

BODY IMAGE PLEDGE TOOLKIT

BE REAL
BODY CONFIDENCE FOR EVERYONE



INTRODUCTION - BODY IMAGE PLEDGE

The *Body Image Pledge* is a voluntary code for the responsible portrayal of body image in advertising, fashion, music and the media, referred to collectively as 'industry'. It is based on the recommendations of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Body Image (APPG), following its widely publicised inquiry into body image anxiety.

This guidance should be read in conjunction with the *Pledge* and has been developed to help organisations interpret and adopt the *Pledge's* four principles, which encourage industry to:

1. **REFLECT DIVERSITY**
2. **REFLECT REALITY**
3. **PROMOTE HEALTH & WELLBEING**
4. **PROMOTE THE PLEDGE**

A section on each of the principles explains their intention and rationale, provides examples of best practice, offers 'top tips' on how to go about portraying body image positively and highlights 'hot topics' to prompt consideration of key issues.

Practical and constructive advice

Be Real recognises that body image is a complex and multi-faceted issue and that change can take time. We are aware that many organisations and individuals want to be positive in portraying body image, but are unsure of how and where to start. This guidance recognises that and offers practical and constructive advice and support.

Building on existing industry codes

Advertising regulations state that marketing communications should be legal, decent, honest and truthful and that they should be prepared with a sense of responsibility to consumers and society. They should also take account of prevailing standards and avoid misleading people or causing harm, especially to children.

The APPG inquiry called on advertising regulators to define what constitutes 'harm' and what they would consider 'misleading' in regard to the portrayal of body image. However, there is no specific obligation in the industry codes that regulate advertising, fashion, music or the media, to reflect positively how people really look. This has meant that progress to date around the portrayal of body image has relied upon some organisations and individuals who have adopted appropriate policies to tackle this issue. This was most recently highlighted by Transport for London taking the initiative to ban 'unhealthy and unrealistic' body image adverts that demean women.

The *Body Image Pledge* seeks to help and support advertisers. It provides clarity on body image portrayal specifically and what is needed for cultural and behavioural change. The Toolkit backs up the Pledge with specific guidance, best practice examples and case studies.

Have your say!

The issue of body image is constantly in the news and as more organisations demonstrate social responsibility in its portrayal, so prevailing standards will improve. Consequently, this guidance will always be a work-in-progress and we'll continually update it to illustrate the latest in best practice.

To do this we want to hear from you. Whether you're an individual who's been impressed by something you've seen or read, or an organisation that is proud of your work and would like to have it promoted as an example of best practice, get in touch with us at BeReal@ymca.org.uk.

PRINCIPLE 1: REFLECT DIVERSITY

Communications, as appropriate, should reflect the UK population's diverse range of body shapes and sizes, skin tones, ages, genders, ethnicities, disfigurements, abilities and disabilities.

Intention

- ***Diversity***

The APPG called for industry to use more diverse images that reflect what consumers and the market place really look like.

- ***Broad cultural ideals***

Broadening cultural ideals of beauty by using a more diverse range of body types in advertising, fashion, music and the media, helps more of us to identify with popular images and so view our own bodies more positively. When we feel better about ourselves, we're more likely to make healthy choices, such as exercising regularly and eating well.

- ***Communications***

'Communications' should be interpreted as widely as possible. It's intended to mean the totality of an organisation's advertising, marketing, communications, promotions, sponsorships, events or sales activity in any medium, including digital media (e.g. social media) and in-store displays and products. It also includes any form of editorial and accompanying imagery in any medium.

While it may not be practical for each communication to reflect the spectrum of physical appearance, all communications from an organisation, taken together, should do so.

- ***Fashion retailers***

As distributors of fashion products directly to the public, retailers have a unique opportunity to promote positive body image messages in a way that responds to the immediate needs of consumers, by stocking and displaying clothing in a wide variety of sizes that cater for all consumers.

- ***Consumer power***

Individuals should be encouraged to use their power as consumers by buying from businesses that reflect diversity and challenging those who don't.

