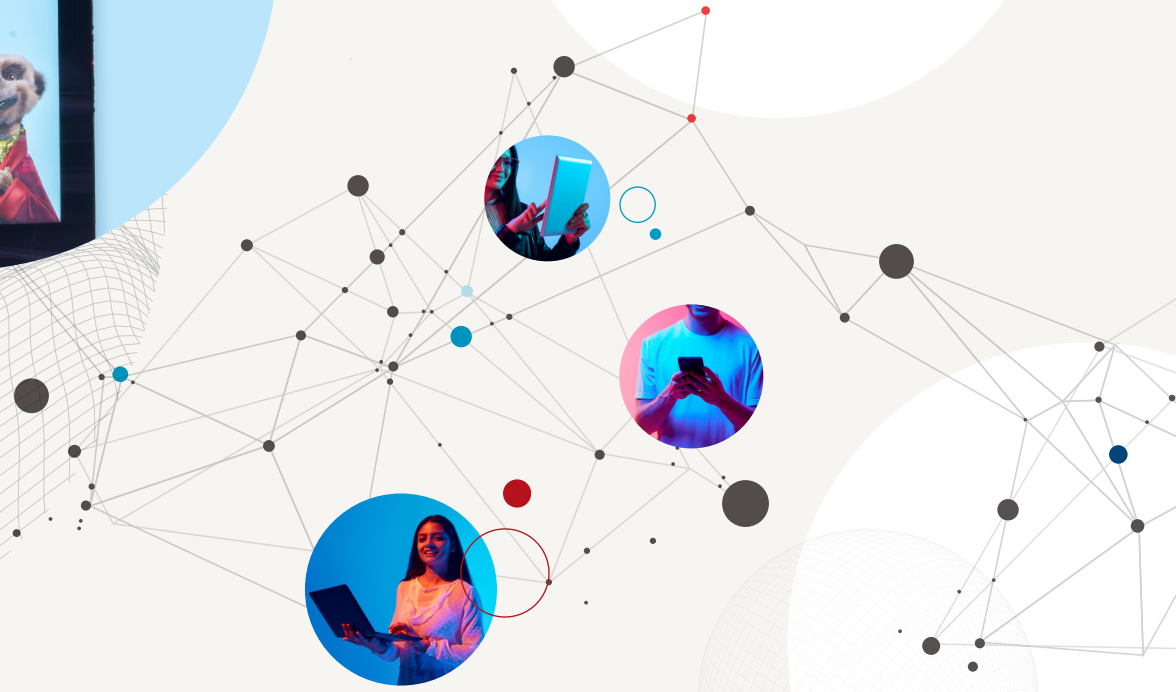
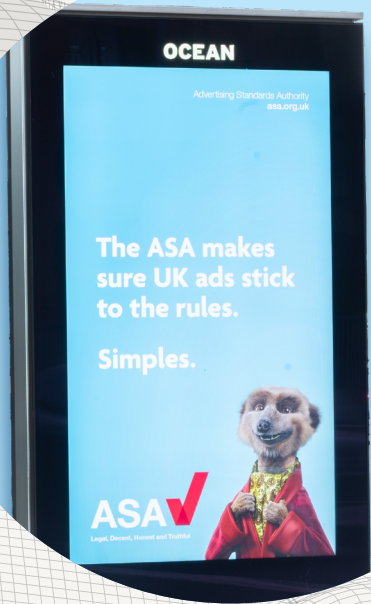


# 2024 Annual Report





The ASA and CAP work to make sure ads are responsible.

**We do this by setting rules, helping businesses comply with them and taking action against misleading, harmful or offensive ads to ensure compliance across all sectors and a level playing field.**



**The Advertising Standards Authority (ASA)** is the UK's independent, frontline regulator of advertising across all media



**The Committees of Advertising Practice (CAP)** write the UK Advertising Codes and provide authoritative guidance on the rules

## Contents

### Forewords

- A message from the ASA Chair, Nicky Morgan 02
- A message from the CAP Chair, James Best 04

