



# Enforcement Notice:

## Misleading “Faux Fur” claims in clothes and accessories

### Who we are

We are the [Committee of Advertising Practice](#) (CAP). We write the advertising rules, which are enforced by the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA), the UK’s independent regulator. You can read about the UK advertising regulatory system [on the ASA website](#).

### Why are we contacting you?

We are concerned that consumers have been misled by adverts for “faux fur” products (also called “fake fur”) which in fact contained real animal fur. Consumers should expect products advertised as “fake fur” or “faux fur” to contain no real animal fur.

Please take immediate action to ensure your advertising complies, including online. If we see continued problems in this area after **11 February 2019** we will take targeted enforcement action to ensure a level-playing-field. This may include – where advertisers are unwilling to comply – referral to our [legal backstop](#).

### Scope

- This guidance encompasses but is limited to advertising, across all media, including websites, social media, and product listings on online marketplaces and platforms.
- We do not regulate labelling. For labelling queries or complaints, please contact Trading Standards.
- We do not take a view on the ethics of animal fur as a consumer product, which can be legally bought and sold in the UK. This guidance solely covers misleading advertising claims for “faux fur” which breach our rules.

## Guidance

### *Case Study #1: “Faux fur” claims in clothes*

The ASA [investigated a product listing](#) on a retailer’s website for a “Faux Fur Pom Pom Jumper”. The complainant purchased the product and commissioned an independent textiles analysis report, which stated that the sample was animal fur, most likely rabbit.

The retailer said they understood the product did not contain animal fur. They said they had robust policies and procedures with suppliers to prevent the sale of fur products, and a quality control team which tested and passed the product for sale. These tests had not been retained. Nonetheless, they had removed the product from sale and stopped placing further orders with the supplier.

The ASA acknowledged the retailer’s procedures but noted they had not retained their tests which passed the product as faux fur. In the context of the complainant’s independent test report, the ASA found the “faux fur” claim misleading.

### *Case Study #2: “Faux fur” claims in accessories*

The ASA [investigated a product listing](#) on an online marketplace platform for a “Faux Fur Pom Pom Headband”. The complainant purchased the product and commissioned an independent textiles analysis report, which stated that the sample was real animal fur, most likely rabbit.

The seller said they had been informed when they bought the products in China that they were faux fur, and were shocked to learn otherwise. They had removed the listing. The ASA acknowledged the product had been removed from sale, but noted that the independent evidence indicated the headband contained animal fur. The ASA concluded that the “faux fur” claim was misleading.

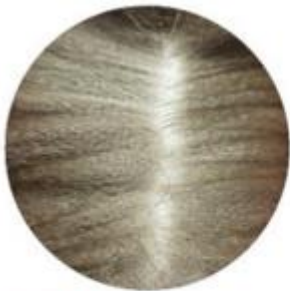
## Advice

### How to tell the difference between animal and faux fur

We understand that laboratory analysis is the most accurate method for identifying animal and faux synthetic fur, but the following three-step test may also be useful:

1

Check the base of the fur – part the hairs at the base and look carefully at the material.



Real fur  
Animal skin base



Faux fur  
Woven fabric base

- **Animal fur** – base of leather or skin (which may be white, tan or dyed)
- **Faux fur** – look for a mesh or threaded fabric backing from which “hairs” emerge

1

2

Check the tips of the hair – does it taper? A magnifying glass and good lighting helps!

- **Animal fur** – often tapers to a point.
  - *Do not rely solely on this test, however, because sometimes animal fur has been sheared or cut to a uniform length.*
- **Faux fur** – blunt ends, cut straight across.



Real fur  
Pointed ends



Faux fur  
blunt ends

3

The Burn Test – make sure you already own the item and cut off the hair first!



- **Animal fur** – singes and smells like burnt human hair
- **Faux fur** – when made from polyester or acrylic, the two most commonly used synthetics, faux fur melts and smells like burnt plastic

<sup>1</sup> Images courtesy of Humane Society International UK <http://www.hsi.org/assets/pdfs/real-vs-fake-fur-guide.pdf>

## What should you do?

On a basic level: *do not claim products are made from “faux fur” if they contain real animal fur.*

## But what can you do to prevent this?

	
<b>Do</b> be as transparent as possible about the materials in the products sold on your websites and shops (and make clear if and how products were tested)	<b>Don't</b> assume that the low cost of the product from a supplier is a good indicator that the product does not contain animal fur. Current market conditions mean that real animal fur is not necessarily more expensive than faux fur
<b>Do</b> test “faux fur” products yourself before putting them on sale – if they are repeat orders, make sure to test a sample from each batch	<b>Don't</b> rely on the touch of the product alone to make your judgement – instead, test the product using laboratory tests or use the three step test outlined above if that's not feasible
<b>Do</b> speak to your local Trading Standards or primary authority for help with labelling requirements and help with how to distinguish faux fur from animal fur; especially if you are aware that your “faux fur” products have ever contained animal fur	<b>Don't</b> use suppliers that make repeated “mistakes” in supplying animal fur instead of faux fur
<b>Do</b> make sure you are consistent in your approach across your lines of clothes and accessories. The legal requirements and regulations may differ, but it is never ok to say “faux fur” when animal fur is being sold	
<b>Do</b> take tip-offs from customers and the press seriously – if they think something is animal fur, look into it	

## An extra word for online marketplaces and platforms, on top of the above:

- We recognise that it is more difficult for online marketplaces to examine all the products sold on the platform, but that does not remove the responsibility you have to ensure that the products sold on your platform are correctly described.
- If you have a “no animal fur policy” on your website, online marketplace or platform, consumers expect this to apply to all products sold on your platform, including items sold by third party sellers. Educate your market place sellers on how to tell real fur from faux fur and make sure your policies match up to your promises and the responsibilities you have adopted.

## Appendix: Code rules and legislation

### Relevant [CAP Code](#) rules:

#### 3.1

Marketing communications must not materially mislead or be likely to do so.

#### 3.7

Before distributing or submitting a marketing communication for publication, marketers must hold documentary evidence to prove claims that consumers are likely to regard as objective and that are capable of objective substantiation. The ASA may regard claims as misleading in the absence of adequate substantiation.

### Relevant legislation:

The [Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations \(CPRs\)](#) prohibits commercial practices which contravene the requirements of professional diligence and materially distort or are likely to materially distort the economic behaviour of the average consumer. The CPRs also prohibit misleading omissions.

The [Textile Regulation \(EU\) No 1007/2011](#) lays out the rules about labelling on textile products in the EU, which includes the use of the “contains non-textile parts of animal origin” label on certain textile products. This regulation is enforced in the UK by Trading Standards.

You should also take into account the [Consumer Contracts Regulations 2013](#) and the [Consumer Rights Act 2015](#).

### Want more?

For free and confidential advice about specific non-broadcast ads, please contact the [CAP Copy Advice team](#).

For advice about compliance with the legislation, please seek independent legal advice.