BEST PRACTICE

In recent years, a number of influential organisations have embraced diversity in the

Dove



The Dove Real Beauty Campaign set the standard for the **Body Image Pledge** in its portrayal of people, working with real women of all shapes, sizes and ethnicities.



SELFRIDGES & CO

Selfridges promotion of its “Body Studio” range featured a diverse cast including Craggs and Ruqsana Begum, a British Thai Boxing champion who de

The store’s “Hello Beautiful” campaign used non-professional models to capture the true diversity of beauty in society. As part of the campaign, Selfridges hosted debates and talks about beauty that were streamed through Google+ Hangouts and set up a photo booth in store where customers could get their picture taken. Customer photos were then used in the window of the Oxford Street store and on the Selfridges website



M&S

Marks and Spencer’s “Leading Ladies” campaign starred celebrities with a broad range of ages, sizes, shapes, ethnicities and achievements.

In 2015, Marks and Spencer advertised their bras for breast cancer survivors featuring a diverse selection of women who successfully underwent surgery. Ten per cent of sales went to Breast Cancer Now, to raise £13m and help prevent 9,000 cases of breast cancer by 2025.



PRACTICE

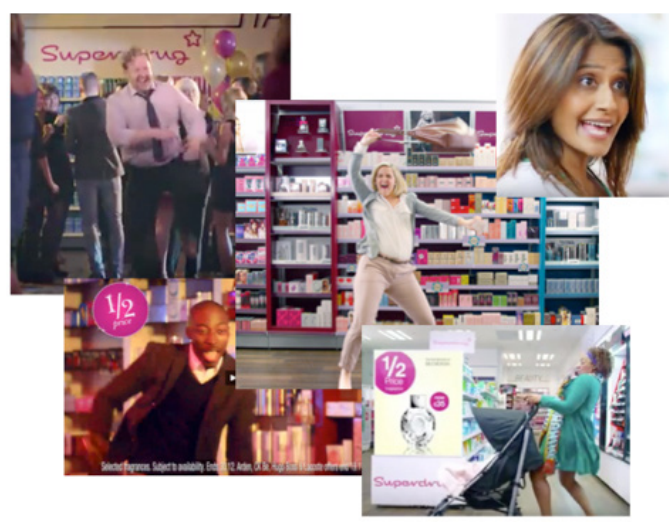
their campaigns. Several of these are shown here, by way of best practice examples.



Indian fashion brand, Viva N Diva, wanted to help change the definition of beauty, so chose acid attack survivor, Laxmi Saa, from Delhi, as the face of their clothing line.

Superdrug

“That Superdrug Feeling” campaign worked with customers of varying shapes, sizes and ethnicities.



st of women, that includes transgender activist, Charlie
signs sports hijabs.



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DEBENHAMS

Debenhams piloted a campaign that used size 16 mannequins in store as well as larger, older and disabled models in their advertising for the Principles by Ben de Lisi range.



TOP TIPS

1. Undertake an audit of your communications to see how they compare with best practice and invite your staff and suppliers to contribute to a plan to address any areas of potential change.
2. Ensure your organisation is aware of the UK's diversity. Use it to reflect society's broad view of beauty and enhance your appeal to a wider audience.
3. Consider using customers and real people in some of your campaigns rather than professional models.

PRINCIPLE 2: REFLECT REALITY

Images should show people as they are in real life, with alterations limited to technical corrections, such as light or deleting stray hairs.

The use of digitally enhanced 'air-brushed' images is frequently used in advertising, fashion, music and the media. In some cases this technology can alter images of people to the extent where their body shape and features are no longer realistic or attainable through healthy practices.

Intention

- **Authenticity**

Images should show people as they really are.

- **Facial Features**

Facial features, such as moles, wrinkles and other permanent distinguishing marks, should remain untouched. Skin tones should remain natural and creases and lines should not be smoothed over.

- **Body Shape**

Fundamental shape or appearance should not be altered - for example, by lengthening or thinning a person's legs, tightening their waist or changing their body size.

