



ASA COUNCIL MEMBER Candidate Pack

Dear candidate

This is an exciting time to be joining our Council as we implement the final year of our 2019-2023 strategy, *More Impact Online*, and produce a new five-year strategy. We are changing to deal with the new challenges posed by regulating online advertising at pace and scale, rebalancing our regulation away from reactive complaints casework towards proactive, tech-assisted intelligence-gathering, complaint handling, monitoring and enforcement.

We already deliver something unique in the field of advertising by legitimate businesses: a one-stop shop across all media and platforms. That is valuable to both the public and responsible business, which is why the ASA system is widely respected both here and abroad. With impending legislation bringing new statutory powers to intervene online, it is vitally important that these powers enhance rather than undermine the ASA system.

There are challenges and opportunities ahead. Trust in advertising is improving, but low. The pace of digital change is extremely high, which is why we are investing in data science and piloting new principles for platforms and intermediaries, to hold them to greater public account for their role in ensuring that ads are responsible. Our projects in areas like racial and ethnic stereotyping in ads, body image and climate change are at the forefront of our proactive response to vital societal issues. And Government initiatives like the Online Safety Bill and Online Advertising Programme provide the opportunity for us to make the case for our approach, a case that we think is strengthened by our progress implementing our strategy.

We are proud of our role protecting people from misleading, harmful, offensive and otherwise irresponsible advertising. But we need to do even more. And a strong, dynamic and diverse ASA Council is fundamental to our future success.

If you have the passion and drive to help us achieve our goal of **making every UK ad a responsible ad**, please do consider applying. I very much look forward to hearing from you.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D A Currie', with a horizontal line underneath.

David Currie
Lord Currie of Marylebone
Chair, ASA



Vacant positions

We have one **Independent Member** vacancy and one **Media Industry Background Member** vacancy from April 2023, arising from existing Council members finishing their terms. We are also looking to appoint two additional **Independent Member** posts to replace existing Council members due to finish their terms in 2024; those posts would begin in April 2024.

To qualify as an **Independent Member**, you will not have engaged in the business of advertising by virtue of current or previous employment by, directorship of, or the provision of services to an advertiser, advertising agency or media company. (We apply judgement when assessing those criteria, recognising that an overly-strict application would rule out most people.) For the role starting in April 2023, we are particularly interested in Independent Member candidates with experience of living and/or working in Scotland.

To qualify as a **Media Industry Background Member**, you will have experience of advertising in a media company, for example by virtue of current or previous employment by or directorship of such a company.

About the Advertising Standards Authority

The Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) is the UK's independent regulator of advertising across all media. Our purpose is to make ads responsible and our ambition is to make every UK ad a responsible ad. We do that by administering the UK Advertising Codes, which are written by the Committees of Advertising Practice (CAP). Together, the ASA and CAP make up the UK's advertising regulatory system (hereafter referred to as the ASA system).

The ASA system is a mixture of self-regulation for non-broadcast advertising and co-regulation (with Ofcom) for broadcast, VOD and VSP advertising. We are funded by the industry, which also writes the rules through CAP, but those rules are independently administered by the ASA.

The system is funded by advertisers, primarily through a 0.1% levy on display advertising space and airtime, and platforms. Funding is collected by two arms-length industry bodies: Asbof and Basbof.

Our system is a sign of the considerable commitment by the advertising industry to uphold standards in their profession. All parts of that industry – advertisers, agencies, media and platforms – have come together to commit to being legal, decent, honest and truthful in their ads.

We have been responsible for regulating non-broadcast advertising since 1962, when the ASA was established by the industry. Our success led Ofcom to contract-out to us the regulation of broadcast advertising in 2004. That move was approved by Parliament and created a one-stop shop for all advertising complaints. Our system expanded again in 2011, when we began regulating companies' own advertising claims on their own websites and social media channels.

The ASA is recognised by the Government and the Courts as being the established means for regulating UK ads and we work closely with statutory regulatory partners including Ofcom, the CMA, the FCA, the Gambling Commission, the ICO and National Trading Standards.

The Advertising Codes cover the following:

- Print and press ads
- Outdoor ads
- Direct mail ads and direct marketing emails and messages
- Television, radio, video on demand and video sharing platform ads
- Sales promotions, e.g. competitions and special offers
- Online ads (e.g. online paid ads, influencer ads and companies' own claims on their own websites and social media channels)
- Teleshopping ads/output
- Cinema commercials

Based in Shoreditch, London, the ASA employs approximately 112 people working across the following functions:

- Complaints and investigations
- Compliance
- Copy Advice
- Regulatory Policy
- Communications, public affairs, marketing and research
- Corporate Services
- Data Science

Further information about the ASA and the work we do can be found at www.asa.org.uk.



