

Dear Sir / Madam,

I am writing to register my strong objection to product placement on UK television programmes. Already, there are hundreds of adverts every week telling us to buy things, and there is substantial recognition among academics such as Lord Layard that adverts which are designed to create dissatisfaction make people feel unhappier. The consumerist messages on TV, radio, internet, billboards, tube trains, phone boxes, taxis, magazines, newspapers, and many other media are not countered by anti-consumerist messages because there is little money or space for uncommercial messages. I believe that the high levels of individual debt in the UK are related to the increasingly advert saturated environment.

Furthermore, I am concerned that allowing product placement will lead to decreased programme quality as producers feel compelled to include brand and product namechecks.

I am particularly keen that under no circumstances alcohol will be allowed to feature in product placements. Nearly 9,000 deaths are caused each year by alcohol, and a great deal of crime, violence and illness is also caused by alcohol consumption, so allowing programmes to glamourise alcohol is unacceptable. Similarly, high fat, salt and sugar foods should not be allowed to feature in product placements.

Obesity and diet related ill health is a growing strain on the NHS and kills thousands each year. Promoting foods which harm people's health undermines all the diet related messaging (like 5 a day) that the Government spends huge amounts on annually. It is widely accepted that children view many programmes outside of traditional children's programming, and so allowing these foods to feature in product placement will expose children, who are particularly vulnerable to advertising messages, to foods which will damage their long term health.

Sincerely,

Lianna Etkind