- **Combination of Images**

Images should not be enhanced or combined, nor should extra elements be added.

Setting the Standard

Dove has set the standard for industry. Its policy on airbrushing is clear and unequivocal:

“Dove limits retouching to address errors that occur on shoots, such as colour correcting from lighting or stray hairs, but we do not make changes to physical shape or appearance of women by removing moles, wrinkles, scars or major blemishes. We don't enhance or add extra elements to an image, or combine images. If you walked past any Dove real woman in the street, she would look just as she does in our adverts. We have very strict guidelines to ensure we represent women as they really are.”

BEST PRACTICE

DEBENHAMS

In 2013, Debenhams announced that it would severely restrict airbrushing and published a revealing before and after illustration of common industry practice. The retailer also announced that it would not allow photo-shopped lingerie model shots, would not practice arm and leg thinning, teeth whitening and 'bust boosting' and would only airbrush minor things like pigmentation or stray hair.



bareMinerals®

bareMinerals use what they call 'responsible retouching', anything that the model brought to the shoot that day, which isn't hers every day - a blemish, a stray hair, we clean up. Anything which is part of her everyday - her freckles, her lines, her eye colour - they don't touch those.

In 2011 bareMinerals held a blind casting call for its 'BE A FORCE OF BEAUTY' campaign. Asking women to answer a questionnaire on who they were on the inside, in order to see their natural beauty.



In 2011, in response to customer feedback, Boots advertised its No.7 beauty products through the "Ta Dah" campaign, which did not use airbrushing. In a review of the campaign, 77% of respondents agreed that the advertising was attractive to look at, 69% agreed that it "felt right" and 50% said it made them feel more positive towards the No.7 brand. Boots feels there is no need for airbrushing techniques in beauty advertising, believing products should speak for themselves, which reflects what customers want.



'Ideal' vs. Attainable Imagery

The APPG Inquiry found that the typical industry 'ideal', of young, thin white women and muscular men, is highly unrepresentative and cannot realistically be attained by 95% of the population.



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The **Body Image Pledge** is specifically seeking to end this practice and to ensure that advertisers use images that honestly reflect what the majority of people can realistically achieve.

Dove addressed the issue of industry's portrayal of the perfect body as part of its Real Beauty Campaign.



Dove

TOP TIPS

1. Read the APPG Report and subsequent studies from the Government Equalities Office and Centre for Appearance Research (located in the Resources section of the Be Real website) to understand the extent of the problem caused by the use of unrealistic and enhanced images.
2. Review your own policies and those of any agencies you may use. If necessary create your own airbrushing policy having regard for the best practice cases that already exist.
3. Create a customer advisory panel from members of the public to provide feedback on the use of images in your communications.

PRINCIPLE 3: PROMOTE HEALTH AND WELLBEING

The *Body Image Pledge* seeks to encourage the communication of people's holistic value, emphasising their health and wellbeing and to end judgment of people based on their weight and appearance and the potentially discriminatory and damaging remarks that typically follow.

We support the conclusion of the DEMOS report *The Self-Esteem Society* that both ***“business and the media should offer more balanced and varied images of success as part of corporate social responsibility.”***

Intention

- **Health**

The use of models implicitly seeks to set a standard to which others will aspire. Consequently, the use of healthy models is intended not only to protect the models themselves, but also to provide role models of good health who will encourage the public to pursue healthy physical goals.

