

Mid-year progress report

January to June 2017



Chief Executive's report

The highlights of the first half of 2017 included new standards coming into force on ads for products high in fat, salt or sugar (HFSS) in non-broadcast media, good progress on key proactive projects like broadband speed and gender stereotypes, as well as record levels of ads amended or withdrawn and pieces of advice and training delivered.

Complaint casework and compliance activity contributed to a huge 3,034 ads being amended or withdrawn in the half year (up 88% on the same period in 2016, itself a record year). Our expanding provision of advice and training services, coupled with a boost to online advice from our newly merged ASA/CAP website, led us to deliver 182,618 pieces of advice and training in the half year (well on track to exceed our 300,000 target and 33% up on last year's figures).

We tackled a backlog in our case-handling, against the background of rising numbers of cases, but feedback shows there's more work to do during the second half of the year in raising levels of complainant satisfaction with our process. An upward trend in satisfaction figures towards the end of the review period suggest that actions taken to date are beginning to take effect.

On the regulatory policy side, CAP and/or BCAP consulted on new broadband speed standards, agreed new rules to prevent sexualised depictions of 16- to 17-year-olds and published guidance on targeting ads (including on social media) and flagging up immersive advertising content. The new HFSS ad placement rules had a smooth launch on 1 July.

On the communications side, we devised a new national ad campaign to raise awareness of the ASA and extended our engagement with the devolved legislatures to Wales. We also launched the new ASA/CAP website which, for the first time, brings both organisations together online.

Included in this report is a preview of the [ASA's 2018 organisational objectives](#), including reviewing and refreshing our five-year strategy, further extending our advice and training offer and continuing our research into the views of people around the UK.



Guy Parker
Chief Executive



1,614
January to June
2016

3,034
January to June
2017

88% increase

More ads are being amended or withdrawn



Our mid-year performance against our 2017 objectives



Our strategy: *Having More Impact; Being More Proactive*

The five strands of our strategy help to define our annual objectives.

Read more about our strategy [here](#)

RAG rating ● On-target ● Requires action ● Off-target

Objectives

Overarching objective

Responding appropriately to the changing technological, media and post-EU referendum economic/political landscape, we will continue implementing our *Having More Impact; Being More Proactive* strategy in pursuit of our ambition to make every UK ad a responsible ad, to protect people and to help them, society and business to feel more able to trust advertising.

This will involve us continuing to give a high priority to protecting the vulnerable, particularly children and the financially vulnerable, from misleading, harmful or offensive advertising and delivering these specific objectives.

Objective 1

We will maintain the balance between reactive complaints casework and proactive regulatory project work. We will refine our use of research/other intelligence and improve the effectiveness of our regulatory project work, including through completing regulatory projects on gender stereotyping and broadband speed claims. We will measure and report on the number of ads amended or withdrawn and the pieces of CAP advice and training delivered, while also developing new behaviour-change measures.

Key actions

- 3,034 ads amended or withdrawn (up 88% on same period in 2016)
- 182,618 pieces of advice and training delivered (up 33%)
- Complaints backlog tackled despite case receipts being up 6.5%
- Speed of casework suffered from tackling the backlog (e.g. meeting only 3/12 case-type KPIs), as did complainant satisfaction (54% v 75% target). Advertiser and Copy Advice user satisfaction on target
- CAP/BCAP agreed new rules to prevent sexualised depictions of 16-17s and published guidance on targeting ads (including on social media) and flagging immersive content. New HFSS rules launched
- Substantial engagement with stakeholders to support the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) review of gambling
- Referred a further 13 advertisers to Trading Standards for action

- Balance between reactive complaints casework and proactive projects, 58% v 18%, broadly in line with target
- Produced first edition of our quarterly Formal Intelligence Gathering report
- Nearing conclusion of our Gender Stereotyping and Broadband Speed projects
- Good progress on our Broadband Fibre, Reference Pricing and Subscription Models projects
- 3,034 ads amended or withdrawn (up 88% on same period in 2016); see below for advice and training performance

Rating



Our summary performance continued...



Advice and training

Pieces of advice and training delivered January to June.



