



Participation TV Part 2: keeping advertising separate from editorial

A consultation on new Broadcasting Code rules for the use and promotion of premium rate services in programmes

Ofcom Consultation 2008

Response of
The Trading Standards Institute

May 2008



Ron Gainsford
Chief Executive
Trading Standards Institute
1 Sylvan Court, Sylvan Way
Southfields Business Park
Basildon, Essex, SS15 6TH
Telephone: 0845 608 9402
Mobile: 07786 066 814
E-Mail: rong@tsi.org.uk

Yvonne Matthews
5th Floor, Content and Standards
Ofcom
Riverside House
2A Southwark Bridge Road
London
SE1 9HA

22 May 2008

Dear Yvonne

Thank you for the opportunity to submit our comments on your consultation on new Broadcasting Code rules for the use and promotion of premium rate services in programmes.

The Trading Standards Institute is the professional body for Trading Standards professionals working in the private and public sectors.

It is the national body responsible for representing, supporting, lobbying, and championing Trading Standards to a range of stakeholders including government, business, consumers, and the media.

We look to provide innovative solutions across the regulatory arena; to administer and award professional qualifications; to accredit and

certify training and ensure the ongoing competence of members; and to influence and lobby on behalf of the profession as a whole.

We aim, through our actions and our members' actions, to empower consumers and reputable business to contribute to a vibrant economy.

We strive to eliminate rogue traders and unfair trading practices from the marketplace, to promote environmental sustainability, and to make an effective contribution to the health and social wellbeing of citizens and communities.

In compiling this response, TSI has sought the view of our Lead Officer Without Portfolio, Richard Matthews. If you require clarification on any of the points raised in the response, please do not hesitate to contact Richard at email lowp@tsi.org.uk or by telephone on 0845 608 9567.

Finally, TSI is happy for this response to be made publicly available – it is not confidential.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'RC', is located below the text 'Yours sincerely'.

Ron Gainsford
Chief Executive

The Trading Standards Institute is a
company limited by Guarantee.
Registered in England and Wales.
Register Number 38769.
Registered office:
1 Sylvan Court, Sylvan Way
Southfields Business Park
Basildon, Essex SS15 6TH

OFCOM Consultation on Premium Rate Services in Programmes

Trading Standards Institute Response – May 2008

The Trading Standards Institute (TSI) welcomes the opportunity to respond to this consultation as we believe that the proposed rules can play an important role in protecting viewers, and in particular vulnerable viewers who can be adversely affected by programmes featuring heavy PRS content.

In general terms TSI supports the proposed amendments to the Code. In our view there is a distinction between programmes which feature PRS and allow the viewer / listener to directly contribute to a programme's content and outcome and allow them to benefit from using the service to other types of programme, i.e. adult and psychic television, in which PRS is used as a vehicle for funding the broadcast.

Whilst we agree with the proposed changes to the Code it is felt that rules surrounding information on the amount charged by PRS operators is clear, reasonable and where possible proportionate* to the benefit the viewer (including listener) derives from participating in the programme.

In response to Question 3 we believe that the proposed rules should apply equally to radio as to television programmes. The rules are proposed to protect consumers and set an industry standard and in order to safeguard consumer enjoyment of broadcasts we cannot see a reason why these rules should be limited to television alone.

**For example on Quiz TV where there is a prize viewers should be aware of the call volume and percentage chance of winning so that they can make an informed choice prior to calling and paying for a Premium Rate Service.*

Trading Standards Institute - May 2008
