

The ABPI Code of Practice for the Pharmaceutical Industry sets standards for the promotion of medicines for prescribing to health professionals and the provision of information to the public about prescription only medicines. Publicity is the main sanction when breaches of the Code are ruled. The latest case ruled in breach of Clause 2 of the Code (a sign of particular censure) and where a company was publicly reprimanded is highlighted below.

SANOFI has breached the ABPI Code of Practice for the Pharmaceutical Industry and brought discredit upon, and reduced confidence in, the pharmaceutical industry. In addition, Sanofi was publicly reprimanded.

SANOFI – CASE/0689/08/25

For a Sunday Express article, a Health Service Journal article and two related social media posts by its employees, which promoted Sanofi's medicine, Beyfortus (nirsevimab) to the public, and included misleading claims and comparisons with Pfizer's vaccine (thereby disparaging it), Sanofi was ruled in breach of the following clauses of the 2024 Code:

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| Clause 2 | - Bringing discredit upon, and reducing confidence in, the pharmaceutical industry |
| Clause 5.1 | - Failing to maintain high standards |
| Clause 6.1 | - Providing misleading information |
| Clause 6.2 | - Making an unsubstantiated claim |
| Clause 6.6 | - Disparaging another company's medicine |
| Clause 8.1 | - Failing to certify promotional material |
| Clause 26.1 | - Advertising a prescription only medicine to the public |
| Clause 26.2 | - Providing unbalanced information and encouraging members of the public to ask for a specific prescription only medicine |

In addition, the Code of Practice Appeal Board imposed a public reprimand and required Sanofi to provide the Appeal Board with a copy of its third-party audit report, and to appear at the Appeal Board meeting in October 2026 to provide details of the actions it has taken, and is taking, as a result of the third-party audit. The Appeal Board reserved the decision regarding the application of additional sanctions until consideration of this information.

The interim case report and public reprimand are available at www.pmcpa.org.uk.

The Prescription Medicines Code of Practice Authority (PMCPA) is the self-regulatory body for the pharmaceutical industry in the UK and was established by The Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry (ABPI) to operate the ABPI Code of Practice for the Pharmaceutical Industry independently of the ABPI. The PMCPA is a division of the ABPI. The Code covers the promotion of medicines for prescribing to health professionals and the provision of information to the public about prescription only medicines.

If you have any concerns about the activities of pharmaceutical companies in this regard, please contact the PMCPA at 2nd Floor, Goldings House, Hay's Galleria, 2 Hay's Lane, London, SE1 2HB, email: complaints@pmcpa.org.uk, or visit www.pmcpa.org.uk/complaints-procedure/make-a-complaint.

The Code and other information, including details about ongoing cases, can be found on the PMCPA website: www.pmcpa.org.uk.