MOSEBURY MEDIA

Marketing rules for doctors in the UK

Doctors are allowed to market their services. This guide explains the main rules in plain English and how to stay within them.

Who sets the rules

Three bodies matter most. The General Medical Council sets the professional standards for doctors. The Advertising Standards Authority enforces the UK advertising code, known as the CAP Code. The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency enforces the law on advertising medicines.

What the GMC expects

The GMC expects the information you publish about your services to be factual and capable of being checked. It must not exploit a patient's vulnerability or lack of medical knowledge. The same standards apply on social media as they do in person.

What the advertising code covers

The CAP Code applies to your own website, your social media posts and your paid adverts. Claims must be truthful and you must hold evidence for them before you publish. Claims that you are the best or the leading doctor need objective proof.

Prescription-only medicines

Prescription-only medicines must not be advertised to the public. The Advertising Standards Authority has made clear that this includes brand names such as Botox, indirect phrases that point to those medicines, and hashtags. You may advertise a consultation.

A short checklist

- State your qualifications and registration accurately.
- Keep evidence for every claim about results.
- Use patient images and stories only with written consent.
- Do not promote prescription-only medicines.
- Label any paid or gifted endorsement as an advert.

- Never confirm that a reviewer was your patient when you reply to a review.

This guide is general information and is not legal advice. If you are unsure, ask your defence organisation or the regulator.

Checklist

- ☐ My qualifications and registration are stated accurately
- ☐ I hold evidence for every claim about results
- ☐ Patient images and stories are used only with written consent
- ☐ I do not promote prescription-only medicines
- ☐ Paid or gifted endorsements are labelled as adverts

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