

# Scottish Travel Professional

informing travel professionals – developing the travel profession

## Briefing ...

### Website and social media advertising – if the CAP fits .....

In the UK, The UK Code of Non-broadcast Advertising, Sales Promotion and Direct Marketing has, for a number of years, been the rule book for non-broadcast advertisements, sales promotions and direct marketing communications. The Code is primarily concerned with the content of marketing communications and not with terms of business or products themselves. Some rules, however, go beyond content; for example, those that cover the administration of sales promotions, the suitability of promotional items, the delivery of products ordered through an advertisement and the use of personal information in direct marketing. Editorial content is specifically excluded from the Code, though it might be a factor in determining the context in which marketing communications are judged.

**With effect from 01 March 2011, broadcast advertising, sales promotion and direct marketing – including website and social media activity of this type – has come under the scope of the Code, and this applies to travel providers, along with other types of business.**

The Committee of Advertising Practice (CAP) is the self-regulatory body that creates, revises and enforces the Code. CAP's members include organisations that represent the advertising, sales promotion, direct marketing and media businesses. Through their membership of CAP member organisations, or through contractual agreements with media publishers and carriers, those businesses agree to comply with the Code so that marketing communications are legal, decent, honest and truthful and consumer confidence is maintained.

The Code supplements the law, fills gaps where the law does not reach and often provides an easier way of resolving disputes than by civil litigation or criminal prosecution. In many cases, self-regulation ensures that legislation is not necessary. Although advertisers, promoters and direct marketers (marketers), agencies and media may still wish to consult lawyers, compliance with the Code should go a long way to ensuring compliance with the law in areas covered by both the Code and the law.

By creating and following self-imposed rules, the marketing community produces marketing communications that are welcomed and trusted. By practising self-regulation, it ensures the integrity of advertising, promotions and direct marketing.

The Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) is the independent body that endorses and administers the Code, ensuring that the self-regulatory system works in the public interest. The ASA's activities include investigating and adjudicating on complaints and conducting research. Full information about the ASA's complaints procedure is available on [www.asa.org.uk](http://www.asa.org.uk).

The full text of the Code is available on [www.cap.org.uk](http://www.cap.org.uk).

(With thanks to CAP – The Committee of Advertising Practice)