

# Coronavirus (COVID-19) & ABC Reporting

## Consumer Magazines Standards - temporary changes



### Introduction

This document sets out further areas where there is now a temporary change to/or suspension of our requirements for Consumer Magazines to enable media owners to cope with the challenges facing them during the COVID-19 pandemic. Other updates can be found on our dedicated webpage <https://www.abc.org.uk/coronavirus>.

Please contact us if you have any questions or would like any advice on changes you are planning.

### Headlines – Consumer Magazines

- Substituting digital copies for paid or requested print copies.
- More flexibility for new requests to receive free digital copies.
- Extension to age limit for controlled circulation requests and supporting sources.
- Non-controlled free circulation - existing print copies may be substituted with digital copies.

#### 1. Supplying an individual with a digital copy instead of a print copy

We've temporarily suspended the requirements that specify a payment or request must specifically be for a digital copy. This means you may claim a digital copy that you've substituted for a paid or requested print copy that is usually mailed to a known individual (i.e. single and multiple copy subscriptions and controlled free circulation).

#### 2. New requests to receive free digital copies

As circulation through retail, paid multiple and free distribution outlets are adversely affected, you may be engaging with your audience by offering free copies of your publication via online promotion/invitations.

In the majority of cases we expect you'll be able to comply with our existing standards in relation to capturing the publication request, the individual's details and providing evidence of delivery (email alert or evidence copy opened). However in recognition of the circumstances, please let us know if the evidence you hold differs from this so that we can review and consider if we can include the copies for this temporary period.

As there is a request to receive the publication, these copies would be eligible as controlled requested copies, providing they fall within the declared Terms of Control criteria that you report on the certificate. For this temporary period, the request alone will be sufficient to enable a copy to be eligible as controlled circulation, providing the Terms of Control include "*Individuals that have requested a free copy*" or similar wording.

#### 3. Controlled Free Circulation - age of requests and ageing of supporting source documents

Due to the difficulty in undertaking planned reverification campaigns, some publishers risk unexpectedly losing copies from their controlled circulation. Therefore, for Reporting Periods ending in 2020, we've amended the age limit for requests and source documentation supporting controlled circulation copies from 3 years to 4 years. If you optionally analyse the age of requested circulation, the age band for 3 years may include requests up to 4 years old for the Reporting Periods ending in 2020 only.

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### 4. Non-Controlled Free Circulation

If you are unable to supply print copies to those currently claimed as non-controlled free circulation you may temporarily fulfil those same individual copies digitally. You will still need to demonstrate that the copy has been circulated to a known individual or organisation.

For further guidance please email us via [info@abc.org.uk](mailto:info@abc.org.uk) or call our advice hotline on +44 (1442) 200 770.