

# Navigating new advertising restrictions on junk food

24 September 2024

Touched upon in our [Summer 2024 update](#), the UK government's latest initiative to combat childhood obesity through stringent [advertising](#) is set to take effect on 1 October 2025.

These new regulations will significantly alter how less healthy [food and drink](#) products are advertised on TV, online, and on-demand programme services regulated by Ofcom. This move is part of a broader ambition to cultivate the healthiest generation of children in the nation's history, addressing the urgent public health crisis of childhood obesity.

The restrictions include a 9pm watershed for advertising less healthy food and drink products on TV and a comprehensive ban on paid-for online advertising of these products aimed at UK users.

For businesses within the food and drink sector, understanding the scope and implications of these restrictions is crucial. The government's response to the consultation process has clarified the definitions and exemptions outlined in the draft regulations, including specific considerations for audio-only content and a new consultation targeting the application of restrictions to internet protocol television (IPTV) services. There are also exemptions for SMEs and for [brand advertising](#).

## Implications for the food and drink industry

The restrictions aim to reduce children's exposure to advertisements for less healthy products, encouraging the industry to innovate and market healthier options more prominently.

Businesses should begin by assessing their product portfolios against the nutrient profiling model (NPM) criteria set out in the regulations to determine which products fall within the scope of the advertising restrictions. This assessment will be crucial for planning future marketing campaigns and product development strategies.

## Opportunities for innovation and growth

While the advertising restrictions pose challenges, they also offer opportunities for innovation within the food and drink industry. There is a growing consumer demand for healthier food options, and businesses that lead in developing and marketing these products stand to gain a competitive edge. The restrictions encourage the industry to invest in reformulating existing products to meet healthier standards and to innovate new products that align with public health goals.

## Preparing for compliance

To ensure compliance by 2025, businesses in scope should take proactive steps, including:

- **Reviewing product portfolios:** Identify which products are affected by the advertising restrictions based on the NPM criteria and consider reformulation or new product development opportunities.
- **Adapting marketing strategies:** Shift focus towards marketing healthier products, especially during peak viewing times for children, and explore creative ways to engage consumers online within the new regulatory framework.
- **Engaging with regulatory bodies:** Stay informed about the latest guidance from regulatory bodies such as Ofcom and the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) to ensure all advertising practices are in compliance.

- **Investing in training:** Educate marketing and product development teams about the new regulations and the importance of aligning product portfolios and marketing strategies with public health objectives.

## Conclusion

The UK government's advertising restrictions represent a significant shift in the regulatory landscape for the food and drink industry, driven by the urgent need to address childhood obesity. By understanding the implications of these restrictions and embracing the opportunities for innovation, the industry can play a pivotal role in promoting healthier dietary choices and contributing to the health and wellbeing of future generations.

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## Key contacts

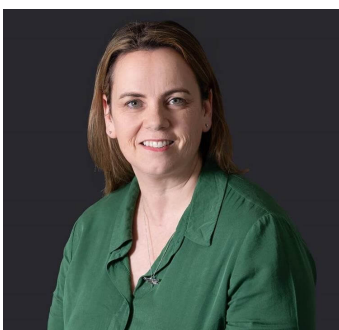


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