

TfL advertising policy

Revised guidelines effective February 25, 2019

1. Background

1.1 The purpose of this policy is to set out high level principles and procedures relating to the approval of advertisements which appear on services run or regulated by Transport for London (TfL).

1.2 The application of the principles will depend on context and will sometimes require subjective judgments.

1.3 The regulation of advertising in the UK is the responsibility of the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA). The ASA applies the Advertising Codes which are written by the Committees of Advertising Practice (CAP).

1.4 Advertisements carried on services run or regulated by TfL (including campaigns on behalf of TfL) should not conflict with the required standards outlined below, which supplement the requirements of the Advertising Codes.

2. Required standards for approval of advertisements

2.1 TfL roundels or other intellectual property owned by TfL may only be used in accordance with any further guidelines and/or licensing system which may be in place.

2.2 Individual TfL services may specify and apply further requirements in relation to advertising on those services.

2.3 An advertisement will not be approved for, or permitted to remain on, TfL's services if, in TfL's reasonable opinion, the advertisement does not comply with the law, does not comply with the UK Code of Non-broadcast Advertising, Sales Promotion and Direct Marketing (or any relevant CAP code), is not socially appropriate, or is inconsistent with TfL's obligations under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 (the Public Sector Equality Duty). More particularly, an advertisement will be unacceptable if:

(a) it is likely to cause widespread or serious offence to reasonable members of the public on account of the product or service being advertised, the content or design of the advertisement, or by way of implication. Advertisements which are consistent with TfL's Public Sector Equality Duty, such as those which promote tolerance, or discourage prejudice, will not however normally be disapproved on the ground that they might cause offence;

(b) it depicts adults or children in a sexual manner or displays nude or semi-nude figures in an overtly sexual context. (While the use of underdressed people in, for example, underwear advertising, may be appropriate, gratuitous use of images of an overtly sexual nature will be unacceptable.);

(c) it could reasonably be seen as distasteful, indecent or obscene, in its use of imagery, language or otherwise;

(d) could reasonably be seen as likely to cause pressure to conform to an unrealistic or unhealthy body shape, or as likely to create body confidence issues particularly among young people;

(e) it relates to lap-dancing, 'gentlemen's clubs', escort agencies, massage parlours, or unproven health and weight loss products;

(f) it depicts direct or immediate violence to anyone shown in the advertisement; or could reasonably be seen as condoning, inciting or provoking crime, illegality, violence, or anti-social behaviour;

(g) it relates to films which have not been granted permission for public exhibition or which do not show the British Board of Film Classification certificate;

(h) it contains images or messages which relate to matters of public controversy or sensitivity. Advertisements which are calculated to promote tolerance, discourage prejudice, or are consistent with TfL's Public Sector Equality Duty, advertisements which are calculated to promote the right to life, liberty and security of the person, and advertisements which reasonably promote causes which are not party political, will however not normally be disapproved on this ground;

(i) it refers to or portrays (or gives the impression of portraying) a living person. TfL requires an indemnity against any action by that person, or on that person's behalf, before such references or portrayals will be accepted. This does not apply to a person who is a professional performer, model or similar, unless there is reason to doubt their consent;

(j) it contains negative references to TfL's services, or those services provided or regulated by other members of the GLA Group, or might bring TfL or other members of the GLA Group into disrepute;

(k) it is likely to be defaced, for example due to the subject matter or the inclusion of a high proportion of blank space;

(l) it uses handwriting or illustrations that suggest the advertisement has been damaged, defaced, fly posted or subject to graffiti after it has been posted;

(m) it may adversely affect in any way the interests of the site owner, TfL or any member of the GLA Group;

(n) it promotes a party political cause or electioneering. Advertisements must conform to TfL's policy on use of resources, with particular care exercised in pre-election periods;

(o) it is digital, and may pose a health and safety risk as a result of flickering or other visual imagery;

(p) it promotes (directly or indirectly) food or non-alcoholic drink which is high in fat, salt and/or sugar ('HFSS' products), according to the Nutrient Profiling Model managed by Public Health England. It is for the advertiser to demonstrate (in case of any doubt) that any product is not HFSS, and/or that an advertisement is not promoting HFSS products, and/or that there are exceptional grounds. A set of guidelines is available which provides more details of how this aspect of the policy is implemented."

(q) it is unacceptable for some other substantial reason (which TfL will identify and explain as reasonably required).