



Department for
Digital, Culture,
Media & Sport

Baroness Deech
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Dear Lady Deech

During Baroness Hayter's Oral Parliamentary Question on Media Advertising on 22 March, my Noble Friend Baroness Chisholm of Owlpen promised to provide further clarity on your points regarding the accountability of the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA). With sincere apologies for the delay, I hope the below will provide some reassurance.

The ASA makes huge efforts to strive for transparency and is accounted to this by its independent board, chaired by Lord Currie.

The ASA publishes the outcomes of all formal investigations and the numbers of cases informally resolved on its website. It also publishes all its research and reports, as well as guidance for advertisers, compliance reports, and factsheets on current 'hot topic' themes. Information about numbers of complaints and cases received and resolved are contained in its Annual Report. Its website also contains an archive of all Annual Reports since 1961.

In addition to this the ASA has been a full member of the Ombudsman Association for a number of years, alongside other bodies such as the Information Commissioner's Office, the First Civil Service Commissioner and the Commissioner for Public Appointments in England.

You stated the ASA is not subject to the Freedom of Information Act as it is not a body listed by the Act as being a public authority (it is independent of Government and receives no taxpayer funding). Nevertheless, it tries to be as transparent as it can when answering queries and provides detailed information and responses wherever possible.

I am placing a copy of this letter in the library of the House.

Yours sincerely

Harry Ashton

Lord Ashton of Hyde
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State