### Chief Executive's report

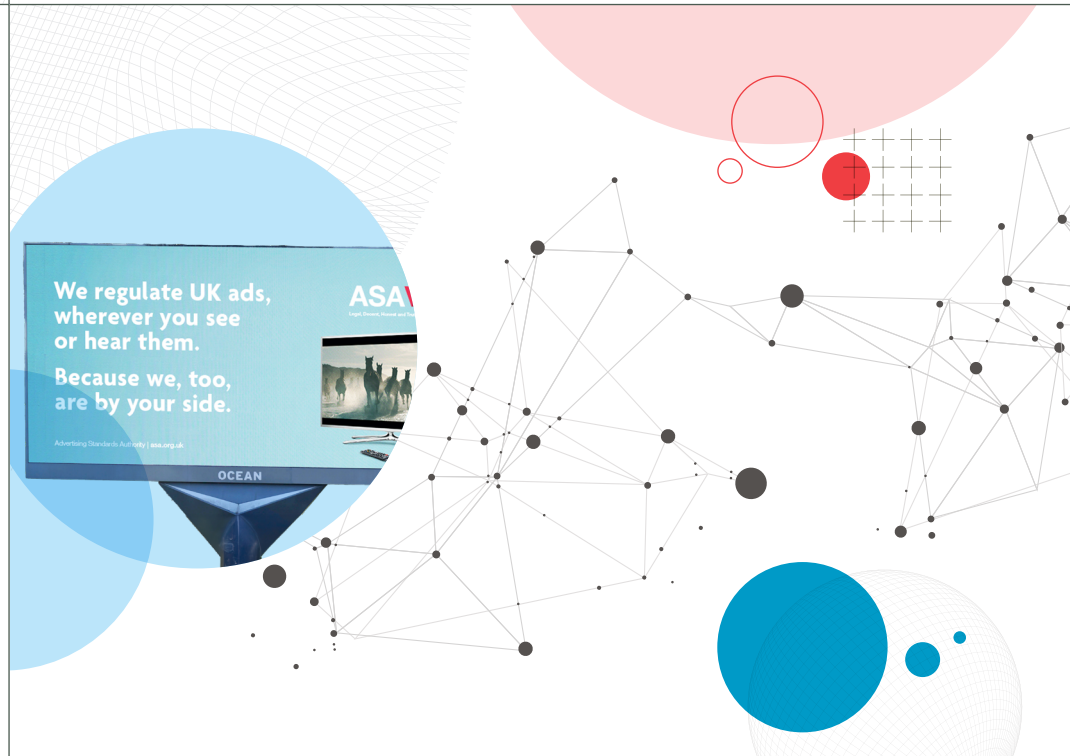
- A message from Guy Parker 06

### Our work in 2024

- Enhancing ad monitoring with AI 07
- Ensuring green claims are responsible 08
- Protecting children from online harms 09
- Protecting vulnerable consumers 10
- Public attitudes to advertising 11
- An evolving online regulatory framework 12

### Appendix

- Find out more online 13





**Nicky Morgan**  
**The Rt Hon the Baroness**  
**Morgan of Cotes**  
ASA Chair

Trust is essential in ensuring that our stakeholders, including Government, can have full confidence in our self-regulatory system.

## A message from the ASA Chair

It is a great pleasure and privilege to be the ASA's new Chair. Thank you to my predecessor, David Currie, for his leadership in building a positive culture as well as encouraging the ASA's adoption of AI and data science techniques in our work, as captured in our current strategy: *AI-assisted, collective ad regulation*.

Since my arrival, I have appreciated the collaborative nature, expertise and support of my new ASA Council colleagues and staff — particularly Guy Parker, our CEO.