- **Age**

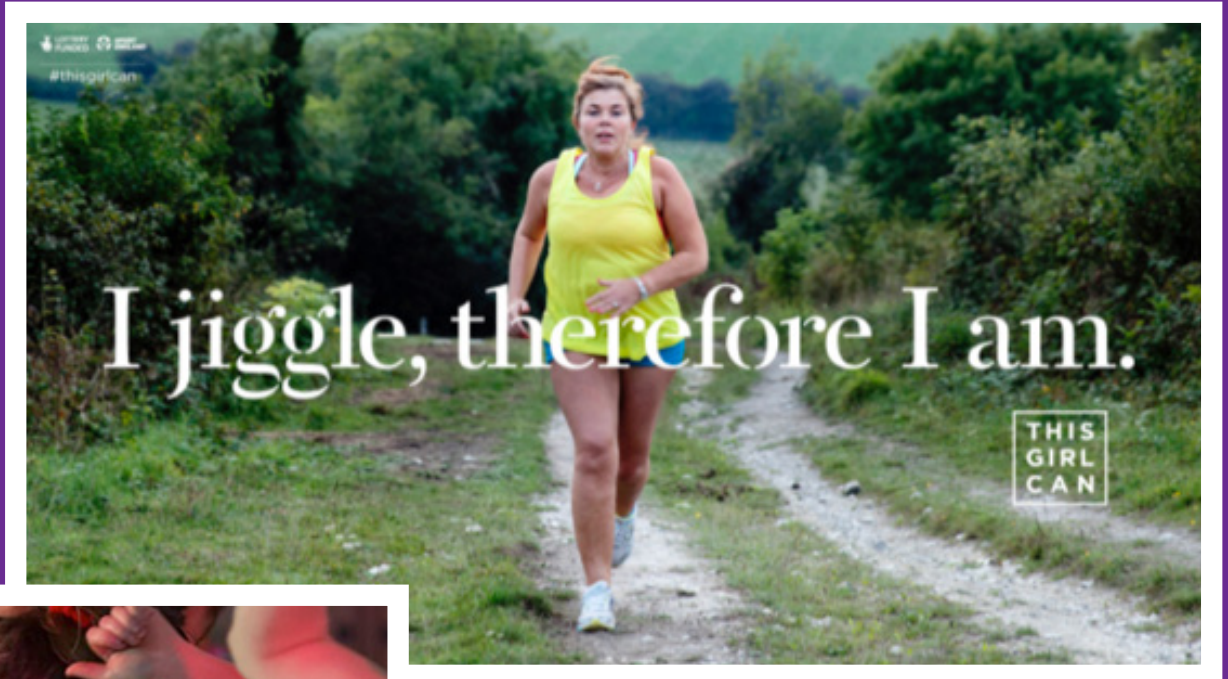
There is a growing tendency to use young models whose bodies conform to thin ideals that are often impossible for adult models to attain through healthy behaviours. This practice contributes to unhealthy ideals and can lead to unhealthy weight management by both models and the public.

Consequently, models should also be of the same age as the primary target audience for the products and services being promoted.

