	The sponsoring organisation (and any associated agency) accepts liability for the accuracy of the content supplied and for its compliance with applicable regulations and codes. ACNR/Whitehouse Publishing is indemnified against claims arising from the content as set out in ACNR's Advertising Policy and the signed agreement.
Is sponsored content peer reviewed?	Sponsored editorial is not peer reviewed in the same manner as independent research or review articles. Content is reviewed by ACNR's editorial team for accuracy, clinical appropriateness, and compliance with editorial standards. The editorial team may request revisions. Sponsors are responsible for the scientific and regulatory rigour of the content they supply.
Can the sponsor make changes to the content after ACNR editorial approval?	Once ACNR has given editorial sign-off, substantive changes to the content will require a further editorial review cycle. Minor factual corrections may be accommodated subject to editorial agreement and timeline constraints. Changes requested after the content has gone to layout production may not be possible and may incur additional charges.
Can the sponsor review the content before it is published?	Yes. The standard process provides for the sponsor to submit content that has already received internal MLR approval. ACNR will communicate any editorial revisions to the sponsor and will not publish content without giving the sponsor an opportunity to review any changes. However, the sponsor does not have the right to override editorial decisions.
What happens if ACNR's editors and the sponsor disagree on content?	ACNR's editors will explain any objections or required changes. Where a disagreement cannot be resolved, ACNR reserves the right to decline to publish the content. In such cases, the Publisher will discuss the appropriate commercial resolution, which may include a partial or full refund, depending on the stage reached and the terms of the signed agreement.

Does ACNR endorse the products or services described in sponsored content?	No. Publication of sponsored editorial in ACNR does not constitute endorsement by ACNR, Whitehouse Publishing, or the ACNR editorial team of any product, service, or clinical position described in the content. This should not be implied in any subsequent use or reproduction of the content.
What are ACNR's requirements regarding author conflicts of interest?	All authors must disclose relevant conflicts of interest using ACNR's standard disclosure form. Disclosure information is published with the article. All substantive contributors must be identified. The sponsoring organisation should ensure authors are aware of this requirement at the outset.
Can the sponsor reproduce or distribute the published article?	Content published in ACNR is made available under the terms of the Creative Commons CC BY 4.0 licence. This permits sharing and reuse, including by sponsoring organisations, provided appropriate attribution is given and any reuse complies with applicable regulatory requirements, including the ABPI Code and MHRA guidance. Reuse must not imply endorsement by ACNR or Whitehouse Publishing. ACNR branding, logos and journal design elements are excluded from the licence unless separately agreed in writing.
How does ACNR handle corrections to published sponsored content?	Corrections are handled in accordance with ACNR's Corrections and Retractions Policy (consistent with ICMJE guidance). The sponsoring organisation will be notified of any proposed correction. Corrections are published transparently; published articles are not silently amended.
Does the agreement need to include any additional terms beyond the standard arrangement?	ACNR's sponsored editorial agreements are designed to address the typical requirements of pharmaceutical company Legal and Compliance teams and reflect the policies set out in this document. If specific additional clauses are required (for example, relating to timelines, version control, or reprint rights), these should be discussed with the Publisher at the outset. Any agreed amendments will be documented in the signed agreement.

12. Further Information and Contact

For any questions relating to the policies set out in this document, or to discuss a specific sponsored editorial project, please contact the Publisher:

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Email: rachael@acnr.co.uk
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This document is reviewed annually and updated as required. It takes precedence over general ACNR advertising policy in matters relating specifically to sponsored editorial content. Document version: 1.0, January 2026.