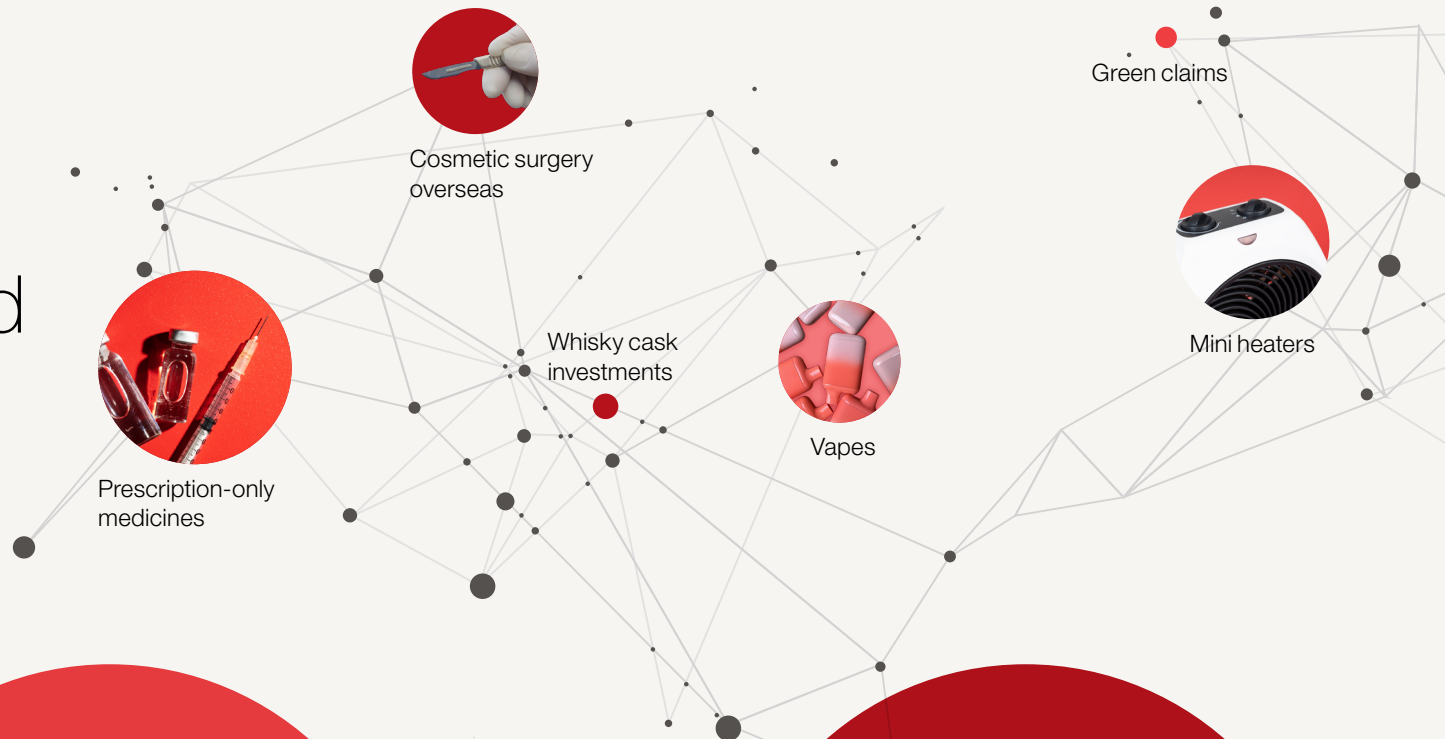
I am impressed by the ASA's sense of purpose, the broad acceptance and effectiveness of the self- and co-regulatory system across the sector and the positive relationship with stakeholders. The significant proactive element of the ASA's work, the quality of the research the team publishes, which is critical to inform our work and findings, and the need to ensure the long-term sustainability of our funding are all important for us to focus on too.

In an early interview, I described advertising as being akin to a 'window into society'. By that I mean that so much advertising content reflects the country and people we are — diverse, entrepreneurial and living much of our lives online now. I've also seen how content can cause harm, particularly to the most vulnerable, and how important ASA rulings are in terms of ensuring the public can trust the advertising they are seeing.

That trust is essential in ensuring that our stakeholders, including Government, can have full confidence in our self- and co-regulatory system. We will strive to retain our agility and responsiveness, so we can protect people, of course, but also support the growth and success of the advertising sector and the broader economy.



In 2024, the ASA and CAP secured the amendment or withdrawal of **33,903 ads**\*



**94%**

of these came from our proactive work using our Active Ad Monitoring system

**6%**

related to our reactive work responding to complaints

**84%**

of the ads amended or withdrawn are non-paid ads online – most of which relate to claims on companies' own websites and social media accounts

**16%**

relate to paid ads

\* These were predominantly ads for prescription-only medicines but also included ads for cosmetic surgery overseas, vapes, mini heaters and those making green claims.





## A message from the CAP Chair

CAP is a contradictory creature, really: constantly changing yet staying the same. There is the work that its committees, advisory panels and expert executive do to provide rules and guidance for advertisers and the ASA, which changes every year, as an astounding variety of current issues attract attention. 2024 was no different, with food, vaping, cosmetic tourism overseas, video games and the new Digital Markets Act all on our agenda.

Behind that work lies a structure and principles that have evolved over more than 60 years, but remain true to their origins as a durable system, despite seismic shifts in the industry and the society they serve.

Consider the changes. Once strictly self-regulatory, CAP and BCAP now combine self- and co-regulatory elements, working closely with statutory regulators. First national newspapers and then ITV led the advertising market, now we seek to maintain effective rules in one dominated by global players and online media. Initially dealing chiefly with printed advertisements, we now face advertising generated and placed, both perhaps with the help of AI, in millions of executions every day by tens of thousands of advertisers and content creators.

Our task has become more complex, fast-moving and wide in scope.

In response, we move with the times, using new tools and developing new approaches. Yet we persist with our underlying principles: that those subject to our rules, those who pay for the ASA and ensure compliance with its rulings, are responsible for abiding by the law. That our committees represent the broad church of a diverse industry. That they are guided by consumer interest, research, expert advisors and public consultation. That they act independently of Government, while seeking to reflect the law and public policy. That, as the rule-making legislature, they are separate from our independent judiciary, the ASA.

