



Enforcement Notice:

Electric Plug-in Mini Heaters

Who we are

We are the [Committee of Advertising Practice](#) (CAP). We write the advertising rules, which are enforced by the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA), the UK's independent regulator. You can read about the UK advertising regulatory system [on the ASA website](#).

Why are we contacting you?

The cost-of-living-crisis has many consumers worried about paying their bills. During the winter this is particularly true for heating.

We are aware that a number of advertisers are distributing ads for electric plug-in mini heaters, which state or imply such products are a viable alternative to central heating.

CAP understands that gas is currently cheaper than electricity. For the whole house, gas central heating radiators can heat rooms effectively by creating natural convection currents. For heating a single room, it would also likely be cheaper and more efficient to run a single radiator. For homes with electric heating, typically electric storage heaters that could use the Economy7 tariff during off-peak hours, would be cheaper than the standard electricity tariff the advertiser's product would run off.

Therefore, we consider ads for electric plug-in mini-heaters which claim – directly or indirectly - that such products are viable alternatives to central heating, to be materially misleadingly and a clear-cut breach of the Code (3.1, 3.11).

Please take immediate action to ensure your advertising complies. If we see continued problems in this area after **16th March** we will take targeted enforcement action to ensure a level-playing-field across the industry. This may include – where advertisers are unwilling to comply – referring them to our [legal backstop](#).

Scope

This Enforcement Notice applies across media falling within the remit of the CAP Code. We understand that these products are primarily being advertised online via content discovery networks and we will therefore prioritise for enforcement non-compliant ads in this area. However, we will not hesitate to take action wherever we see non-compliant content appearing, such as online advertorials.

We expect advertisers to hold adequate evidence to support objective claims (3.7). Those failing to do so, and who otherwise exaggerate the capability or performance of their product (3.11), will be brought into scope. This includes ads for freestanding electric heating products, such as fan heaters.

This Notice does not cover **claims** regarding product safety. **Cases involving the advertisement of unsafe products – regardless of the claims being made – will be referred directly to the appropriate bodies.**

Guidance

It's important that advertisers are particularly sensitive to moments in time when people are looking for ways to cut back and save money. Ads which exploit this situation by making wholly misleading comparisons between their products and traditional heating methods, are simply unacceptable. Nor should ads make objective claims relating to cost or efficacy which are unachievable for the products advertised.



Do not **state** or **imply** that electric plug-in mini heaters are an economical alternative to central heating. For instance, by claiming that using the product will result in cheaper energy bills –

- [“If you ... don't want massive central heating bills - this is the best solution”](#)

- [“Brits Are Using New Heating Device to Combat Soaring Energy Bills”](#)



Do not claim – **directly or indirectly** - that electric plug-in mini heaters are an efficient alternative to other heating methods. For instance, by stating or implying that the product provides comparable heating performance to central heating -

- [“With This Trick You Can Heat Almost For Free This Winter”](#)
- [“This new mini heater is an alternative to gas for the winter ahead.”](#)
- [“Turn Off Your Central Heating & Plug New Mini Heater In – Is it really cheap heat? \[sic\]”](#)

Furthermore:

- advertisers must not exaggerate the capability or performance of their product, for instance by making unqualified claims that it will [“heat the entire room”](#), when that is not the case.

Objective Claims

CAP recognises that auxiliary heating products may be of interest to consumers looking for something to provide a small boost of additional heat in a single room, for instance on a particularly cold day.

Advertisers must hold adequate evidence to support claims that consumers are likely to regard as objective and that are capable of objective substantiation, such as [“incredible 99.8% efficiency”](#).

Appendix: Code rules and legislation

Relevant [CAP Code](#) rules:

3.1

Marketing communications must not materially mislead or be likely to do so.

3.7

Before distributing or submitting a marketing communication for publication, marketers must hold documentary evidence to prove claims that consumers are likely to regard as objective and that are capable of objective substantiation. The ASA may regard claims as misleading in the absence of adequate substantiation.

3.11

Marketing communications must not mislead consumers by exaggerating the capability or performance of a product.

Relevant legislation:

The [Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations \(CPRs\)](#) prohibit misleading actions. In particular, Regulation 5 (misleading actions) prohibits the provision of false information regarding a number of matters including the 'delivery of the product' (Regulation 5 (5) (k)). Regulation 5 also prohibits the provision of information about the delivery of a product in a way that is likely to deceive the average consumer. Regulation 6, which prohibits misleading omissions, includes the prohibition of commercial practices which hide or omit material information, or which provide material information to consumers in a way which is unclear, untimely or ambiguous. It is noted that when a commercial practice is an 'invitation to purchase' a trader is required to provide *(i) all additional freight, delivery or postal charges; or (ii) where such charges cannot be reasonably be calculated in advance, the fact that such charges may be payable* (Regulation 6 (6) (e)).

You should also take into account the [Consumer Contracts Regulations 2013](#) in particular Regulations 13 and 14.

Want more? See our advice on [Misleading Advertising](#). For free and confidential advice about specific non-broadcast ads, please contact the [CAP Copy Advice team](#).