



Setting the standard

Executive Summary

Reporting Standards

All Print sectors - UK

Version 1 2017

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This is an executive summary of the Reporting Standards for all UK Print sectors. For those who do not need a detailed knowledge of all the requirements it highlights the definition and principles for each circulation type. Against each type the relevant rules sector(s) is listed. If you do need a more detailed version then please visit www.abcstandards.org.uk where you can access the online interactive version or download a copy for an individual sector.

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RETAIL SALES (SALE OR RETURN)

All

DEFINITION

A copy sold to a retailer, on a sale or return basis, for resale as a single copy to a consumer.

PRINCIPLES

1. Single copy knowingly paid for by the consumer to the retailer
 2. Copies are purchased from the publisher by the retailer, on a sale or return basis, either direct or via the distribution chain (typically distributor and/or wholesaler)
 3. Cover price must be published on or inside front or back cover of the publication
 4. The price paid for the publication by the consumer must be clear and conspicuous
 5. There must be an incentive for unsold copies/net sale to be reported to the publisher
 6. If the final net sale and/or rate classification are not known then estimates must be made
 7. Reported by rate, comparing price paid by the consumer with the Basic Cover Price
-

RETAIL SALES (LIMITED SALE OR RETURN)

BM, Bulk, RP

DEFINITION

A copy sold to a retailer, on a limited sale or return basis, intended for resale as a single copy to a consumer.

PRINCIPLES

1. Single copy made available for purchase by the consumer from the retailer
 2. Copies are purchased from the publisher by the retailer, on a limited sale or return basis, either direct or via the distribution chain (typically distributor and/or wholesaler)
 3. Cover price must be published on or inside front or back cover of the publication
 4. The price paid for the publication by the consumer must be clear and conspicuous
 5. There must be an incentive for unsold copies/net sale (to the limit) to be reported to the publisher
 6. If the final net sale and/or rate classification are not known then estimates must be made
 7. Reported by rate, comparing price paid by the consumer with the Basic Cover Price
-



RETAIL SALES (FIRM SALE)

BM, CM, NN, RP

DEFINITION

A copy sold to a retailer, on a firm sale basis, intended for resale as a single copy to a consumer.

PRINCIPLES

1. Single copy made available for purchase by the consumer from the retailer
2. Copies are purchased from the publisher by the retailer, on a firm sale basis, either direct or via the distribution chain (typically distributor and/or wholesaler)
3. Cover price must be published on or inside front or back cover of the publication
4. The price paid for the publication by the consumer must be clear and conspicuous
5. The retailers' ability to vary supply must not be unduly restricted
6. If the final rate classification is not known then estimates must be made
7. Reported by rate, comparing price paid by the consumer with the Basic Cover Price

SINGLE COPY SALES

All

DEFINITION

A single copy sold to a consumer direct by the publisher.

PRINCIPLES

1. Single copy knowingly paid for by the consumer
 2. Copies are purchased direct from the publisher
 3. Cover price must be published on or inside front or back cover of the publication
 4. The price paid for the publication by the consumer must be clear and conspicuous
 5. If the final rate classification is not known then estimates must be made
 6. Reported by rate, comparing price paid by the consumer with the Basic Cover Price
-



PUBLISHER CONTROLLED DIRECT DELIVERY

DEFINITION

A single copy purchased by a consumer directly from the publisher for a contracted period, delivered to the consumer.

PRINCIPLES

1. There must be a contractual arrangement between the consumer and the publisher
 2. Single copy per issue, distributed to the consumer
 3. Single copy knowingly paid for by the consumer
 4. For a contracted period, and for a minimum number of issues (at least two)
 5. Cover price must be published on or inside front or back cover of publication.
 6. The price paid for the publication by the consumer must be clear and conspicuous
 7. Reported by rate, comparing price paid by consumer with standard rate
 8. Reported by geographical type
-

PAID EMPLOYEE COPIES

DEFINITION

A single copy sold by a publisher to a current employee of the publisher under an ABC approved purchase scheme.

PRINCIPLES

1. Single copy knowingly paid for by current employee
2. Copies are purchased direct from the publisher under an ABC pre-approved purchase scheme
3. Cover price must be published on or inside front or back cover of the publication
4. The price paid for the publication by the employee must be clear and conspicuous
5. Reported by rate, comparing price paid by the employee with the Basic Cover Price



SINGLE COPY SUBSCRIPTION SALES

All

DEFINITION

A single copy sold and distributed to an individual or organisation for a contracted period.

