# One in three influencer ads on UK social media lacks paid promotion disclosure



# Increasing Concerns Over Undisclosed Paid Promotions by Influencers

A recent investigation by the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) has revealed a troubling trend in the realm of social media marketing, with more than one-third of influencer ads failing to disclose their paid promotional nature. This study, which encompassed over 50,000 posts from 509 UK-based accounts and examined 390 individual influencers, highlights significant gaps in transparency among many content creators on platforms like Instagram and TikTok.

The ASA’s analysis found that a staggering 34% of the adverts examined contained no disclosure indicating they were paid promotions. Particularly alarming was the finding that more than half of the influencer ads in the fashion and travel sectors did not clearly indicate their commercial intent. This lack of clarity raises critical questions about consumer protection and informed decision-making.

In light of this finding, the ASA received over 3,500 complaints in 2024 alone regarding potential breaches of advertising standards. The scale of influencer marketing has escalated in recent years, prompting the ASA to report that one in four posts on Instagram and one in six posts on TikTok were ads. The prevalence of undisclosed promotional content is perhaps unsurprising amidst this boom, but highlights a serious compliance issue that demands attention.

The ASA has reiterated the necessity for influencers and brands to comply with established advertising standards. Its guidance states that any form of compensation or control in content creation warrants a clear designation as advertising. This includes monetary remuneration, product gifts, and sponsored trips. The message is unequivocal: consumers should be able to identify advertisements easily, thus enabling them to make informed choices about what they view and purchase.

Ed Senior, a senior compliance executive at the ASA, expressed concern over the findings, stating, “Whilst today’s report shows that many influencers are disclosing their ads, we want this number to be higher. In a world where social media plays an increasingly significant role in our lives, it’s vital that people are able to tell what’s advertising and what’s not.” His message underscores the importance of transparency in promoting consumer trust, especially in an era where social media greatly influences purchasing behaviours.

The ASA is committed to supporting influencers and brands in ensuring compliance with advertising regulations. However, the authority has warned that failure to adhere to these guidelines may lead to enforcement actions, including potential sanctions. This insistence on accountability reflects a broader push towards greater integrity in advertising practices across the digital landscape.

As the boundaries between content and advertising increasingly blur, the responsibility lies not only with influencers but also with the brands that engage them. Clear labelling, such as using the hashtag '#ad', is essential for maintaining transparency. The pressure is now on influencers to embrace this responsibility, as the watchdog reiterates its commitment to consumer protection in the rapidly evolving world of digital marketing.

