

TMAP guidelines for coverage of sexual subject matter in teenage magazines

Introduction to TMAP's Guidelines for coverage of sexual subject matter in teenage magazines

- 1.1 The guidelines are the outcome of discussions between publishers of teenage magazines (represented through the Periodical Publishers Association [PPA]), retailers of teenage magazines (represented by, among others, the British Retail Consortium [BRC], National Federation of Retail Newsagents [NFRN], the Multiple Newsagents Association [MNA]) and magazine editors (represented by the British Society of Magazine Editors [BSME]).
- 1.2 The guidelines cover the editorial content of teenage magazines. The final arbiter of the meaning and interpretation of the Guidelines is the Teenage Magazine Arbitration Panel (TMAP), to whom any complaints relating to alleged infractions of the Guidelines should be addressed.
- 1.3 There is a separate code of practice relating to advertisements, which is produced by the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA), which is the final arbiter in the meaning of the code of practice. The ASA deals with complaints about advertisement content.

- 2.1 The guidelines apply to magazines published more than once a year when it is apparent that young women aged under 15 comprise 25 per cent or more of the total readership.
- 2.2 A list of such titles will be drawn up on the basis of the latest available figures over a 12 month period, using the reports of the Youth Target Group Index survey (Youth TGI) or other figures or bases accepted by the TMAP.

General principles and procedures

- 3.1 Readers will always be encouraged to take a responsible attitude to sex and contraception, and where relevant to seek advice from General Practitioners and other professionals.
- 3.2 If sex is being discussed, then safer sex will be highlighted and encouraged wherever relevant.
- 3.3 Where under-age sex or sexual abuse is discussed it will be clearly stated as illegal. Under-age sex will be discouraged and the age of consent clearly stated.
- 3.4 Editorial advice will be given in good faith, with relevant professional organisations contacted for guidelines and named within the editorial if appropriate.

- 3.5 Readers will be encouraged to seek support from parents, guardians or other responsible adults wherever relevant . The emotional consequences of sexual activity will be highlighted where relevant.
- 3.6 The editorial content of the magazines will reflect the typical concerns of the magazine's readership, with advice given to provide readers with relevant and responsible answers to their concerns.
- 3.7 It is recognised that magazines have an important role to play in the field of sex education for, and emotional development of, teenagers.

Implementation and assessment

- 4.1 Publishers of teenage magazines containing subject matter on sexual issues are responsible for ensuring that editorial policies for their magazines fall within the guidelines.
- 4.2 Editorial policies with regard to the publication of subject matter on sexual issues will be formally recorded by the publishers. All editorial staff employed to work on such subject matter will be instructed on the magazine's editorial policy and informed of any changes to that policy if relevant.
- 4.3 Editorial instruction will incorporate clear examples of appropriate and inappropriate editorial treatment of subject matter on sexual issues.
- 4.4 Each magazine will appoint an independent consultant of good standing to advise the editor on an ongoing basis with regard to sexual, emotional and moral issues.
- 4.5 An annual audit will be conducted by TMAP to ensure published material (those titles listed as a result of 2.2 plus any other titles apparently aimed at the defined readership) falls within the Guidelines.
- 4.6 All teenage magazines containing problem pages will ensure that published letters are based on genuine letters received by those magazines.
- 4.7 All published responses to letters on problem pages will be provided by relevant, professionally qualified advisors. Relevant qualifications will be approved by the TMAP.

Retail display

- 5.1 Publishers will advise distributors and retailers of the appropriate display category of their magazines.
- 5.2 Distributors and retailers should ensure that displays of magazines reflect the perceived age of purchasers, as communicated by publishers.