

Four key things brands and influencers need to know: UK advertising rules and affiliate marketing



1 What is affiliate marketing?

Affiliate marketing is a way for a business to sell its products by signing up individuals or companies, aka “affiliates”, who market the business’s products for a commission. Affiliates typically place ads, promotional codes and links online that direct consumers to the website of a company.

2 How do the UK Advertising Codes apply to affiliate marketing?

The advertising rules say that:

- all marketing communications should be obviously identifiable as ads
- marketing communications must not falsely imply or claim that the marketer is acting as a consumer and must make their commercial intent clear

In instances where there is an affiliate marketing arrangement in place, you need to make it clear whether parts or all of the content is an ad.

3 Recommendations for identifying affiliate marketing content

START

Is it already obvious that it's an ad?

NO

YES

Is all of the content about an affiliate linked product or products?

NO

No action required.

Some forms of affiliate marketing will be

YES

You need to make it clear it's advertising.

A person needs to know that the page, article, blog, vlog, tweet or post is an ad before they click (or read it).

ADVICE
You need to identify the content as an ad.

Are some of the links and/or part of the content about affiliated products?

The links or parts of the content related to affiliated products should be identified as advertising.

NO

Is the page, article, blog, vlog, tweet, post or communication entirely editorial content with no affiliate links included?

No action required.

obviously identifiable as ads because of the nature or context of the content. Examples include banner ads, branded emails, or 'cashback' websites.

YES

ADVICE
You need to identify the links and sections of content related to the affiliate product(s) as advertising. One way to do this is with a label.



Who is responsible for following the rules?

Are you a brand using affiliate marketers?

It is your responsibility to know who is promoting your products, where they are promoting them and that your affiliates are following the advertising rules.

Are you an affiliate for a brand or business?

You are also responsible for ensuring that your content is correctly labelled and follows the advertising rules.