



Guidelines for Retailers for the Display of ‘Lads’ Magazines” (and ‘Ladies’ Magazines) with Front Covers or Content that May Offend Some Customers

These titles are not ‘Top Shelf’ titles; however we do urge retailers to be sensitive to the concerns of consumers, particularly in relation to the display of titles with front covers and/or content that may be inappropriate to display at a young person’s eye-level or below.

To minimise complaints from consumers, without adversely affecting the sale of these titles, we recommend...

- ...That you do not display them at children’s eye-level or below, to ensure they are not in the direct sight and reach of children
- ...That you do not display them adjacent to your display of children’s titles and comics
- ...That where display space restraints preclude the above, that titles with front covers that may cause concern are part-overlapped with other titles so as to minimise the potential for offence to parents with children.



BRITISH RETAIL CONSORTIUM
for successful and responsible retailing



NATIONAL FEDERATION
of
RETAIL NEWSAGENTS



Your Ref:
Our Ref: 157347/JB/25



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Dear Rhona

Thank you for your letter of 1 July to the Home Secretary, the Rt Hon Theresa May MP, about the display of adult material in retail outlets. It has been passed to this Department and I am replying as Minister for Culture, Communications and Creative Industries. I apologise for the delay in doing so, however your letter has only just arrived in this Department.

I know that some people find the content of adult magazines and newspapers offensive, and I can assure you that the Government is particularly concerned that children should not be exposed to inappropriate material of any kind. We are working to ensure that there are firm measures in place to see that this is so.

The Obscene Publications Act 1957 and the Indecent Displays Act 1981 govern what is acceptable in newspapers and magazines. These laws apply to all publications and the Police have enforcement powers; ultimately, it is for the Courts to determine whether the law is being broken.

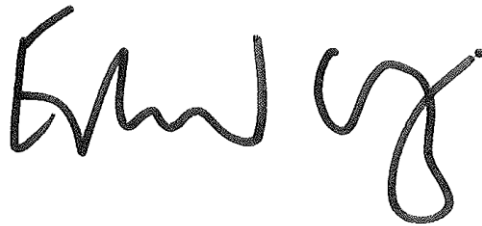
With respect to the display of such publications, there is no law which determines where newspapers or magazines are placed, nor is there any formal classification of something as top-shelf material, limited for sale to adults; it is simply a matter of convention and public demand.

Publishers and wholesalers regularly remind retailers about the placement of magazines. Guidelines were drawn up to avoid giving offence to customers;

something that retailers are generally keen to prevent. The advice on displaying such publications is that they should take care to avoid giving offence by displaying them above child's eye level where possible, and certainly away from publications aimed at children. I attach a copy of these guidelines for your convenience.

In an open society like ours, it is necessary to find the appropriate balance between protecting the public and legitimate freedom of choice, and this is what the guidelines are intended to achieve. Some retailers are simply not aware that some images are offensive to some people and, once this is brought to their attention, they may be happy to oblige customers by moving the material to a less prominent position.

While at present we do not believe that there is a convincing case for further Government intervention in media regulation, such as a requirement for publications to be concealed or age-rated, the Government is very conscious of people's concerns and this is a matter that we will be keeping under constant review.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ed Vaizey', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Ed Vaizey MP
Minister for Culture, Communications and Creative Industries

Enc. Display Guidelines