Those foundations have proved resilient, adaptable and effective in sustaining a framework of sensible rules for UK advertising throughout all the changes of the years. Despite some unusually testing challenges, they did so again in 2024, as this report shows. My thanks go to all those, past and present, who made that true.



**James Best**  
CAP Chair



**Our foundations have proved resilient, adaptable and effective in sustaining a framework of sensible rules for UK advertising.**



# CAP delivered **777,321 pieces** of advice and training to businesses in 2024

Most of these were visits  
to advice and guidance  
on our website.

It also includes:

**51,014**

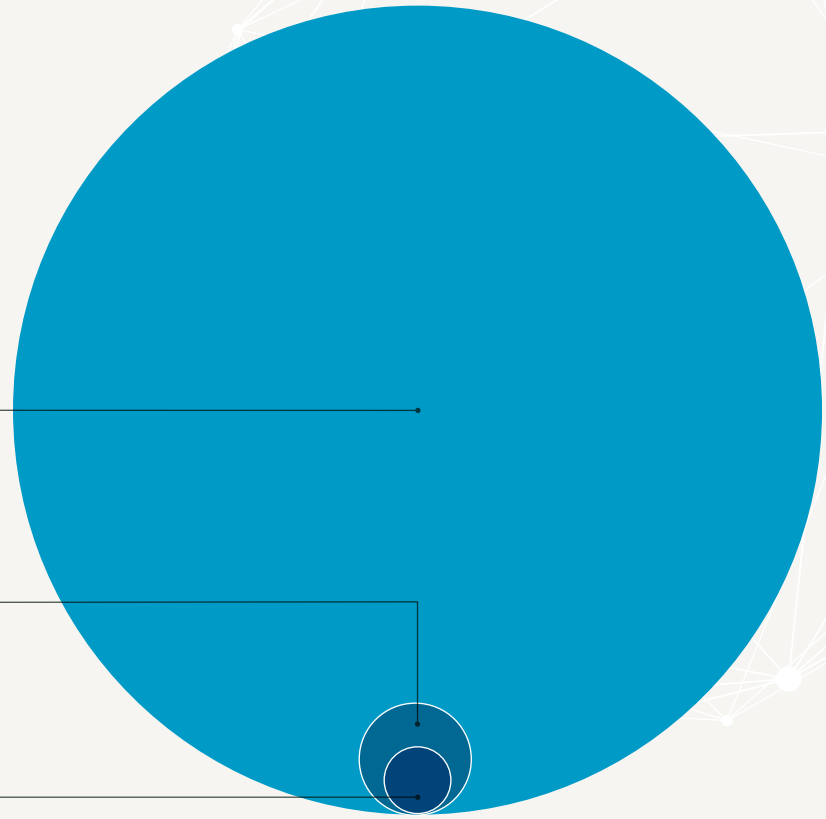
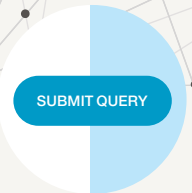
CAP newsletters read  
by subscribers

**5,981**

people participated  
in CAP training

**4,262**

queries answered by  
our Copy Advice team



# Chief Executive's report: A word from Guy Parker

Nicky's right: trust is essential for confidence in the ASA system. Happily, public trust is high. We know that because we track it around our UK-wide ASA ad campaign, which ran again in late 2024. 51% of people trust the ASA and only 6% distrust us. Importantly, those who saw or heard our ads were almost twice as likely to say they tended to trust most ads. And the media and platforms that generously donate us ad space get a dividend too, with all channels enjoying a boost in trust amongst those who saw or heard our campaign. Of course, ads must be deserving of that trust.

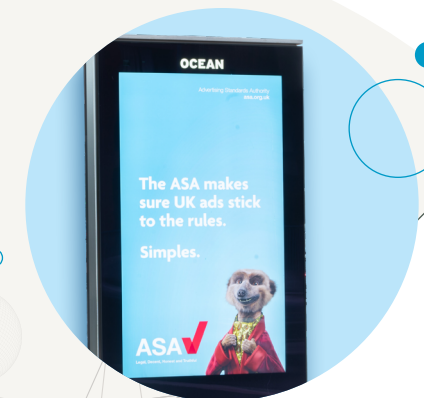
So, the Advertising Codes that CAP sets, the wealth of advice and training resources that the ASA system provides to help businesses get their ads right and the AI-assisted regulation that the ASA delivers, all combine to make advertising more worthy of trust.