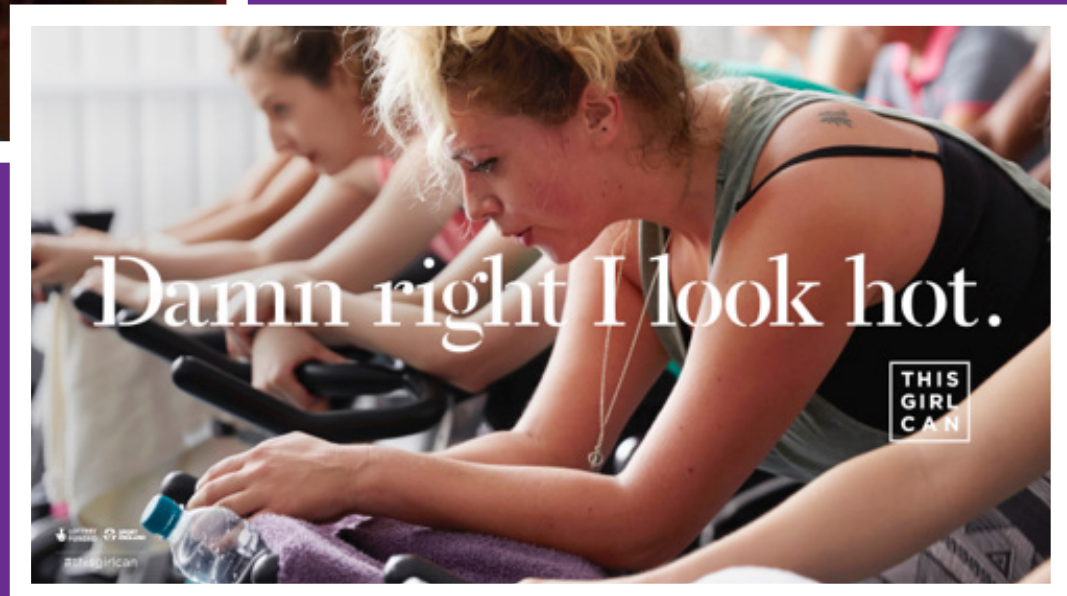
BEST PRACTICE

SPORT ENGLAND

Sport England's *This Girl Can* campaign, which encourages women to be physically active and proud of themselves while they exercise is the role model for prioritising health and wellbeing.



**SPORT
ENGLAND**



PRINCIPLE 4: PROMOTE THE PLEDGE

Promote and advocate the *Body Image Pledge*; encouraging others to adopt its principles and follow responsible body image practice. Educate and train staff in responsible body image practice as defined by the *Pledge*.

Intention

- ***Promotion and Advocacy***

The *Body Image Pledge* is intended to be the recognised benchmark for best practice in body image portrayal and consumers will be encouraged to buy from those businesses that adopt its principles. Publicly adopting and promoting the *Pledge* will offer a competitive advantage to early adopters; ultimately, this should become an essential industry standard.

Businesses are encouraged to promote the *Body Image Pledge* through all points of contact, from customer communications to stakeholder and supplier management and industry events.

- ***Education and Training***

The *Body Image Pledge* intends to help create best practice businesses, with staff who develop body confident products and services as a matter of course, who make suppliers aware of their responsibilities and who live body confident lives.

TOP TIPS

1. All organisations involved in creating a communication should consider the health and wellbeing of the models and collectively take steps to satisfy themselves that the models they use are healthy and age-appropriate before employing them.
2. Take a holistic approach to health and wellbeing and avoid using size, shape, weight or body composition as the sole determinants of health.
3. Use images and descriptions of success that are varied, balanced, based on health, wellbeing and achievement and employ ambassadors and spokespeople who follow good health practice.

YMCA Body Confidence Training

YMCA, the world's oldest and largest charity for children and young people, offer the UK's leading resources in accredited and internal staff training in body image best practice.

Accredited qualification

To support body image knowledge and training, a Level 1 Award, Body Image and the Relationship to Wellbeing, has been accredited by [YMCA Awards](#). This qualification aims to help the learner:

- Understand the influences of body image
- Know what is meant by self esteem
- Understand ways of building confidence and self esteem
- Understand how active leisure pursuits contribute to fitness
- Understand the range of active leisure pursuits available to them
- Understand the benefits and components of a balanced diet

More information on the qualification can be found on the [YMCA Awards](#) website.

Internal guidelines

YMCA is creating a set of best practice guidelines for the staff, volunteers and suppliers of the 133 YMCAs in England and Wales, which will subsequently be shared with the YMCA network in 119 countries around the world.

Shared through events, seminars, training and internal communications, these guidelines will comprise:

- Guidance on:
 - Auditing current practice against best practice, as defined by the [Body Image Pledge](#)
 - [Body Image Pledge](#) compliant language
 - [Body Image Pledge](#) compliant imagery
 - Understanding advertising
 - Healthy models and responsibility for their recruitment
- Body confidence research bank
 - Links to the leading body image research and analysis
- Body confidence training
 - Comprehensive training in responsible body image portrayal, based on the YMCA's accredited qualification

TOP TIPS

1. Share the *Body Image Pledge* with staff, suppliers and customers and encourage them to participate in defining best practice for your business.
2. Let your customers know that you are supporting the *Body Image Pledge*. Promote any policies or campaigns that encourage positive body image clearly, so people know that you are a brand that is doing something about this issue.
3. Bring the *Body Image Pledge* to work: a body confident workforce is healthier, happier and more productive. Help your staff to take a long-term approach to health and wellbeing.

