

Press Statement

15th June 2016

ASA Rules ‘The Nutrition School’ guilty of misleading the public

Published today, the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) has upheld complaints raised by the Association for Nutrition (AfN) and members of the public against Scott Austin Ltd t/a The Nutrition School.

Following investigation, the ASA **upheld all complaints** made against Scott Austin Ltd t/a The Nutrition School, ruling that they breached the following CAP Code Rules:

- Misleading advertising (3.1)
- Substantiation (3.7)
- Comparisons with identifiable competitors (3.33)
- Endorsements and Testimonials (3.50)

The ASA ruled:

- The claim "The Nutrition School is one of the largest online educators in the field of nutrition" was **misleading and could not be substantiated**. (Breaching CAP Codes Rules 3.1, 3.7 and 3.33)
- Scott Austin Ltd t/a "The Nutrition School" **misleadingly implied** the school was endorsed by a number of independent third party bodies, their courses were accredited by an official awarding organisation and recognised across the industry (Breaching CAP Codes Rules 3.1 and 3.50).
- The ASA noted that the British Nutrition Council (BNC) was **not recognised** as an accrediting body or that it would be accepted by other third parties as a certificate of achievement within the profession. The ASA also noted in their ruling that the UK Obesity Society and BNC were limited companies with the same registered address as The Nutrition School, as opposed to a separate body that had independently endorsed them.

Leonie Milliner, Chief Executive at Association for Nutrition said:

"We are delighted the Advertising Standards Authority upheld our complaints. We will continue to take action if we find companies or individuals misleading the public about the nature of their activities or qualifications.

Having met with us to discuss AfN Course Certification, Scott Austin Ltd t/a The Nutrition School were fully aware the AfN as the regulator of nutrition professionals provides educational quality assurance and is not a training provider. It was therefore completely inappropriate for Scott Austin Ltd t/a The Nutrition School to have attempted to justify their misleading claims by comparing the number of individuals who bought one of their courses with the number of individuals successfully gaining UKVRN registration. Additionally it is not applicable to compare the turnover of the AfN, a Registered Charity with a regulatory role, to that of a commercial business selling training courses.

We advise all those seeking to undertake studies in nutrition to choose one that has been independently approved and listed on the AfN website."

Notes for Editors:

The Advertising Standards Authority final adjudication is available at:

https://www.asa.org.uk/Rulings/Adjudications/2016/6/Scott-Austin-Ltd/SHP_ADJ_331804.aspx#.V2EXuN_mopE

About the Association for Nutrition

The Association for Nutrition is a registered charity. We hold the UK Voluntary Register of Nutritionists (UKVRN). Our purpose is to protect and benefit the public by defining and advancing standards of evidence-based practice across the field of nutrition and at all levels within the workforce. In addition, we set standards of competence for the wider nutrition workforce and recognise high quality, relevant nutrition training through our University Degree Accreditation, CPD Endorsement and Course Certification schemes.

Through the quality assurance of over 200 independent training provisions, AfN assures the public that training in nutrition at all Levels, from an AfN Certified RQF Level 1 introductory course in nutrition to an AfN Accredited post-graduate degree is evidence-based and meet AfN's quality standards.

Registration with the UK Voluntary Register of Nutritionists (UKVRN) is an accepted mark of professional status and competence in nutrition; qualified nutrition professionals with shared ethical standards, scientific integrity and commitment to public protection. All individuals registered with the UKVRN demonstrate rigorously applied training, competence and professional practice criteria, with a minimum of degree-level nutrition science knowledge and expertise. All UKVRN registrants also adhere to the AfN Standards of Ethics, Conduct and Performance.

For further information please see: <http://www.associationfornutrition.org/>

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