

ASA monthly insights July 2025: Four(teen) rulings you need to know about

31 July 2025  Katharine Mason

The Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) published 40 rulings in July. As ever, the rulings assessed compliance under The UK Code of Non-broadcast Advertising and Direct & Promotional Marketing (CAP Code) and The UK Code of Broadcast Advertising (BCAP Code), and cover an eclectic range of products and services.

This particular batch highlights how the ASA will look at guidance from appropriate bodies as part of its investigation.

Prices must be accurate and genuine

Holiday listings which showed discounted prices were challenged when consumers were unable to purchase holidays at the advertised price. The pricing of the holidays was dynamic (i.e. it changed according to demand), but the company's website was unable to update in real time and there was no information explaining that prices could change.

The ASA referenced guidance from the Committee of Advertising Practice noting that in these circumstances, a "from" price could be used, along with wording making it clear the prices were subject to changes and information about when they were last updated.

A mattress advertiser who didn't provide evidence of having sold mattresses at the struck-through reference price was found to breach the CAP Code after a competitor complained. The ASA did not consider that changes to the website to refer to the struck-through price as "Similar Brands Avg Price" to deal with the issue that the products had not been sold by the advertiser itself at the higher price.

Encouraging people to skip meals ruled irresponsible

An ad on social media for a collagen matcha product was found to breach the CAP Code because it encouraged young women to skip breakfast in order to be more physically attractive. The ASA noted that NHS guidance cautions against skipping meals. The advertiser removed the ad which included claims such as "hot girls drink matcha" and "skip breakfast 10g protein 0.1g sugar".

ASA action on ads for weight loss injections

The Ad Codes reflect the law, and the law prohibits the advertising of prescription only medicines (POM) to the public. Currently, all injectable forms of weight-loss medication are POMs in the UK.

No surprise then that when investigating ads for weight-loss injections, the ASA sought input from the statutory regulator, the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA). Across 9 published rulings, the ASA reminded clinics that being able to prescribe a medicine is not the same as being able to advertise it.

The prohibition on advertising POMs goes further than stopping people from naming the medicine in an ad. Any reference which is likely to lead consumers to request a POM from their GP or specialist clinic will be problematic. This includes:

- generic descriptions such as "weight loss injections", "weight loss pen", "weight loss treatment", or "obesity treatment jab";
- references to the medicine being "prescribed on the NHS";
- imagery including partial imagery of a pen; and
- promotional discounts on prices and was/now reference pricing.

The ASA has confirmed that there are further investigations underway and that its Active Ad Monitoring system continues to conduct monitoring sweeps.

Using “only” in relation to calories is still a nutrition claim

The Ad Codes reflect the law on nutrition and health claims and so state that only nutrition claims authorised on the Great Britain nutrition and health claims register ([the GB NHC Register](#)) can be made in ads for food.

Back in 2008, the ASA ruled that a reference to “only one gram of fat” was likely to be interpreted as meaning the food was low in fat and was non-compliant because it didn’t meet the criteria for the claim “low in fat”.

This time the claim “[only 91 calories](#)” was considered likely to be interpreted as the same as a “low energy” nutrition claim. To make a low energy claim a product cannot contain more than 40 kcal per 100g for solids. The chocolate products in question were between 413 or 415 kcal per 100g.

The ASA also considered that the context of the ad made implied “reduced energy” claims (i.e. that the products had 30% fewer calories than other products) which wasn’t the case. Therefore, the radio ad was ruled non-compliant under the BCAP Code. The ruling refers to the situation in Great Britain, for advertising in Northern Ireland the EU list would apply, but the lists haven’t yet diverged when it comes to nutrition claims.

And finally, one for fun: ASA rules on Easter egg hunts

While chocolate is ageless, the ASA ruled Easter bunny and Easter eggs hunts are [likely to be of particular appeal to children](#) and therefore should not feature in gambling advertising (same [applies to Santa](#), if you’re wondering).

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