



BCAP

Submission by British Naturism

to

Advertising Standards Association

June 2009

British Naturism is the representative organisation for naturists in the UK.

About 1.5 million people in the United Kingdom describe themselves as being a naturist¹ and there are about ten times that number who practise naturism to at least some extent. There is a surprisingly high level of acceptance by the public though there are also some who are deeply prejudiced against nudity. Few people realise how numerous we are.²

In this response we frequently refer to attitudes, harm and benefit. Please see our briefing notes on "Statistics", "Children", and "Health and Wellbeing" for the supporting evidence.

Question 27

i) Taking into account its general policy objectives, do you agree that BCAP's rules, included in the proposed Harm and Offence section, are necessary and easily understandable? If your answer is no, please explain why.

No.

There are numerous references to avoiding harm and similarly numerous references to avoiding causing widespread and serious offense. Unfortunately the code does not recognise that there are many situations where the two requirements conflict and it does not provide a rule for resolving the conflict. We firmly believe that considerations of harm must always take precedence over offense. Anything else is indistinguishable from prejudice.

The rules are almost entirely concerned with the rights of marketers and the rights of individuals receiving advertising material. Marketing materials are part of the general pattern of life and they do have an impact on society as a whole. The code needs to give much more weight to the general well being of society.

Protection must be based on evidence of what causes harm and of what promotes well-being. Anything else is prejudice and that almost invariably causes harm.

Question 34

i) Taking into account its general policy objectives, do you agree that BCAP's rules, included in the proposed Children section, are necessary and easily understandable? If your answer is no, please explain why.

iii) Do you have other comments on this section?

Morals are a very slippery concept. One person's moral imperative is often anathema to somebody else. Supposed morals must not be allowed to override considerations of harm.

The terms 'unsuitable' and 'inappropriate' need to be defined. There are numerous misconceptions about how children react to material so policy and decisions must be

¹INOP poll. 2001. "and would you describe yourself as being a naturist?"

²When a naturist gets dressed the disguise is perfect.. The Statistics Briefing Note provides further information.

based on evidence and not supposition. For example there is not a shred of evidence to support the notion that nudity causes harm to children but we frequently hear people asserting that it does. They are overlaying children with their own prejudices and the evidence is very clear that it results in substantial harm.

Rule 5.1 Advertisements must contain nothing that could cause physical, mental, moral or social harm to children.

Interpretation of this rule must be based on evidence of what is harmful. Some supposedly generally accepted ideas about harm are very simplistic, counter productive and in some cases cause serious and widespread harm.

Rule 5.6 Advertisements must not portray or represent children in a sexual way.

Some of the present rules and their interpretation can only be justified by assuming that children are inherently sexual. This reinforces dangerous and harmful fallacies and causes widespread and in some cases very serious harm. If children are hidden, pixelated or otherwise censored purely because some disturbed individuals may consider them sexual then that in itself promotes the idea that children are sexual.

Treating nudity as if it is inherently sexual causes immense harm.

Question 147

Do you agree that television advertisements for condoms should be relaxed from its present restriction and not be advertised in or adjacent to programmes commissioned for, principally directed at or likely to appeal particularly to children below the age of 10? If your answer is no, please explain why.

Yes but we are puzzled by the age restriction. Is it to protect children or is it to protect some adults from their own embarrassment? It is generally accepted that treating knowledge of sex related issues as something to be kept hidden encourages attitudes which result in harm. If condoms are treated as everyday objects it demystifies them and results in improved outcomes. It is not coincidence that the most censorious countries, compared to the most liberal, have about ten times the teenage pregnancy and abortion rates and over seventy times the gonorrhoea rate.

These comments also apply to rule 32.6.1 "*sanitary protection products*", the radio rules 32.17.4, 32.17.5 and any other similar rules.

Question 157

Do you have other comments or observations on BCAP's proposed Code that you would like BCAP to take into account in its evaluation of consultation responses?

Yes.

Section 30, Pornography. The phrase "*the recognised character of pornography*" is used repeatedly without any definition being provided. It must be made very clear that nudity is neither pornography nor sex.

Great care must be taken to ensure that mistaken ideas about what is harmful do not prevent advertising that is beneficial to the well-being of individuals or society in

general. In particular complaints from a large proportion of a vociferous but tiny minority must not carry more weight than considerations of harm and the wishes of the overwhelming majority.

Most people are unaware of how much censorship takes place and are also unaware of how much harm some of that censorship causes. Surveys are often flawed because the respondents do not have the knowledge required to give a considered response.

There are numerous references to avoiding harm and similarly numerous references to avoiding causing widespread and serious offence. Unfortunately the proposals fail to take account the many situations where the two requirements are exclusive. We firmly believe that harm must always take precedence over offence. Anything else is indistinguishable from prejudice.

At present the code is almost entirely centred around the rights of advertisers and the rights of individuals receiving the adverts. Advertising is a part of the general pattern of life and it does have an impact on society as a whole. The code needs to give much more weight to the general well being of society.

Protection must be based on evidence of what causes harm and of what promotes well-being. Anything else is prejudice and that almost invariably causes harm.

Great care is required to ensure that complaints from a large proportion of a vociferous but tiny minority do not carry more weight than considerations of harm and the wishes of the overwhelming majority.

We are disturbed that further consideration of "offence" will not be the subject of a public consultation. This is one of the most pervasive parts of the code and many of the consequences are far from obvious.

British Naturism

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