

COMPLAINT NUMBER	22/227
ADVERTISER	Partners Life
ADVERTISEMENT	Partners Life, Television
DATE OF MEETING	8 August 2022
OUTCOME	No Grounds to Proceed

Advertisement: The television advertisement for Partners Life insurance begins with David Fane reading the Three Blind Mice nursery rhyme. The reading is accompanied by a cartoon of the three mice. The narrator says "... Three blind tail-less mice, See how they fall, See how they fall. They all fall over because they're no longer stable, how will they work if they are not able, no job no cover means no food on their table, three blind tail-less, insurance-less mice". The advertisement ends with the text "It doesn't have to be unhappily ever after. So, plan ahead. Partners life. Get it right."

The Chair ruled there were no grounds for the complaint to proceed.

Complaint: I would like to complain about an advertisement shown across channels the last few months that promotes insurance company Partners Life as it is derogatory towards disabled people. Unfortunately, I do not know the actual date and time the advert was shown and therefore attach the You Tube link for your reference: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kHbnL89h_rE.

A screenshot of the beginning of the advertisement has been attached that shows its name and link in You Tube.

The advertisement is labelled "Unhappily Ever After – Three Blind Mice 60" and uses the Three Blind Mice nursery rhyme to emphasize the importance of insurance. It is symbolic but it suggests that becoming more disabled, as the mice get their tails chopped off, leads to an 'unhappy ever after'. The advert is narrated by Dave Fane.

Having a disability does not mean an unhappy life. The advert seems to use a very old, medicalised view of disability, which has no place on television.

Please consider removing this advertisement. I look forward to hearing from you.

The relevant provisions were Advertising Standards Code - Principle 1, Rule 1(c);

Principle 1: Social Responsibility: Advertisements must be prepared and placed with a due sense of social responsibility to consumers and to society.

Rule 1(c) Decency and Offensiveness: Advertisements must not contain anything that is indecent, or exploitative, or degrading, or likely to cause harm, or serious or widespread offence, or give rise to hostility, contempt, abuse or ridicule.

The Chair noted the Complainant was concerned the advertisement presented an out of date, medicalised view of disability.

The Chair carefully reviewed the advertisement and said the likely consumer takeout would be the Advertiser was using a well-known nursery rhyme as a metaphor for what can happen to those without insurance.

The Chair said the advertisement did not focus on the fact the mice were blind, but on the accident which caused them to lose their tails. The Chair said the purpose of the story is to show that unlike humans, mice cannot mitigate the effects of an injury with insurance cover.

Rule 1(c) of the Advertising Standards Code required the Chair to consider whether the use of a well-known nursery rhyme to advertise insurance in this context was likely to cause serious or widespread offence in light of generally prevailing community standards. The Chair said that despite the Complainant's objection to the advertisement, the connection between an accident and the role of insurance did not reach the threshold to cause serious or widespread offence for most consumers when used in the context of an advertisement for an insurance company.

While acknowledging the genuine concerns of the Complainant, the Chair said in her view the advertisement was not a comment on disability as a whole, but rather about insuring against the effects of injuries. The Chair said the advertisement was not in breach of Principle 1 or Rule 1(c) of the Advertising Standards Code.

The Chair ruled there were no grounds for the complaint to proceed.

Chair's Ruling: Complaint **No Grounds to Proceed**

APPEAL INFORMATION

According to the procedures of the Advertising Standards Complaints Board, all decisions are able to be appealed by any party to the complaint. Information on our Appeal process is on our website www.asa.co.nz. Appeals must be made in writing with notification of the intent to appeal lodged within 14 calendar days of receipt of the written decision. The substantive appeal application must be lodged with the ASA within 21 calendar days of receipt of the written decision.