



July 2022

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## ABC Consumer Magazines Reporting Standards

This document details changes that have been agreed to the Reporting Standards for Consumer Magazines. You can view the updated ABC Reporting Standards on our [website](#).

### Have a suggestion or a query about a rule?

As an ABC member you can ask us to look at any aspect of the information we publish or the rules behind them. If you have any suggestions or comments please contact your ABC Account Manager, Charlotte Brown ([charlotte.brown@abc.org.uk](mailto:charlotte.brown@abc.org.uk)) or any member of the ABC team.

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### 1. Multiple Copy Business Sales (Digital) [effective immediately]

- **Previous requirement:** The third-party must pay the publisher at least minimum legal tender (i.e. 1p) per copy for the claimed copies.
- **New requirement:** The third-party must pay the publisher a positive financial contribution for the claimed copies.

### 2. Multiple Copy Subscription Sales [effective immediately]

- **Previous definition:** *“More than one copy purchased by a known subscriber for a contracted period with the intention to distribute to the same group of, but unknown, individuals over the term of the subscription”.*
- **New definition:** The words “but unknown” are removed from the definition for clarity – the meaning and requirements are unchanged.

### 3. Concurrent release of data [effective immediately]

- **Previous requirement:** References data first being made available in a concurrent release.
- **New requirement:** Provides for circumstances when a concurrent release doesn't apply and where data is issued via certificates on a rolling basis.

Please see below for additional information on these changes.

## 1. Multiple Copy Business Sales (Digital) [effective immediately]

Currently digital copies can be claimed in the Multiple Copy Business Sales category if they have been viewed by a consumer and a third party has paid the publisher at least minimum legal tender (1p) per copy.

Copies claimed in this sector tend to be those made available to consumers via third-party suppliers who handle digital magazine subscriptions and who may make their own contractual arrangements with the organisation paying for the copies.

These businesses utilise a variety of business models, some that base payment to the publisher, not with reference to the quantity of active views, but upon some other basis, such as a flat licence fee or share of the revenue from the organisations paying for the copies. This can create uncertainty as to whether the copies will be eligible, until quantities viewed and revenues remitted are established.

The principle that these copies are paid for by a third party is therefore better served by a requirement that a payment is made for them (a positive financial contribution) rather than at a specified level. The level of eligible copies will in most cases be governed by the fact they must be viewed by a consumer.

### Standards amendment

Shading denotes text added, strikethrough being text deleted

## Multiple Copy Business Sales [Digital only] - extract

### REQUIREMENTS

#### 1. Copy is purchased by a third-party

- a) A third-party must pay the publisher ~~at least minimum legal tender per copy (net)~~ a positive financial contribution for the copies claimed.

## 2. Multiple Copy Subscription Sales [effective immediately]

This category is currently defined as *“More than one copy purchased by a known subscriber for a contracted period with the intention to distribute to the same group of, but unknown, individuals over the term of the subscription”*.

It’s come to our attention that the words *‘but unknown’* in the definition have been mistakenly interpreted that the group of individuals *must* be unknown, whereas the intention of this wording was to clarify that the names of the individuals don’t need to be known.

We have therefore amended the definition as shown below. The second requirement and associated guidance note remain unchanged and make the requirements clear.

## Multiple Copy Subscription Sales [extract]

### Definition

More than one copy purchased by a known subscriber for a contracted period with the intention to distribute to the same group of, ~~but unknown,~~ individuals over the term of the subscription.

[For information]

## Requirements

...

### 2. Must be likely copies are received by the same individual(s) over the term of the subscription

- a) You must be able to demonstrate, through the distribution method, that the copies are likely to be distributed to the same individual(s) over the subscription term.

## Guidance

...

### G2. Must be likely copies are received by the same individual(s) over the term of the subscription

- a) You might demonstrate the copies are likely to be distributed to the same individual(s) over the subscription term by:

- i) By providing names of the individuals to whom the copies are distributed
- ii) By demonstrating that copies are distributed to the same fixed pool of individuals *e.g. employees of a particular department or company who can reasonably be expected to be present at the same delivery location on an on-going basis.*

## 3. Concurrent release of data [effective immediately]

During the pandemic the number of titles reporting to June reduced. This year a number of former six-month reporters plan to opt for a 12 monthly reporting cycle.

Therefore, following discussion with the Consumer Reporting Standards Group, we won't be releasing data in the form of a concurrent release for the June end 2022 period. Instead, we'll publish certificates to our website on a rolling basis as soon as they're ready for issue, and update the published data tables accordingly. All titles scheduled to report to June have been notified.

There are no plans to change the reporting for the December period end.

The wording of the certification section in the Standards has been amended as follows to reflect this scenario.

## Standards amendment

### Return Form Submission, Audit, Certification [extract]

#### 3. ABC will issue a Certificate based on the Return Form

...

- b) Where we ~~We~~ first release the circulation figures for publications ~~reporting on the 6 or 12 month reporting cycle~~ in an ABC concurrent release of data. ~~We~~, we will publicise the date and time of this release and you must not issue or publicise any figures before this release.