

# 2025 Advertising Advisory Committee report

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**The Advertising Advisory Committee (AAC) advises CAP and BCAP on consumer and citizen issues arising from key aspects of broadcast and non-broadcast advertising regulations. The members are independent of the advertising and media industries and are drawn from a range of different backgrounds to ensure that ad rules are effective, evidence-based and responsive to public concerns.**

For the AAC, 2025 was a year of continuity in the sense that there was no churn in committee membership, which helped us to have well-informed, confident discussions on a wide range of issues of importance to consumers of advertising. The strength of the committee lies in the diversity of experience and perspective its members bring. This is enhanced by the high quality of the support provided by the executive, and I would like to thank Shahriar Coupal, Malcolm Phillips and the whole team for their professionalism and commitment. Although there is an asymmetry in the executive's full-time engagement set against the episodic involvement of the committee, the gap is minimised by the quality of the papers provided, the immensely valuable Quarterly Formal Intelligence Report and also by the programme of informal sessions with relevant external organisations.

In 2025 we had stimulating and valuable engagements with Age UK, Step Change and Money Advice Trust, the Research Institute for Disabled Consumers and the Royal National Institute for the Blind. It is important, and helpful, that the AAC is connected with and informed of industry perspectives through the presence on the committee of the Chair of CAP/BCAP. Members have also appreciated opportunities to participate in ASA system-wide events on key topical issues.

The important thing for the Committee is that it addresses substantive issues of concern to consumers in a timely manner in order to be able to help frame and influence the discussions in CAP/BCAP. During 2025 the AAC has been engaged in debates on key issues such as how advertisers take account of consumer vulnerabilities, particularly in light of the new and wider definition of vulnerability in the Digital Markets, Competition and Consumers Act; the accessibility of advertising for all consumers; issues for older people in relation to advertising, including both age-related vulnerabilities, and the portrayal of older people in ads; and the question of whether to update the Code rules on offence in an increasingly polarised society.

It is worth noting that a disproportionate amount of executive – and indeed AAC – attention in 2025 was absorbed by the concern to ensure the integrity of the guidance associated with the government's legislation on Less Healthy Foods (LHF). Nevertheless, the Committee has also focused on some challenging longer-term issues which will continue no doubt to preoccupy us through 2026 and beyond. These include the implications for advertising regulation of the growing polarisation of views across the UK on more or less everything; the challenges of reconciling the government's strong focus on economic growth with the committee's priority of consumer protection; and the question of the appropriate role for the ASA in encouraging better media literacy among consumers. And of course, looming at speed for us – as for all organisations – is the need to engage with the implications of Generative AI and Agentic AI.

**Sam Younger, CBE**  
**AAC Chair**