ASA purpose, ambition and strategy

Our purpose and ambition

Our purpose is to make ads responsible and our ambition is to make every UK ad a responsible ad.

What we do is important

We're passionate about what we do because responsible ads are good for people, society and businesses.

How we regulate

We regulate ads wherever they appear. It's right for us to focus on online ads, but we won't take our eye off the important task of making sure ads are responsible in offline media too. Resolving public complaints will continue to be vital to our work, but so will continuing our proactive regulation.

Our More Impact Online strategy:



The six strands of our strategy:

1. **People and the planet:** We will put people first. People means everyone, not just those who complain to us. We'll explore the role advertising regulation can play in responding to the climate emergency. We'll be open to listening and collaborating in new ways. And we'll continue to improve our engagement with the UK nations and regions.
2. **Online:** We will improve our regulation of online advertising. We'll continue to focus on misleading content and inappropriate targeting, but we'll also be open to thinking beyond that, for example working more closely both with the large online platforms and with the government and Ofcom, both on Video Sharing Platform advertising regulation and to address any gaps in online advertising regulation, including potentially via co-regulation. We'll raise awareness of, and develop our thought-leadership in, online ad regulation.
3. **Effectiveness:** We will deliver high quality, proactive regulatory projects on ads that cause the most detriment to people. We'll prioritise better, use machine learning to improve our regulation, act more nimbly, simplify and make more efficient our regulation where we can.
4. **Buy-in:** We will work closely with key stakeholders to put our funding on a sustainable basis. We'll seek greater buy-in from online-only advertisers, retailers, brands, micro- and SME businesses and the social influencer community, by highlighting the benefits of our regulation and being open to regulating differently.
5. **Enforcement:** We will improve how we proactively identify and remove irresponsible ads (particularly online) and our sanctioning of non-compliant advertisers.
6. **Independence:** We will continue to regulate without fear or favour, taking account of the evidence-base at all times. We'll continue to demonstrate the effectiveness of our regulation – including in response to challenges to TV and online ad regulation – through our actions and our communication, and we'll be open-minded to change that strengthens the ASA system.

To find out more about our strategy please read our detailed [strategy document](#), which outlines the case for change.

Our shared values are:

- Proactive
- Collaborative
- Accountable
- Decisive

External stakeholders will also find us

- Independent in administering the Advertising Codes
- Evidence-based, targeted and consistent
- Reflective of society, not a social engineer

Our commitment to good regulation

It's important that those we regulate understand what standards they can expect from us as a regulator.

Together, the ASA and CAP are committed to regulating in a way that is transparent, proportionate, targeted, evidence-based, consistent and accountable.

In Our Commitment to Good Regulation we have set out six commitments – modelled on the Regulators' Code - and some of the practical ways in which we make these commitments a reality through our day-to-day work.

Like the Regulators' Code, our commitments do not take away from our main purpose to ensure that all UK ads are responsible. It remains important for us to continue to strike the right balance between those we regulate and those we protect.

Our six commitments

1. We'll keep regulatory burdens to a minimum
2. We'll engage with you
3. We'll be targeted
4. We'll share information
5. We'll provide advice and training support
6. We'll be transparent

Read [Our Commitment to Good Regulation](#).

Council set-up

The ASA Council is, in fact, two Councils: one for non-broadcast advertising serving the Advertising Standards Authority Ltd; and one for broadcast advertising serving the Advertising Standards Authority (Broadcast) Ltd. Each Council is chaired by the ASA Chair and has the same 12 members. Eight of the members are Independent Members and four are Advertising Industry Background Members. The Advertising Industry Background Members have experience of the advertising and media businesses but serve in an individual capacity.

Members fulfil two roles: they are the jury who adjudicate on formally investigated ads and oversee our proactive regulatory projects; and they are the Board of the ASA Ltd and ASA (Broadcast) Ltd.

The adjudicatory role

The core role involves a weekly online task of reviewing and commenting and ruling on recommendations from the ASA Executive about cases. Once established, a Council member might typically spend two to three hours a week on that task.

The Council meets monthly, except in August when there is no meeting. Council meetings are a mix of fully virtual, hybrid and face-to-face, the last typically at our London office but exceptionally at other locations in the UK. Council meetings usually take place on a Friday with dates notified at least six months ahead. Council meets at 10:30 and concludes no later than 15:00, often earlier.

