

19 July 2018

Title of consultation

Tackling harmful gender stereotypes in advertising

Organisation

Advertising Standards Authority (CAP & BCAP)

Introduction

London Fire Brigade (LFB) is London's fire and rescue service - one of the largest firefighting and rescue organisations in the world and we are here to make London a safer city. Decisions are made either by the London Fire Commissioner (the statutory fire and rescue authority for Greater London), the Mayor of London or the Deputy Mayor for Fire and Resilience. A Fire, Resilience and Emergency Planning Committee of the London Assembly holds the Commissioner, Mayor and Deputy Mayor to account.

Our vision is to be a world class fire and rescue service for London, Londoners and visitors. We will always respond to fires and other emergencies, but our work has changed over the years with a much stronger emphasis now on fire prevention activity and community safety.

Response

1. Do you agree with CAP and BCAP's proposal to introduce a new rule and supporting guidance into the Advertising Codes? Please include relevant evidence to support your view, whether you agree or disagree with the proposals. Please include evidence for your proposals.

LFB agree with CAP and BCAP's proposals to introduce a new rule and supporting guidance into the Advertising Codes. LFB believes the proposed introduction of CAP rule 4.9 and BCAP rule 4.14 and supporting guidance will specifically support its view that marketing communications and advertisements should not:

- Exclude or cause harm or offence to serving women firefighters.
- Cause harm by reinforcing perceptions that could deter girls and / or women from considering a career as a firefighter.

LFB has an Inclusion Strategy (called Safer Together) which includes an action to proactively engage advertising agencies, journalists, publishers and broadcasters to improve the representation of firefighting as a diverse and inclusive industry in the media. This strategy can be found on the LFB website <https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/about-us/equality-and-diversity/inclusive-culture/>

Aligned to its Inclusion Strategy, LFB launched a Firefighting Sexism (#FirefightingSexism) campaign to challenge perceptions that influence girls and /or women from considering a career as a firefighter. The campaign calls for media (including children's television producers) to use the term firefighter and not to use the out-of-date term fireman so as not to exclude or offend women firefighters and to challenge perceptions reinforced by terminology that the firefighting profession is a career only men can do. The term fireman has not been used on employment contracts for over 35 years.

LFB also developed a recruitment campaign in 2017 (Firefighting. It means so much more) to challenge perceptions of what it means to be a firefighter, using images of women firefighters, as well as male and BAME firefighters and directly addressing the perceived barriers for women to become firefighters that our research had identified.

Both the Firefighting Sexism campaign and recruitment campaign were developed using LFB research conducted by consultants Future Thinking.¹ Future Thinking explored the barriers to women considering a career as a firefighter and asked how LFB could overcome those barriers. The following quotes are taken from a sample group of women filmed as part of this research.

Barriers to considering a career as a firefighter:

“Even in schools... looking at gender stereotyping ...30 to 60 kids were asked to draw a firefighter, a surgeon and a fighter pilot other than about 3 kids they all drew them as men.”

“I think it’s a very masculine environment.”

“If I saw a job advert for a ‘fire lady’ I’d like to see the pay for the job.”

“Perception is it’s a sexist field and quite male dominated and I don’t know how I could handle that.”

“Growing up you would get some of the parents to come in and talk about what they do, they never come in and talk about being a firefighter.”

Overcoming the barriers (what can LFB do to overcome these barriers):

“I haven’t heard enough about firefighters in general - no access when I was younger... you do need to go down the whole female role models route. You need to build a marketing campaign around that, and put it on your website.”

“You clearly want to attract women who are driven.. show them that there is diversity within the LFB. Doing some kind of marketing drive to inform people it is a job they can do.”

“In the adverts and in the wording and this needs to apply to young girls.”

LFB feel the scenarios featured in the CAP guidance relating to gender-stereotypical roles and characteristics and those aimed at or featuring children are of particular relevance to the LFB views and concerns outlined above.

The gender stereotypes LFB is challenging can be found online as demonstrated by the following television commercials:

- Gaviscon commercial https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_skKmcLdyVQ
- Harpic Power Plus commercial <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4mmRiSlXrDM>
- Imperial leather commercial <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H1ZKvm5tyHQ>
- Lidl commercial <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YdHfF4PEaFE>
- Lynx commercial <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YTfWjIbpwEE>

2. Do you agree with the wording of the proposed new CAP and BCAP rules? If not please include suggestions for how the proposed rules could be improved to achieve the aims set out in this consultation. Please include your suggestions.

LFB would like to suggest the addition of the words ‘misinform’ or ‘mislead’ as shown in italics below to the proposed new rule:

Depicting gender stereotypes likely to *misinform or mislead*, cause harm or serious or widespread offence.

Please include evidence for your proposals.

LFB offers its Future Thinking research (above), examples of television commercials (above) and examples of its own communications (below) as evidence to support how gender stereotypes can misinform and / or mislead children and adults by suggesting that a firefighter is a male role or a profession that women do not do or cannot do.

ITV Love Island news coverage:

<https://inews.co.uk/culture/television/love-island-london-fire-brigade-fireman-sexist/>

LFB media release:

<https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/news/2017-news/there-is-no-such-thing-as-a-fireman-says-brigade-chief/>

¹ <http://moderngov.london-fire.gov.uk/mgconvert2pdf.aspx?id=5777>

3. Do you consider the draft guidance to be clear and practicable? If not please include suggestions for how it could be improved to achieve the aims set out in this consultation.

On the whole LFB considers the draft guidance to be clear and practicable but would suggest that an additional scenario is added under the heading “Scenarios featuring gender-stereotypical roles and characteristics” to provide more clarity about adverts that could cause harm by deterring girls and women from considering certain professions. LFB would suggest this additional scenario:

An ad in which a profession is depicted as being for only one sex e.g. a firefighter or group of firefighters presented as men, using terminology that is no longer used e.g. fireman.

For the reasons set out above LFB is particularly supportive of the guiding principle set out under the heading “Scenarios aimed at or featuring children” which sets out that:

Ads can be targeted at and feature a specific gender but should take care not to explicitly convey that a particular children’s product, pursuit, activity, **including choice of play or career** [emphasis added], is inappropriate for one or another gender.

We’ll use the information provided in this form to log and process your response to our consultation. All responses will be treated as non-confidential unless you expressly ask for confidentiality. Personal information will not be shared, unless you have a significant public profile and your identity is relevant context to your response. We’ll process this information on the basis of a [legitimate interest](#). To find out more, please read our [Privacy Notice](#).

Would you like your answers to be kept confidential?

LFB is content for its response to be made public.