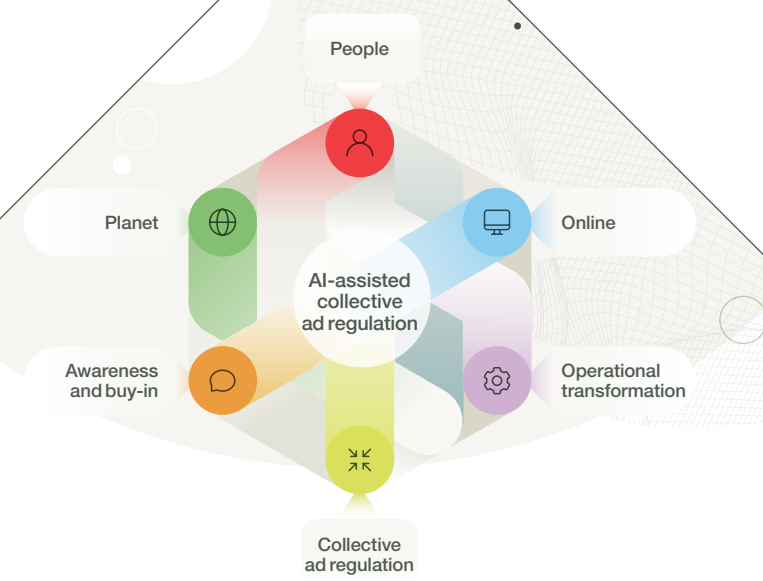
**Guy Parker**  
ASA Chief Executive

A word on year one of our five-year strategy: *AI-assisted, collective ad regulation*. That strategy continues to prioritise the ASA system's transformation into a preventative and proactive regulator, not just relying on public complaints to tell us where to act. How are we doing on that? Well, this report attests to the huge scale of our AI monitoring, with 28 million ads scanned in 2024. But there's another stat worth mentioning. Our strategy targets 2028 as when we'll spend more of our regulatory resource on preventative and proactive activities than reactive complaints casework. We've already exceeded that, with 59% of our activity being preventative/proactive in 2024.

We love creative, engaging, entertaining advertising. We know how crucial it is to funding journalism, content, sport and culture. To helping us to choose products and services. To encouraging us to contribute to good causes. To persuading us to make better lifestyle choices and stay safe. And to delivering competition and powering the economy. Responsible ads are good for people, good for society and good for business. Long may they flourish.



Those who saw or heard the ASA ads were more than twice as likely to trust the industry, and their trust in most ads almost doubled.





## Enhancing Ad Monitoring with AI

**In 2024, we made improvements to the Active Ad Monitoring system, our AI-based toolkit for monitoring online advertising. As a result, it processed 28 million ads in the last year, giving us much greater visibility of ads appearing online.**



**Adam Davison**  
Head of Data Science

28 million ads were captured and analysed by the Active Ad Monitoring system in 2024

### Active Ad Monitoring in high-priority areas

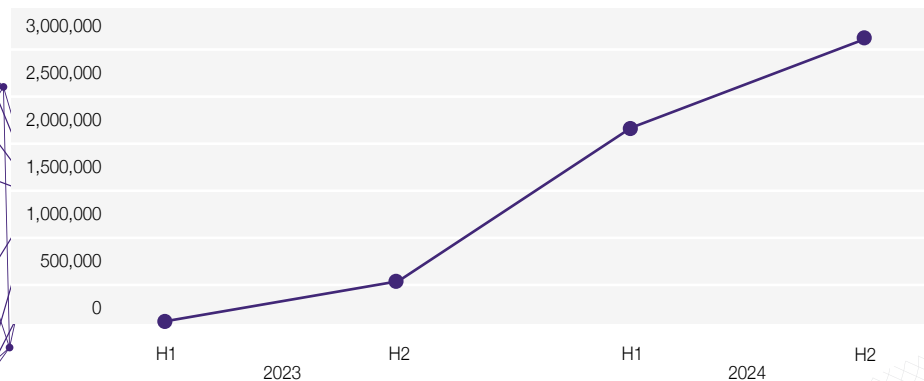
These AI-based tools are now used in most of our high-priority projects, including our climate change and environment project, as well as work on influencer marketing, financial advertising, prescription-only medicines, gambling, e-cigarettes, and cosmetic surgery clinics based outside the UK. The Active Ad Monitoring system was the source of 41 published formal rulings in 2024, nearly 15% of our total output. It also supported a wide range of enforcement action by our Compliance team, including more than 30,000 ads being amended or withdrawn.

2024 was also a year in which AI technology, more broadly, continued to advance at a rapid pace. We are making sure our work takes full advantage, with the Active Ad Monitoring system already making use of Large Language Models (LLMs) to speed up review of content in several projects. We are also actively experimenting with how these tools may make our internal processes more efficient in the future.

