



Education from the Advertising Industry

Rt Hon Caroline Nokes  
Women and Equalities Committee Chair  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

22 June 2021

Dear Ms Nokes,

I am writing to you on behalf of Media Smart UK, the advertising industry's education programme.

Media Smart is an award-winning not-for-profit organisation, funded by the advertising industry programme and housed at the Advertising Association. It creates free, PSHE Association-accredited media and digital literacy educational materials for schools and youth organisations as well as teachers, parents and carers. These materials enable young people to navigate confidently the media they consume and to identify, interpret and critically evaluate all forms of advertising.

Over the past five years, Media Smart resources have been downloaded across the UK over 75,000 times, and we estimate that it has reached over half a million young people. On average, 325 people visit the Media Smart website every day looking for educational resources. This [showreel](#) provides an overview of Media Smart's impact and supporters.

In light of the Committee's inquiry into body image, I wanted to highlight Media Smart's resource on body image and mental well-being. Informed by research conducted with young people, Media Smart created The Boys' Biggest Conversation Campaign, a PSHE accredited teaching resource on the representation of the male body in the media. The module helps young people to understand how this issue can affect body confidence and delivers this training through a series of interviews with secondary school boys, inviting them to share how they feel about their appearance, and exploring why they feel that way.

The campaign, produced in partnership with the NSPCC and Childline, was co-developed with First News and kick-started an ongoing partnership with the title which is read by over 2 million young people and subscribed to by over half of UK schools. The [short film](#) features TV doctor and youth specialist Dr Ranj.

The films are supported by teacher guidance and a presentation for use in assemblies or the classroom. To date, the educational resource has been downloaded 9,500 times, which continues to increase month-on-month, and is estimated to have reached over 600,000 students. These materials have seen a high demand during the COVID-19 lockdown and are currently being promoted in cinemas across the UK. It has also received support from the Government Equalities Office and been previously commended in the Government's response to the Internet Safety Strategy.

In addition to this resource, Media Smart also has a PSHE accredited social media influencer teaching resource, the first of its kind to tackle this area of marketing. Launched on 7 February of this year, the module helps youngpeople to understand the commercial link between influencers and the brands they may be promoting and delivers this training through a series of informal and informative films made by real influencers. To date, the educational resource has been downloaded over 1,700 times.

Media Smart is dedicated to equipping young people with the skills and attributes they need to navigate safely media and digital literacy to support their well-being and future employability. I would be delighted to brief you and your colleagues further on our work.

Yours sincerely



Rachel Barber-Mack  
Director, Media Smart UK