Objectives

Objective 2

We will implement the findings of our review of our CAP advice and training services, helping us to increase our advice and training Touchpoints to 300,000.

Objective 3

We will continue to increase our understanding of and collaboration with other stakeholders (e.g. digital media/platform owners) and regulators and enforcement regimes (e.g. Primary Authorities), in order to provide joined-up, consistent and effective regulation.

We will act on the findings of the independent audit of our performance against our Commitment to Good Regulation.

Objective 4

We will deliver our public research commitments, including through undertaking two to four pieces of research into the views of the public about ads, and continue to ensure that the ASA takes into account the views and interests of those who live in different nations and regions of the UK.

Objective 5

We will accelerate our efforts to build awareness of the ASA system, so people are aware of and have confidence in advertising regulation, including through launching a new public ad campaign and extending our engagement programme in the devolved administrations.

Objective 6

We will make sure we have the necessary skills, capabilities and IT training to undertake our work and deliver our strategy, including improving our understanding of emerging technologies.

Objective 7

We will make sure we have the necessary technology to deliver our strategy, in particular by launching our new case/contact management system.

Key actions

- 182,618 pieces of advice and training delivered (up 33%)
- 38% increase in online advice in first three months after launch of new website
- 516 further bookings for eLearning and 52% increase in seminar attendance

- Published Dame Janet Paraskeva's audit of our performance against our Commitment to Good Regulation, agreeing with 29 out of 30 recommendations
- Engaged with Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy's Regulatory Delivery and its Business Reference Panel, agreed a formal Memorandum of Understanding with the CMA and played an active part in the Consumer Protection Partnership

- On course to deliver three pieces of consumer research, including at least two which incorporate fieldwork in the devolved nations
- Partway through qualitative research on Reference Pricing and study into consumers' understanding of 'fibre' in broadband ads

- Devised new ad campaign to launch before the end of the year
- Extended devolution engagement programme to Wales

- Audited our digital media skills gaps before training planned for the second half of the year

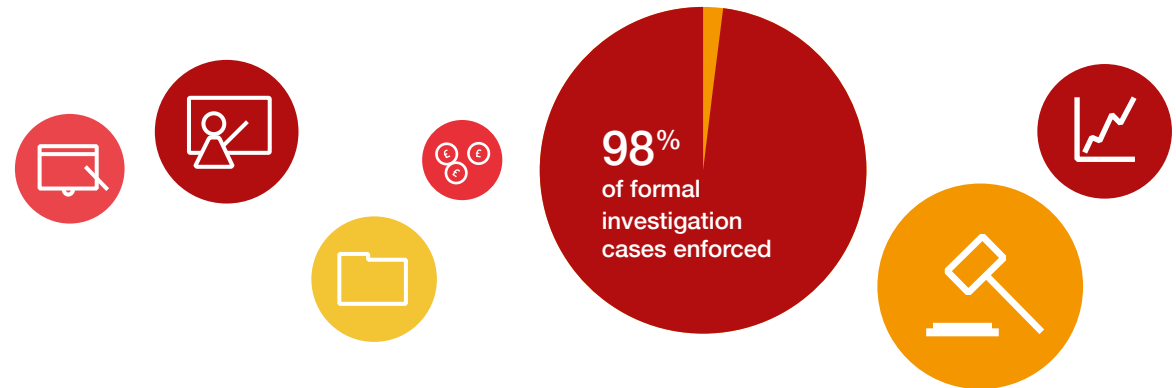
- Completed requirement gathering phase and selected supplier for our new case/contact management system

