

COMPLAINANT V NOVARTIS

Allegations regarding arrangements for a sponsorship

This case was in relation to Novartis's sponsorship of a patient organisation's annual event, which brought together patients, carers and health professionals, to raise awareness of latest developments in the therapy area.

The complainant was non-contactable and described themselves as a current employee or contractor of Novartis.

The complainant alleged that Novartis had committed to a sponsorship arrangement with a patient agreement without it being properly reviewed and approved internally by Novartis. The complainant further alleged a breach of Clause 27.2 of the Code because the sponsorship agreement had not been certified.

As part of its response to the complaint, Novartis provided evidence that the activity had been approved formally in June 2025 and the sponsorship agreement had been certified in July 2025, in advance of the sponsored event taking place in October 2025. The PMCPA case preparation manager therefore concluded that there was no case to answer on this allegation.

However, in its response to the complaint, Novartis admitted that the sponsorship agreement itself had not been signed in advance of the event. Novartis submitted that this was an isolated error in which signing the agreement had been overlooked due to a team restructure at the relevant time. Novartis accepted a breach of Clause 27.2 for failing to sign the agreement. The case preparation manager considered the nature of the breach, and concluded that this matter was suitable for the abridged complaints procedure because Novartis:

- accepted a breach of the Code,
- confirmed, following an investigation, that this was not a systemic issue, and
- provided the required undertaking and assurance.

The outcome under the 2024 Code of Practice was:

Breach of Clause 27.2	Failing to have a written agreement in place for donations, grants or sponsorship to a patient organisation
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Complaint received 30 November 2025

Case completed 17 February 2026