### Looking ahead

In 2025, we will continue to develop the Active Ad Monitoring system, increasing the number of topics it can monitor and working with industry to fill gaps in visibility. We will continue to integrate it more deeply into our work, ensuring it is not just innovative but also leads to us delivering visibly better regulation.

### Ads processed per month



# 10x increase

in the number of ads processed compared to last year.



**Miles Lockwood**  
Director of Complaints  
and Investigations, ASA

## Ensuring green claims are responsible

**Our work on climate change and the environment continues to be a priority area for the ASA.**



**Monthly sweeps show high levels of compliance following our airline rulings. Of the circa 140,000 ads monitored in April 2024, five were found to be non-compliant.**

### More compliant claims

In 2024, we saw evidence that businesses are adapting and evolving to make better evidenced, more precise green claims.

For instance, our Active Ad Monitoring system identified that many airlines were making misleading online claims that suggested flying was “sustainable” and “eco-friendly” where the evidence was lacking. Following a series of rulings and engagement with the sector, we’ve been pleased to see improvement and our routine monitoring now shows high levels of compliance.

Meanwhile, we carried out proactive monitoring of claims following publication of two pieces of research into green waste disposal and meat, dairy and plant-based food. We’ve been encouraged to find generally high levels of compliant claims being made, particularly by big brands.

### Providing more certainty

But we know there is more work to do, and we’re committed to helping responsible businesses navigate green claims with confidence. That’s why we worked with the CMA in 2024 to help develop their guidance for businesses in the greener homes sector. It’s why we’re working with the Department for Transport to help develop further guidance for airlines and why we’re continuing to support the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero in their plans for a key consultation on voluntary carbon markets. And we continue to support businesses by offering confidential Copy Advice services that help them to grow and prosper by making green claims with confidence.

#### Sponsored



Air France@  
[www.airfrance.co.uk/](https://www.airfrance.co.uk/)

**Manchester to Bangkok from | Air France flights MAN to DMK**



Air France is committed to protecting the environment: travel better and sustainably!

[Book Your Flight Now](#) · [Nos Meilleures Offres](#) ·

The ASA ruled this ad misleading, as Air France didn't provide any evidence about how they were protecting the environment or making aviation sustainable.





# Protecting children from online harms

**The ASA continued to prioritise the protection of children and young people through our proactive projects.**

## Age-restricted ads

A good example of this was our latest Tech4Good project, which sought to understand the online distribution chain of ads for alcohol, gambling and other age-restricted ads with the aim of reducing children’s exposure to them on websites and YouTube channels disproportionately popular with this age group.

The report presented a positive picture of how the industry is working to limit children’s exposure to age-restricted ads in these and other online environments. Of the 82,657 occasions when an ad was served in the monitored media, 133 (or 0.16%) related to age-restricted ads mistargeted to a child or neutral avatar.

**Emily Henwood**  
Operations Manager  
– Complaints



Just 50 (0.06% of the total) were served to a child avatar, and they related to age-restricted ads from 12 advertisers: two for food products high in fat, salt, or sugar; six for gambling; two for weight-loss products or treatments; two for e-cigarette products; and none for alcohol.

The report provided specific evidence around mis-categorisation of age-restricted ads, (which if categorised correctly were likely to have prevented the ad from being served), and inadequacies relating to the blocklisting of publications disproportionately popular with children.

## E-cigarettes

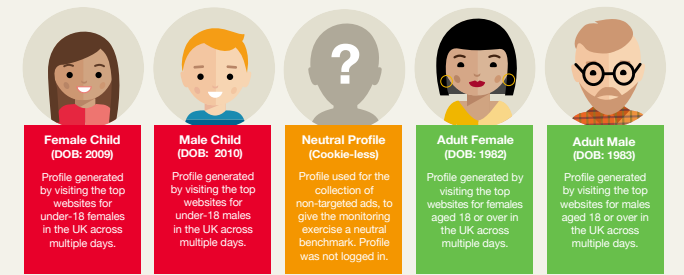
We also continued our work concerning vaping ads appearing in social media where, under the law and our rules, they shouldn’t. Our monitoring revealed problematic content from both influencers and businesses on all social media platforms.

We issued our second Enforcement Notice, this time to hundreds of key players including brands and retailers, directing them to stop any advertising on social media, including retailers’ own organic ads, paid ads, and influencer posts. Compliance action is ongoing and involves having social media accounts taken down where an advertiser appears unwilling or unable to stick to the rules.

## Looking to 2025

We’ll be publishing the results of another Tech4Good project next year, looking into the online supply pathway of in-app ads that objectify women. We’ll also be reviewing new research into young people’s media habits to help us consider if, in future, we should take a stricter approach to applying the gambling advertising rules. We’ll continue to use our research, ad monitoring tools and insights to ensure our regulation protects children and young people from potential advertising-related harms.