PRINCIPLES

1. There must be a contractual arrangement between the subscriber and the publisher (or their agent)
2. Single copy per issue, distributed to a known addressee
3. Single copy knowingly paid for by the subscriber
4. For a contracted period and for a minimum number of issues (at least two)
5. Standard subscription rates must be published
6. Reported by rate, comparing price paid by subscriber with standard rate
7. The price paid for the publication by the subscriber must be clear and conspicuous

PAID AND CONTROLLED

BM

DEFINITION

A single copy sold and distributed to an individual for a contracted period (single copy subscription) that falls within a defined group of individuals.

PRINCIPLES

1. Single copy per issue, distributed to an individual that meets the requirements to be eligible as a Single Copy Subscription Sale.
2. Standard subscription rates must be published
3. Individual falls within defined criteria (Terms of Control)
4. Individual's details supported by third party evidence that is less than three years old

ALL YOU CAN READ SALES

CM

DEFINITION

A Digital Edition copy that a consumer has purchased and viewed as part of a multi-publication package.

PRINCIPLES

1. Copy is paid for and viewed by the consumer
2. There must be a contractual arrangement between any third-party intermediaries/sellers and the publisher to purchase the copies



REQUESTED SPONSORED SUBSCRIPTION SALES

CM

DEFINITION

A single copy personally requested by and distributed to a known individual, but paid for by a third party sponsor for a contracted period.

PRINCIPLES

1. There must be a contractual arrangement between the sponsor and the publisher (or their agent)
 2. Single copy per issue, requested by and distributed to a known addressee
 3. Single copy knowingly paid for by the sponsor
 4. For a contracted period and for a minimum number of issues (at least two)
 5. Standard subscription rates must be published
 6. Reported by rate, comparing price paid by sponsor with standard rate
 7. The price paid for the publication by the subscriber must be clear and conspicuous
-

SPONSORED SUBSCRIPTION SALES

BM

DEFINITION

More than one copy purchased by a third party subscriber and distributed to known individuals for a contracted period, with the intention of promoting their professional or business interests.

PRINCIPLES

1. There must be a contractual arrangement between the subscriber and the publisher (or their agent)
 2. Single copy per issue distributed to known addressees, requested by the subscriber
 3. Copies are paid for by the subscriber
 4. For a contracted period and for a minimum number of issues (at least two)
 5. Standard subscription rates must be published
 6. Subscriptions will be reported by rate, comparing price paid by subscriber with standard rate
 7. The price paid for the publication by the subscriber must be clear and conspicuous
-

CORPORATE SUBSCRIPTION SALES

NN

DEFINITION

Copies purchased on a contractual basis by an employer for its employees.

PRINCIPLES

1. There must be a contractual arrangement between the purchaser (a third party employer) and the publisher (or their agent)



2. Copies are purchased by the third party employer for its employees
 3. The copies are distributed to the same fixed pool of employees on an on-going basis
 4. Claimed quantity should not exceed potential demand
 5. For a contracted period and for a minimum number of issues (at least two)
 6. The price paid for the publication by the purchaser must be clear and conspicuous
-

MULTIPLE COPY SUBSCRIPTION SALES

BM, CM, RP

DEFINITION

More than one copy purchased by a known subscriber for a contracted period with the intention to distribute to the same group of, but unknown, individuals over the term of the subscription.

PRINCIPLES

1. There must be a contractual arrangement between the subscriber and the publisher (or their agent)
 2. Must be likely copies are received by the same individual(s) over the term of the subscription
 3. Copies are paid for by the subscriber
 4. For a contracted period and for a minimum number of issues (at least two)
 5. Standard subscription rates must be published
 6. Reported by rate, comparing price paid by subscriber with standard rate
 7. The price paid for the publication by the subscriber must be clear and conspicuous
-

VOUCHER SUBSCRIPTION SALES

NN, RP

DEFINITION

A single copy sold to an individual who pays the publisher in advance to obtain the publication via a retailer, by means of a voucher, for a contracted period.

PRINCIPLES

1. There must be a contractual arrangement between the individual purchaser and the publisher
 2. Copies are purchased by an individual in advance
 3. Copies are supplied to the individual through retailer distribution via the redemption of a voucher
 4. For a contracted period and for a minimum number of issues
 5. There must be an auditable incentive for vouchers redeemed to be reported to the publisher
 6. The price paid for the publication by the purchaser must be clear and conspicuous
 7. Reported by rate, comparing price paid by the purchaser with standard rate
-



MULTIPLE COPY SALES

CM, NN, RP

DEFINITION

Copies purchased by a third party from the publisher, delivered and made available for pick up or receipt by consumers.

PRINCIPLES

1. There must be a contractual arrangement between the final purchaser (third party) and the publisher or an intermediary
2. Copies are paid for by the final purchaser
3. The publisher must receive a positive financial contribution per copy from the final purchaser
4. Copies distributed and made available for pick up or receipt by consumers
5. Claimed quantity should not exceed potential demand by the intended consumers
6. Reported by consumer type/location
7. The price paid for the publication by the final purchaser (and the intermediary if applicable) must be clear and conspicuous

MULTIPLE COPY BUSINESS SALES

CM

DEFINITION

A Digital Edition copy that has been purchased by a third-party and viewed by a consumer.