The Board Director role

Council members are also Company Directors of the ASA Ltd and ASA (Broadcast) Ltd and therefore oversee the strategy and performance of those companies.

Council members will be asked to serve on one of the Council's sub-committees (e.g. the Risk and Audit Committee, the Appointments, Remuneration and People Committee or the Performance Review Committee) and/or attend meetings of CAP's advisory panels (the Industry Advisory Panel or the Promotional Marketing and Direct Response Panel). The Council committees generally meet on two or three occasions in the year and the CAP panels on up to four occasions. Again, meetings are a mix of fully virtual, hybrid and face-to-face.

On occasion, members will also be expected: to assist the Chair in entertaining visitors to the ASA; to take part in strategy sessions (either at the ASA's office or a location readily accessible from London); to attend one or two Council meetings or events a year in the nations and regions of the UK; and to take part in training.

Timings

One Independent Member and the Media Background Member will be appointed to serve from **21 April 2023**. If appointed, two Independent Members will be appointed to serve

from April 2024. Members of the ASA Council typically serve a maximum of two terms of three years each.

Remuneration

Members are paid an honorarium of up to £19,000 per annum (the maximum being for those living at a distance from London), plus the reimbursement of reasonable expenses.

Diversity

It is important that the ASA Council is widely representative, as far as possible reflecting the views of the UK public. We welcome candidates of any age, race, sex, sexual orientation, religion or belief. We welcome candidates with disabilities. And we welcome candidates who live and/or work in England, Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland, with experience of living and/or working in Scotland particularly desirable at present.

Recruitment process and power of appointment

Candidates are appointed only after a thorough process that assesses them against the requirements of the role. That process involves short-listing undertaken by the Chair, supported by the ASA Chief Executive, and interviews undertaken by the Chair, Council members and an independent person.

Appointments to the Council are made by the Chair, ratified by the Councils.

In choosing Council members, the Chair aims for complementarity of skills and background. There is no stereotype. All members of the Council are different and bring differing experience, knowledge and abilities.

The Chair's decision on appointments is final and no correspondence will be entered into once the decision is made.

Training

There is initial induction training for new Council members and Council is kept updated at their monthly meetings on developments in policy and regulation.

Register of Interests

The Council maintains a Register of Interests, which can be inspected on application to the Company Secretary.

Requirements of the role

Judgement and analysis of complex material

Candidates should be able to demonstrate analytical skills and sound judgement. A study of the ASA's published rulings shows that Council has to deal with complex issues and a mass of detail. So far as possible, Council has to maintain a consistent approach to similar cases.

Independence

Whilst we seek Council members from different backgrounds, we look for someone who is able to show a genuine independence of mind and approach. Candidates should, if possible, not be too prominently involved in day-to-day party politics (although political experience is not a barrier), nor in special interest or campaign groups that might prejudice their independent judgement in Council business.

Experience/knowledge

All-round experience and knowledge is better than narrow specialism. The most important quality is a critical approach to arguments and evidence. Council obtains external expert advice when it needs it, to assist all the members. That includes legal advice so legal qualifications are neither an advantage nor a disadvantage for Council membership.

Board experience is welcome, but not essential. Board Director training will be made available to those who need it, so Council members can properly discharge their legal duties as company directors.

Communication and listening skills

Candidates should be able to work effectively as a member of a deliberative Council. That means being able to put a case persuasively in a small meeting, while taking on board the perspectives of others.

Engagement with society

Council members should have reasonable day-to-day contact with the public or parts of it. Anyone too withdrawn from the community would be unlikely to reflect wider opinion.

Media literacy

Candidates should be typical consumers of TV, radio, non-broadcast and online media. They should be interested in ads in all media and the role advertising plays in UK society.

Advertising awareness

Candidates should be interested specifically in the work of the ASA, as opposed to generalised public service. Candidates should be able to demonstrate at least some

awareness and understanding of advertising self-regulation and its purpose and provide some insight into current trends in the world of advertising, even if from an external perspective.

IT literacy

Candidates should be online-literate. Council's work is conducted online, rather than being paper-based. Successful applicants will have regular and reliable access to good-quality IT equipment, with at least a superfast broadband connection.

Availability/commitments

Candidates should have the time to devote to the task. They must be able to commit to the weekly obligation of reading, listening to or viewing advertisements online, considering complaints, consulting the Codes and any guidance material, assessing recommendations and comparing similar cases.

Health/resilience

Candidates should be likely to be able to serve for at least one three-year term.