Rating



Key performance indicators

Mid-year progress



RAG rating ● On-target ● Requires action ● Off-target

Key performance indicator	Rating	Key performance indicator	Rating
1 Secure amendment or withdrawal of ads and report publicly <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3,034 ads amended or withdrawn (1,611 at Jun 2016) 	●	7 Meet target of 97% of Formal Investigation cases enforced <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 98% of Formal Investigation cases enforced (98% at Dec 2016) 	●
2 Increase CAP advice and training delivered by 11% to 300,000 Maintain cost per piece of advice and training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 182,618 pieces of advice and training delivered (up 33% on Jun 2016) • Cost per piece of advice and training was £1.29 (31% better than Dec 2016) 	●	8 Complete two to four high priority regulatory projects. Ensure 1-2 are commissioned and completed in 2017. Complete 6-10 other projects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender Stereotypes in Ads and Broadband Speed projects nearing completion • Broadband Fibre, Subscription Models, Reference Pricing and Complementary and Alternative Medical Practitioners' Ads projects well underway • Two other projects completed 	●
3 Maintain balance of reactive complaints casework and proactive regulatory project work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Met: 58% v 18% (53% v 22% at Dec 2016) 	●	9 Behaviour change measure after seminar attendance: 90% agree they're more confident in complying with Ad Codes immediately after attending; 70% agree after three months <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 93% of respondents more confident after seminar, with 100% agreeing after three months 	●
4 Meet closure targets for complaint cases (80% within target number of working days) and for Copy Advice cases (90% within 24 hours) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaint cases closure targets not met – 3/12 case types in target (7/12 at Jun 2016) • Copy Advice cases met at 98% (97% at Jun 2016) 	●	10 Deliver two to four pieces of public research that take into account the views of those living in the different nations and regions of the UK <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two studies underway (Reference Pricing and Broadband Fibre) and one planned (Labelling Instagram Ads) 	●
5 Maintain complaints casework productivity performance in line with 2016 levels <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost per No Additional Investigation case - £64.75 (2% better than Dec 2016) • Cost per Informal Investigation case - £227 (5% better than Dec 2016) • Cost per Formal Investigation case - £687 (4% worse than Dec 2016) 	●	11 Increase prompted awareness from 57% in 2016 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research to be conducted in second half of the year 	n/a
6 Meet customer satisfaction targets: 75% for complainants and advertisers and 90% for Copy Advice enquirers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complainant satisfaction not met - 54% (61% at Dec 2016) • Advertiser satisfaction met - 75% (76% at Dec 2016) • Copy Advice met - 89% (92% at Dec 2016) 	●	12 Expenditure within 97.5-100% of budget <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On course to meet 	●

Preview of 2018 organisational objectives



Overarching objective

Objective 1



Objective 2



Objective 3



Objective 4



Objective 5



Objective 6



Objective 7



Objective 8

Objective 9

Responding appropriately to the changing technological, media and post-EU referendum economic/political landscape, we will continue implementing our *Having More Impact; Being More Proactive* strategy in pursuit of our ambition to make every UK ad a responsible ad, to protect people and to help them, society and business to feel more able to trust advertising.

This will involve us continuing to give a high priority to protecting the vulnerable, particularly children and the financially vulnerable, from misleading, harmful or offensive advertising and delivering these specific objectives.

We will maintain the balance between reactive complaints casework and proactive regulatory project work. We will continue to use public research and other intelligence to improve the effectiveness of our regulatory project work, including through regulatory projects and other activity on gambling, gender stereotyping, online labelling of ads, clickbait ads and small print. We will measure and report on the number of ads amended or withdrawn and the pieces of CAP advice and training delivered.

We will continue to implement the findings of our review of our CAP advice and training services, helping us to increase our advice and training Touchpoints to 350,000.

We will continue to increase our understanding of and collaboration with stakeholders (e.g. business compliance representatives) to provide joined-up, consistent and effective regulation.

We will deliver our public research commitments, including through undertaking two to four pieces of research into the views of the public about ads, and continue to ensure that the ASA takes into account the views and interests of those who live in different nations and regions of the UK.

We will further reinforce efforts to build awareness of the ASA system, so people are aware of and have confidence in advertising regulation, including through launching the second phase of our new public ad campaign.

We will extend our engagement programme in the nations and regions.

We will make sure we have the necessary skills, capabilities and IT training to undertake our work and deliver our strategy, including improving our understanding of existing technologies.

We will make sure we have the necessary technology to deliver our strategy, in particular by completing the launch of our new case/contact management system and ensuring we comply with the General Data Protection Regulation.

We will review and refresh our 2014-2018 *Having More Impact; Being More Proactive* strategy, including exploring the impact of artificial intelligence on: product/service design, development and delivery; the advertising ecosystem; and the way we regulate.





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