



**Medicines and Healthcare  
products  
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Mr Charles Medawar  
Social Audit Ltd  
P.O. Box 111  
London NW1 8XG

20th May 2005

Dear Mr Medawar,

I am writing on behalf of the Agency in reply to your FOIA request of [25 April](#) 2005, addressed to Sir Alasdair Breckenridge.

You ask whether Sir Alasdair made known his recreational interest in the stockmarket on his appointment to the Chairmanship of the CSM and then the MHRA. The former appointment was subject to the then Code of Practice for Ministerial Appointments to Public Bodies, and while serving as Chairman on the CSM Sir Alasdair was subject to the rules relating to declarations of interest set out in the Code of Practice for Members of the Medicines Commission and Section 4 Committees and Sub-Committees. In his appointment as the Chairman of the MHRA, Sir Alasdair is subject to the [Civil Service Management Code](#).

To take your points in turn:

1 and 2: There was no disclosure in writing by Sir Alasdair of his recreational interest in the stockmarket in relation to his appointments to the Chair of the CSM and of the MHRA.

Recreational interests are not required to be disclosed unless the person believed that it could be regarded as influencing his advice.

3 and 4: MHRA took no steps to extract details on any of the areas you cite. Under the relevant Codes, the onus is on the individual Committee Chair or member, or staff member to disclose interests which he or she considers relevant. Once interests are disclosed, the Agency will advise that individual of any Agency requirements concerning the retention, disposal or management of those interests. The Agency is not required, under the relevant Codes, to investigate proactively the possibility of any interests other than those that have been declared:

5. The Code of Practice for applicants for the new Commission on Human Medicines is currently being finalised. But it is likely to specify that the Chairs and members of the CHM, the Homoeopathics Board and the new Herbal Medicines Committee must hold no direct personal interests in the pharmaceutical industry. This will apply also to the Chairs of Expert Advisory Groups. All Chairs and members of the advisory committees must declare any financial interest or other matters that could affect their impartiality, or that could reasonably be perceived as affecting their impartiality.

Yours sincerely,

Roy Alder  
Director, Executive Support

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