PRINCIPLES

1. Copy is viewed by the consumer
2. Copy is purchased by a third-party

SPECIAL EDITIONS

RP

DEFINITION

A stand-alone edition, sold as a single copy, in which the subject matter differs from the normal edition(s).

PRINCIPLES

1. A Special Edition must be in keeping with the parent edition to be reported on the same certificate
2. Cover price must be published on or inside front or back cover of the publication
3. Single copy knowingly paid for by the consumer, at the published cover price, in the UK or Republic of Ireland
4. Prior notification to ABC is required

SPORTS EDITIONS

DEFINITION

An extra edition sold in addition to the normal edition(s) of the parent publication to cover sports.

PRINCIPLES

1. A Sports Edition must be in keeping with the parent edition to be reported on the same certificate
2. Copies knowingly paid for in the UK or Republic of Ireland

SOCIETY/ASSOCIATION/ORGANISATION CIRCULATION BM, CM

DEFINITION

A single copy of an official Society publication distributed to a member of that society. *Note: 'Society' throughout this section refers to the Society, Association or Organisation as appropriate.*

PRINCIPLES

1. The publication is an official publication of the Society
2. Single copy of an issue distributed to an individual who is a member of the Society (or an employee nominated under a corporate society membership)
3. Copies reported by circulation type

CONTROLLED FREE CIRCULATION BM, CM

DEFINITION

Copies sent free to a defined group of individuals.

PRINCIPLES

1. Single copy per issue, distributed to an individual.
2. Individual falls within defined criteria (Terms of Control)
3. Individual's details supported by third party evidence that is less than three years old
4. Copies reported either as requested or non-requested

NON-CONTROLLED FREE CIRCULATION BM, CM

DEFINITION

Single copies distributed to individuals or organisations.

PRINCIPLES

1. Single copy per issue, distributed to an individual or organisation



FREE PICK UP COPIES

Bulk, RP

DEFINITION

Copies distributed on a regular and consistent basis to known distribution points for pick up or receipt by consumers.

PRINCIPLES

1. **Prior notification of distribution details and any changes to ABC**
2. **Distribution follows a regular and consistent pattern to known distribution points**
3. **Copies are made available at the known distribution points for pick up or receipt by consumers**
4. **Quantity claimed should not exceed potential demand by the intended consumers**
5. **Effective management controls over distribution**
6. **Reported by distribution type**
7. **Reported by distribution point type**

FREE LETTERBOX DELIVERY

RP

Definition:

Copies delivered on a regular and consistent basis to round level intended for onward letterbox distribution to known addresses.

Principles:

1. **Prior notification of distribution details and any changes to ABC**
2. **Distribution follows a regular and consistent pattern.**
3. **Copies are delivered to round level intended for onward distribution as single copies through letterboxes in the round.**
4. **There will be effective management controls over distribution.**



FREE LETTERBOX DELIVERY - MULTIPLE RESIDENTIAL UNITS RP

DEFINITION

Copies distributed to multiple-residential units, intended for pick up by residents.

PRINCIPLES

1. **Prior notification of distribution details and any changes to ABC**
 2. **Distribution follows a regular and consistent pattern to known multiple residential units**
 3. **Copies are delivered into multiple residential units, intended for pick up by residents**
 4. **Quantity claimed should not exceed potential demand by the intended residents**
 5. **There will be effective management controls over distribution**
-

FREE REQUESTED DELIVERED COPIES

Bulk, RP

DEFINITION

A single free copy requested by and distributed to a known individual.

PRINCIPLES

1. **Single copy per issue, distributed to a known individual**
 2. **Individual has personally requested to receive the publication**
 3. **Only copies distributed in UK and Republic of Ireland can be claimed**
-

SAMPLE FREE DISTRIBUTION

Bulk, CM, RP

DEFINITION

Free copies distributed, on an irregular basis, using an existing ABC Free Distribution category.

PRINCIPLES

1. **Distribution uses an existing ABC Free Distribution method, without the need for a regular and consistent basis.**
 2. **Prior notification of distribution details to ABC**
 3. **Distribution must be of an existing edition claimed on the certificate**
-



CM

MONITORED FREE DISTRIBUTION

DEFINITION

Copies distributed on a regular and consistent basis to known distribution points for pick up or receipt by consumers.

