

Claims to prevent, treat or cure ADHD and ASD traits in paid ads for food supplements



CAP Enforcement Report
August 2026

About this report

CAP Enforcement Reports explain the actions CAP takes to address non-compliance in specific sectors. They also show how these actions affect overall compliance rates.

These reports use insights from our AI-based [Active Ad Monitoring system](#) (AAMs) to track ads in certain sectors.

This report examines the impact of enforcement against advertisers of food supplements whose ads contain claims to prevent, treat or cure traits of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in paid ads on Meta and Google between February and July 2026. It highlights fluctuations in compliance after these actions and a reduction in the volume of harmful ads.

Why this sector matters

ADHD and autism and their associated characteristics are not illnesses or diseases, nor are they conditions that can be cured. Greater awareness, recognition and understanding of ADHD and autism have led to increasing numbers of people exploring diagnosis and seeking support for particular traits or difficulties associated with them. This has also placed additional pressure on NHS services.

Against this backdrop, we identified a number of paid ads for food supplements exploiting the demand and breaking the rules by claiming to prevent, treat or cure traits linked to ADHD and autism.

These claims carry clear potential for harm, particularly given the vulnerability of the audiences being targeted. As such, we undertook follow-up compliance work in the sector to address the issue directly.

Previous regulatory action

In December 2025, the ASA published [five rulings](#) on ads for food supplements that claimed to prevent, treat or cure traits of autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and included specific health claims and general health claims that breached the Code.

What did we do?

Following the publication of these rulings, the Compliance team embarked on follow-up work in the sector.

Using our AAMs, we captured 72.4k unique paid ads for food supplements that appeared relevant to ADHD and ASD on Meta and Google between February and July 2026. We screened these ads for potentially non-compliant claims, leading to 1,595 unique ads from 17 advertisers being flagged.

These ads were reviewed for compliance with the medicines and food rules of the CAP Code and the precedent set by the December 2025 rulings.

Compliance issues identified

When the ads were assessed, it was found that 1,383 ads by 17 advertisers broke the rules. The main issues involved:

- **Claims that a supplement can treat, prevent or cure traits of ADHD or ASD**, such as *“fixes ADHD in 30 days”*, *“no more meltdowns”*, and *“autism parents – this is a game changer for speech”*.
- Health claims that breach the Code, such as claims that a supplement can enhance mental clarity, energy, focus, cognitive performance, memory and mood, and eliminate brain fog.

Compliance action taken

Throughout the monitoring period, the Compliance team contacted a total of 17 advertisers, who were serving high volumes of ads with significant reach.

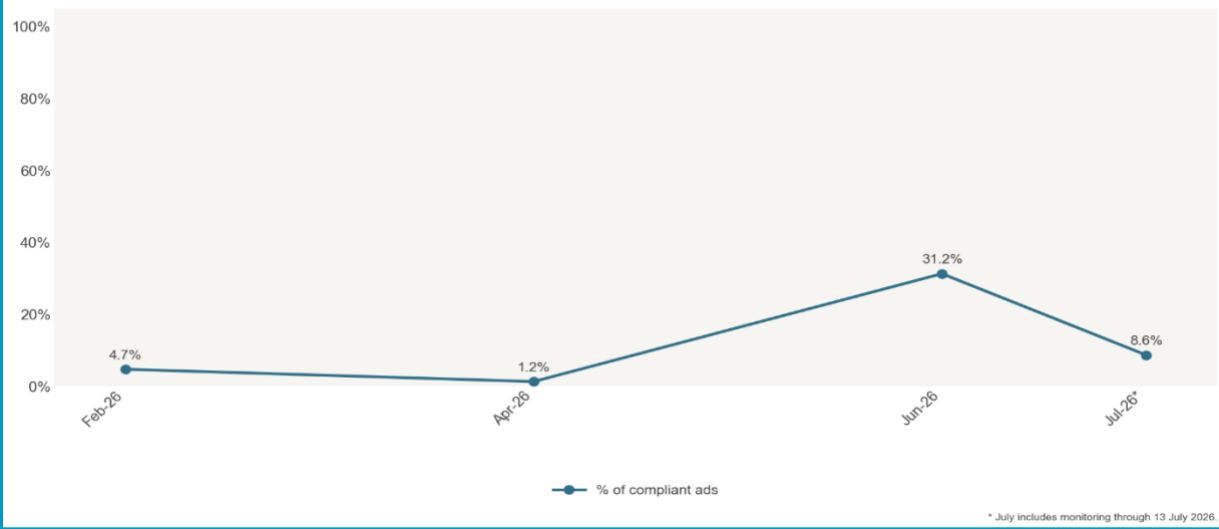
Three of the 17 advertisers were no longer running ads but had previously made claims that broke the rules. We contacted them proactively and provided guidance on their advertising of food supplements, outlining what claims were and were not acceptable.