### The ASA used 5 Avatars representing the online profiles of...



Over the course of three months, the ASA monitored ads served to the avatars on 55 websites and 20 YouTube channels disproportionately popular with those aged 17 and under.



Ads for mini heaters, such as this one, were banned for implying that they were an economical alternative to other heating systems.

## Protecting vulnerable consumers

**The ASA has always prioritised the protection of vulnerable people from misleading, harmful or offensive ads. Vulnerability can derive both from membership of a particular group sharing certain characteristics, for example children, or as a result of a particular circumstance such as bereavement, a health condition or financial problems.**

### Health claims

In 2024, we investigated complaints about eight different drug and alcohol rehabilitation clinic referral services. The issues were transparency and clarity, as the ads were like to mislead and could affect particularly vulnerable people and their families. As well as acting on complaints, we used our Active Ad Monitoring system to proactively search for online ads that might break the rules.

We also shone a light on problem health claims by ruling against a range of supplement ads that claimed to treat menopause, anxiety, ADHD, and autism as well as ads that claimed CBD was suitable for consumption by children.

### Financial ads and savings claims

In relation to financial vulnerability, we found and ruled against ads by credit unions, because they irresponsibly encouraged consumers to spend more than they could afford by taking out loans to fund extravagant Christmas spending. We also found and ruled against ads that encouraged consumers to borrow money for Black Friday sales and spend more than they could afford.

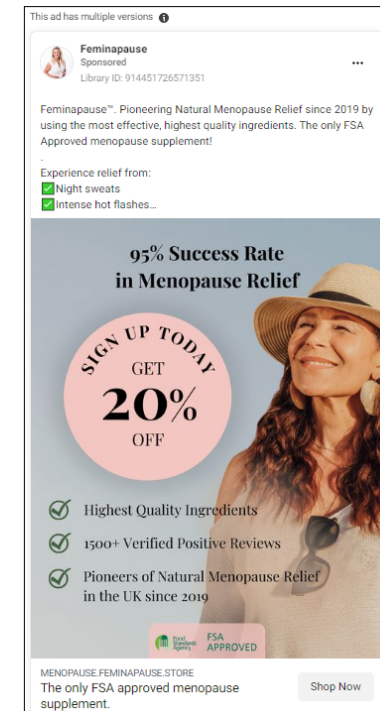
Our Compliance team tackled ads for electric plug-in mini heaters that sought to exploit vulnerable people through misleading claims about the efficacy of the devices' saving potential compared with traditional heating methods.

Going forward in 2025, we will continue to work with our Data Science team to understand the impact of our interventions to protect the vulnerable and to tackle new and emerging areas of concern.

**Jo Poots**  
Head of  
Complaints and  
Investigations, ASA



This ad for Feminapause was upheld because food supplements cannot imply that they treat or cure the symptoms of menopause. It also falsely implied Feminapause had been approved by the FSA.





**Kam Atwal**  
Research Lead

## Public attitudes to advertising

**Our research plays an important role in enabling proactive engagement with our largest groups of stakeholders – the UK public. Understanding public behaviours, concerns and attitudes is key to informing our evidence-based approach.**

### Developing our understanding

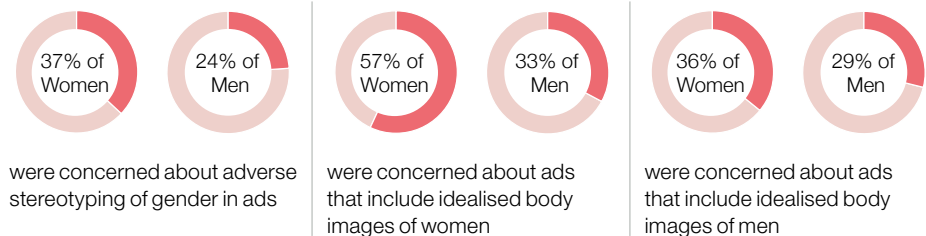
We do this by using a range of methodologies. In 2024, we continued our tracking study to understand public awareness and trust in the ASA. We published our qualitative research looking at the disclosure of host-read ads in podcasts, which led to new guidance being introduced, as well as continuing to inform our work on climate change and the environment, with our research into consumer understanding of environmental claims in food and drink ads. And, as part of our Tech4Good series, we published the findings of our unique insight into the online supply pathways of ads, continuing to use innovative solutions to inform our work on limiting children’s exposure to age-restricted ads.