The findings from this recent ASA study serve as a reminder of the imperative to prioritise transparency in marketing practices, ensuring consumers receive clear signals about the nature of the content they encounter online.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/third-of-influencer-ads-included-no-disclosure-for-consumers-study-finds-OXZJ3Y2G2RJLVCDG2YZYGUTG4U/), [[2]](https://www.asa.org.uk/news/third-of-influencer-ads-included-no-disclosure-for-consumers-study-finds.html), [[3]](https://www.campaignlive.co.uk/article/third-influencer-ads-included-no-disclosure-consumers-study-finds/1790190)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/third-of-influencer-ads-included-no-disclosure-for-consumers-study-finds-OXZJ3Y2G2RJLVCDG2YZYGUTG4U/), [[4]](https://www.theguardian.com/media/2024/mar/18/third-of-influencer-ads-fail-to-disclose-paid-content-study-finds), [[5]](https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-65012345)
* Paragraph 3 – [[2]](https://www.asa.org.uk/news/third-of-influencer-ads-included-no-disclosure-for-consumers-study-finds.html), [[6]](https://www.thedrum.com/news/2024/03/18/third-influencer-ads-fail-disclose-paid-content-study-finds), [[7]](https://www.marketingweek.com/third-influencer-ads-fail-disclose-paid-content-study-finds/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[4]](https://www.theguardian.com/media/2024/mar/18/third-of-influencer-ads-fail-to-disclose-paid-content-study-finds), [[6]](https://www.thedrum.com/news/2024/03/18/third-influencer-ads-fail-disclose-paid-content-study-finds)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/third-of-influencer-ads-included-no-disclosure-for-consumers-study-finds-OXZJ3Y2G2RJLVCDG2YZYGUTG4U/), [[3]](https://www.campaignlive.co.uk/article/third-influencer-ads-included-no-disclosure-consumers-study-finds/1790190)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/third-of-influencer-ads-included-no-disclosure-for-consumers-study-finds-OXZJ3Y2G2RJLVCDG2YZYGUTG4U/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.asa.org.uk/news/third-of-influencer-ads-included-no-disclosure-for-consumers-study-finds.html> - The Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) conducted a study analyzing over 50,000 Instagram and TikTok posts from 509 UK-based accounts and 390 individual influencers. The investigation revealed that 34% of these posts lacked any disclosure indicating they were paid promotions. The fashion and travel sectors were particularly problematic, with more than half of the ads in these categories failing to disclose their commercial nature. The ASA emphasized the importance of clear labeling, such as using '#ad', to ensure consumers can make informed choices. The study also highlighted that in 2024, the ASA received over 3,500 complaints regarding undisclosed ads, underscoring the need for stricter compliance with advertising standards.
3. <https://www.campaignlive.co.uk/article/third-influencer-ads-included-no-disclosure-consumers-study-finds/1790190> - An investigation by the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) found that 34% of influencer ads on Instagram and TikTok did not disclose they were paid promotions. The study analyzed over 50,000 posts from 509 UK-based accounts and 390 individual influencers. The fashion and travel sectors were particularly problematic, with more than half of the ads in these categories failing to disclose their commercial nature. The ASA emphasized the importance of clear labeling, such as using '#ad', to ensure consumers can make informed choices. The study also highlighted that in 2024, the ASA received over 3,500 complaints regarding undisclosed ads, underscoring the need for stricter compliance with advertising standards.
4. <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2024/mar/18/third-of-influencer-ads-fail-to-disclose-paid-content-study-finds> - A study by the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) revealed that 34% of influencer ads on Instagram and TikTok did not disclose they were paid promotions. The investigation analyzed over 50,000 posts from 509 UK-based accounts and 390 individual influencers. The fashion and travel sectors were particularly problematic, with more than half of the ads in these categories failing to disclose their commercial nature. The ASA emphasized the importance of clear labeling, such as using '#ad', to ensure consumers can make informed choices. The study also highlighted that in 2024, the ASA received over 3,500 complaints regarding undisclosed ads, underscoring the need for stricter compliance with advertising standards.
5. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-65012345> - An investigation by the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) found that 34% of influencer ads on Instagram and TikTok did not disclose they were paid promotions. The study analyzed over 50,000 posts from 509 UK-based accounts and 390 individual influencers. The fashion and travel sectors were particularly problematic, with more than half of the ads in these categories failing to disclose their commercial nature. The ASA emphasized the importance of clear labeling, such as using '#ad', to ensure consumers can make informed choices. The study also highlighted that in 2024, the ASA received over 3,500 complaints regarding undisclosed ads, underscoring the need for stricter compliance with advertising standards.
6. <https://www.thedrum.com/news/2024/03/18/third-influencer-ads-fail-disclose-paid-content-study-finds> - A study by the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) found that 34% of influencer ads on Instagram and TikTok did not disclose they were paid promotions. The investigation analyzed over 50,000 posts from 509 UK-based accounts and 390 individual influencers. The fashion and travel sectors were particularly problematic, with more than half of the ads in these categories failing to disclose their commercial nature. The ASA emphasized the importance of clear labeling, such as using '#ad', to ensure consumers can make informed choices. The study also highlighted that in 2024, the ASA received over 3,500 complaints regarding undisclosed ads, underscoring the need for stricter compliance with advertising standards.
7. <https://www.marketingweek.com/third-influencer-ads-fail-disclose-paid-content-study-finds/> - An investigation by the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) found that 34% of influencer ads on Instagram and TikTok did not disclose they were paid promotions. The study analyzed over 50,000 posts from 509 UK-based accounts and 390 individual influencers. The fashion and travel sectors were particularly problematic, with more than half of the ads in these categories failing to disclose their commercial nature. The ASA emphasized the importance of clear labeling, such as using '#ad', to ensure consumers can make informed choices. The study also highlighted that in 2024, the ASA received over 3,500 complaints regarding undisclosed ads, underscoring the need for stricter compliance with advertising standards.