

## Advertising 'part of the solution'

### **The Advertising Association responds to Nick Clegg's speech on making the UK a better place for children.**

In a speech to Barnardo's [yesterday](#), Nick Clegg set out his plans to make our country a better place for children. This included a 'crackdown on irresponsible advertising and marketing'.

His intentions are noble, but they are not new to the industry. The UK has some of the world's strictest advertising rules, rigorously enforced by the [ASA](#) and carefully designed to protect children from the very concerns he outlined.

The [Advertising Codes](#) demand that all ads are legal, decent, honest and truthful - prepared with a sense of social responsibility, particularly with regard to children. They contain specific rules governing advertising to children, to prevent the exploitation of children's vulnerability and lack of experience. They prohibit the use of 'pester power'. The Codes also contain strict sector-specific rules designed to ensure children are protected from the advertising of adult products (e.g. alcohol, medicines, gambling and foods that are high in fat, salt and sugar).

It is a complaints-driven system, and it only takes one complaint to trigger an investigation. If you see a piece of advertising that you think is irresponsible - [tell the ASA](#). If the ad doesn't comply with the codes, it gets banned.

And it is not just 'advertising' that is subject to stringent rules, it is the entire marketing process - including data collection, market research, and the use of child actors.

But no rules are entirely future-proof, that is why [the industry has recommended](#) that the remit of the ASA be extended to better cover social media. From the autumn, even more forms of commercial communications will have to comply with rules on advertising to children. This will include companies' marketing communications on their own websites, and other non-paid for space online, such as brand activity on social networking sites.

To help marketers navigate the industry's rules and promote best practice, [a new website](#) called CHECK will be a practical toolkit for communicating with children. We hope to launch it later this year.

To echo the words of the [Buckingham Report](#), the debate around commercialisation is highly sensitive, polarised and often sensationalised. We must remember that there are aspects of the commercial world that offer children myriad experiences and opportunities to promote a happy and healthy childhood.

The regulatory framework to prevent irresponsible advertising is already in place, compliance levels are high and there is a proven track record of the system adapting to meet new concerns. As the voice of the advertising industry, we look forward to engaging with the government's new task force.

Our message to the deputy prime minister is simple: we are not part of the problem, we are part of the solution and we're here to help.