PRINCIPLES

1. Prior notification of distribution details and any changes to ABC
2. Distribution follows a regular and consistent pattern to known distribution points
3. Copies are made available at the known distribution points for pick up or receipt by consumers
4. Quantity claimed should not exceed potential demand by the intended consumers
5. Effective management controls over distribution
6. Reported by distribution type
7. Reported by distribution point type

FREE RETAIL VOUCHER COPIES

CM

DEFINITION

Single copies obtained free from a retailer by a consumer by means of a voucher.

PRINCIPLES

1. Free single copies are supplied to the consumer through retailers via the redemption of a voucher
2. There must be an auditable incentive for only those vouchers redeemed by the consumer to be reported to the publisher

OTHER COUNTRIES

NN

DEFINITION

Copies sold for distribution outside the UK and Republic of Ireland.

PRINCIPLES

1. Copies are purchased from the publisher on a contractual basis by a third party for distribution outside the UK and Republic of Ireland
2. Copies may be sold on a Sale or Return or Firm Sale basis



DIGITAL EDITIONS

DEFINITION

A digital edition is an edition of the print publication published electronically as a unit [*which once published is, as a principle, inert (i.e. does not change).]

**included in some sectors*

PRINCIPLES

1. Prior notification of Digital Edition claims and plans are required
2. A Digital Edition is sufficiently similar to be considered the same product as the print parent edition
3. Digital Edition copies are opted in
4. A Digital Edition is published and available to the consumer
5. Digital Edition copies must meet requirements of the relevant print category except where varied by this section.
6. Reported by rate, comparing price paid with the print copy price
7. Optional metrics/breakdowns can be reported.

BASIC COVER PRICE

DEFINITION

The Basic Cover Price is the standard published price for an issue against which circulation is reported.

PRINCIPLES

1. The Basic Cover Price is a recognised standard price
2. A cover price must be published to claim certain categories of paid circulation
3. Copies reported by rate, comparing price paid with Basic Cover Price

RETURN FORM SUBMISSION, AUDIT, CERTIFICATION

DEFINITION

The Return Form is a submission in which the circulation claim is reported to ABC for certification. Each circulation claim is subject to audit.

PRINCIPLES

1. A Return Form must be submitted for the registered product for every applicable Reporting Period
2. The Return Form must be submitted by the Submission Deadline
3. ABC will issue a Certificate based on the Return Form
4. Each circulation claim is audited to verify it is in accordance with the applicable Reporting Standards



ISSUES TO BE INCLUDED/EXCLUDED

All

DEFINITION

All published issues for which the majority of the distribution took place within the Reporting Period must be included except for any issues allowed to be excluded according to this section.

PRINCIPLES

1. All issues published in the Reporting Period must be included
 2. Published issues that are allowed to be excluded according to this section may be removed from the average circulation figure
 3. Issues allowed to be excluded from the average circulation figure will be reported
-

REPORTING PERIODS

All

DEFINITION

Each ABC Certificate has a defined Reporting Period which identifies the date or dates it covers.

PRINCIPLES

1. You must report a continuous series of Reporting Periods on a mandatory frequency
 2. You can report optional shorter Reporting Periods
-

CERTIFICATE TYPES

All

DEFINITION

The ABC Certificate is published by ABC for a specific period and contains the data and information that is subject to audit.

PRINCIPLES

1. You must report using a standard Certificate type
 2. You may choose to report using an optional Certificate type
-



EDITIONS

All

DEFINITION

An Edition is a version of an issue of the publication that varies from the Main Edition (the UK and/or ROI version that has the largest circulation), usually for reasons of geography, timing or content. How it has varied from the Main Edition will affect how or whether it can be included on the same ABC Certificate.

PRINCIPLES

1. An Edition must be in keeping with the overall issue to be reported on the same ABC Certificate
2. Changes to an Edition may require a breakout on the ABC Certificate

CAPS BY SUPPLY TYPE – MULTIPLE COPY SALES/FREE PICK UP COPIES

Bulk, NN, RP

DEFINITION

The caps in this section set the maximum number of copies that you can claim for designated supply types for Multiple Copy Sales and for Free Pick Up Copies (for non-daily publications and for daily publications distributed airside and on trains).

Caps are expressed as a percentage of the 'total potential penetration' or other quantifiable measure.

PRINCIPLES

1. Copies must meet the requirements of the Multiple Copy Sales or Free Pick Up Copy category.
2. If the number of copies supplied is less than the cap then you must claim the actual supply
3. You cannot claim copies supplied over and above the cap
4. Caps cannot be 'double-counted' at a particular location already subject to its own cap
5. Caps may be restricted due to multiple publications being supplied
6. Caps are set by the ABC Republic of Ireland Council

GEOGRAPHICAL ANALYSIS

BM, CM

DEFINITION

The Geographical Analysis is an optional breakout of the circulation into geographical locations.

PRINCIPLES

1. Publishers may optionally report a Geographical Analysis
2. The circulation is analysed into standardised geographical locations