### Capturing diverse perspectives

We also ensure we capture the views of the population as a whole by speaking to representative samples, across demographic groups, from all four nations. We commissioned three major projects in 2024. Our survey of over 6,500 respondents explored the ad-related concerns people have, to help understand the most important issues for us to tackle. We engaged 11-17-year-olds to help inform our rules restricting the appeal of gambling ads by understanding their affiliation with different sports, how they discover and engage with personalities of ‘strong appeal’ and what makes them appealing. Our third project, due for publication in 2025, looks at the public’s views on the depiction of older people in ads and to what extent certain portrayals give rise to offence or harm.

Insights from these studies are key to understanding public attitudes across a wide range of topics and informing our priority to protect vulnerable people.

### Our research into the public’s concerns about advertising showed differences between men and women



Source: YouGov Plc/ASA – July 2024, Adults 16+. Base: Women 3,426, Men 3,382.  
Q. Which, if any, of the following are you concerned about in adverts? Please select all that apply.



## An evolving online regulatory framework

**In 2024, we made good on our commitment to tackle harms arising from online advertising, not just through casework and innovative projects, but also through regulatory policy development.**

We worked with government, regulator and industry partners to ensure our framework evolves to meet the challenges of regulating online and remains fit-for-purpose to tackle irresponsible ads.

### Online Advertising Taskforce

We engaged with the former Government’s Online Advertising Programme and we remain an active participant of its Taskforce, which – now under the new Government – continues to drive better ways of minimising scam ads and mistargeting of age-restricted ads online. ASA representatives sit on each of the Taskforce’s working groups.

### Intermediary and Platform Principles (IPPs)

Under our flagship Intermediary and Platform Principles (IPPs), the likes of Amazon Ads, Google, Meta, TikTok, X (formerly Twitter), Yahoo for Business and others continued to help raise advertisers’ awareness of the UK advertising rules and, on notification from the CAP Compliance team, to act swiftly to remove persistently non-complying ads.

### Looking ahead

At the end of the year, we triggered the process of formalising the IPPs framework. In 2025, we’ll look to recruit more companies and, by 2026, we aim to deliver on our ambition to create a global first in advertising self-regulation: an online regulatory framework primarily focused on holding advertisers to account for the creative content and placement of their ads, but now complemented by a set of Principles, administered by the ASA, to which platforms and intermediary companies agree to be held to.



**Shahriar Coupal**  
Director, Committees of Advertising Practice

### Intermediary and Platform Principles – in short

A one-year pilot, 10 participating companies, all of whom (as applicable to the services they offer):

- ✓ Raised awareness of the CAP Code on their services
- ✓ Used Ts&Cs to help secure advertisers’ compliance with the Code
- ✓ Assisted with promoting awareness of the ASA regulatory system
- ✓ Supported advertisers to meet obligations with regard to paid age-restricted ads
- ✓ Acted swiftly against an advertiser that persistently refuses to remove a non-compliant paid ad
- ✓ Provided relevant information to the ASA to help carry out its investigatory regulatory duties

A full copy of the principles can be found at [asa.org.uk/ipp-principles](https://asa.org.uk/ipp-principles).





## Find out more online

You can find the following information on our website by clicking the titles below.



### [Performance against our 2024 objectives](#)

Information on the ASA's 2024 objectives and key performance indicators.



### [Independent Reviewer's report](#)

Sir Hayden Phillips, the Independent Reviewer of ASA Council Rulings, reports on cases he reviewed in 2024.



### [2024 Complaints and cases in context](#)

Find out how the complaints and cases break down by media, sector, issue, outcome and UK nation.



### [Advertising Advisory Committee report](#)

The Advertising Advisory Committee (AAC) provides advice from the perspective of consumers on potential updates to the UK advertising rules. Sam Younger, AAC Chair, reports on the Committee's activity for 2024.



### [ASA Council](#)

Read about the Council members who decide whether an ad has broken the rules and operate as the ASA board.



### [CAP Panels](#)

Read about the roles of the Industry Advisory Panel and the Promotional Marketing and Direct Response Panel and the advice they gave in 2024.



### [Committees of Advertising Practice](#)

Find out about the advertisers, agencies, media owners and other industry groups that make up the Committees of Advertising Practice.



### [Financial report](#)

Read our 2024 Financial report which includes information about our accounts and future plans. This will be available from 2 May, after our accounts are published.





**Advertising Standards Authority**

Castle House  
37 – 45 Paul Street  
London EC2A 4LS

[www.asa.org.uk](http://www.asa.org.uk)



**Committees of Advertising Practice**

Castle House  
37 – 45 Paul Street  
London EC2A 4LS

[www.cap.org.uk](http://www.cap.org.uk)