We instructed the remaining 14 advertisers to remove or amend their problematic ads. Of those:

- Eleven advertisers agreed to remove or amend their non-compliant ads.
- Two advertisers did not respond but removed their ads.
- One advertiser did not respond and was referred to Meta, which removed the ads.

Impact on compliance rate and ad volume

Figure 1: Compliance rates for ads from contacted ADHD and Autism supplement advertisers

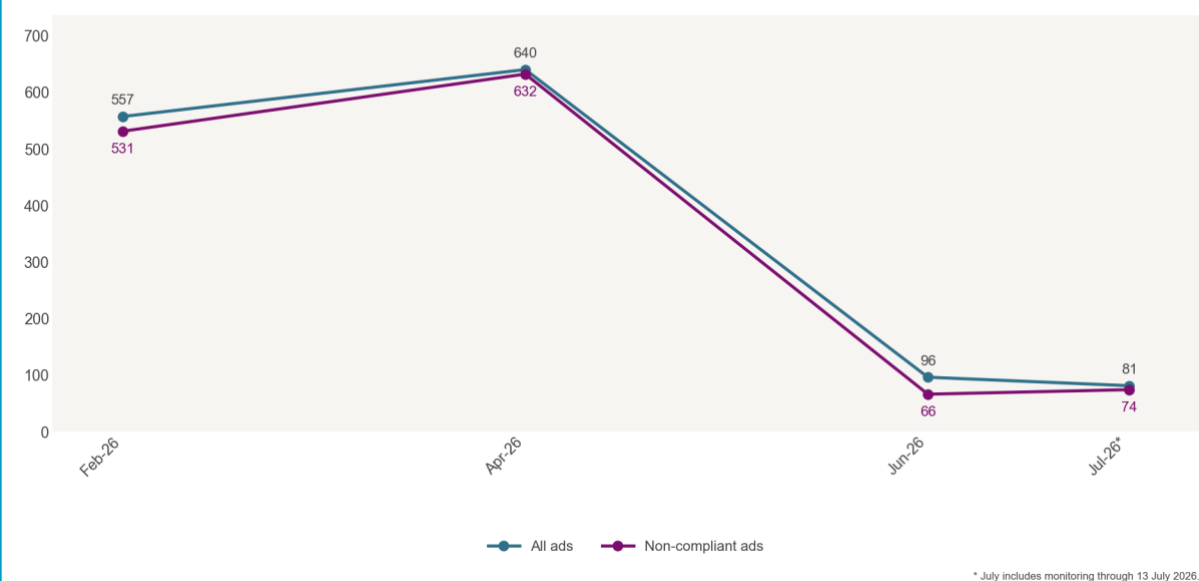


With the exception of a slight increase in compliance in June 2026, the compliance rate has remained low during the monitoring period – shown in Figure 1 below.

- When monitoring began in February 2026, the proportion of compliant ads was 4.7%.
- Following the second sweep (June 2026), compliance rose to 31.2%.
- Following the third sweep (July 2026), compliance dropped to 8.6%.

However, the overall number of relevant ads from those 14 advertisers has decreased significantly since initial contact was made. By July 2026, the number of relevant ads had fallen to less than a quarter of what it was before contact was made – shown in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2: Monthly ad volume from contacted ADHD and Autism supplement advertisers



Conclusion and next steps

Our targeted action has led to a notable reduction in the volume of harmful advertising. By July 2026, the number of ads fell to less than a quarter of pre-contact levels. However, it has not yet produced sustained compliance in the remaining ads, and the compliance rate remains low.

A contributing factor may be that nearly half of the advertisers we contacted are based outside the UK and may be less familiar with our advertising rules. As a result, achieving compliance can be less immediate and they may require additional time to fully understand and meet our requirements.

The vulnerability of the audiences targeted, combined with a low compliance rate, highlights the need for continued intervention. We will conduct periodic monitoring, escalate swiftly where advertisers do not comply with the rules, and work with platforms to secure lasting compliance across the sector.