

ASOS, Boohoo and Asda investigated over fashion 'green' claims

- CMA to get to the bottom of whether the firms' green claims are misleading customers
- Wider investigation into fashion sector to continue as the CMA will also consider whether to put additional firms under the microscope
- CMA interim Chief Executive says: "Should we find these companies are using misleading eco claims, we won't hesitate to take enforcement action – through the courts if necessary"

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) will be scrutinising eco-friendly and sustainability claims made by ASOS, Boohoo and George at Asda about their fashion products, including clothing, footwear, and accessories. The move comes as part of its [ongoing investigation into potential greenwashing](#) and follows concerns around the way the firms' products are being marketed to customers as eco-friendly.

In January this year, the CMA turned its eye to the fashion sector, where an [estimated £54 billion is spent by consumers annually](#), and its initial review identified concerns around potentially misleading green claims. These included a number of companies creating the impression that their products were 'sustainable' or better for the environment – for example by making broad claims about the use of recycled materials in new clothing – with little to no information about the basis for those claims or exactly which products they related to.

Today, the CMA has launched investigations into ASOS, Boohoo and George to get to the bottom of its concerns. Among other things, these include whether:

- the statements and language used by the businesses are too broad and vague, and may create the impression that clothing collections – such as the 'Responsible edit' from ASOS, Boohoo's current 'Ready for the Future' range, and 'George for Good' – are more environmentally sustainable than they actually are
- the criteria used by some of these businesses to decide which products to include in these collections may be lower than customers might reasonably expect from their descriptions and overall presentation – for example, some products may contain as little as 20% recycled fabric
- some items have been included in these collections when they do not meet the criteria
- there is a lack of information provided to customers about products included in any of the companies' eco ranges, such as missing information about what the fabric is made from
- any statements made by the companies about fabric accreditation schemes and standards are potentially misleading, such as a lack of clarity as to whether the accreditation applies to particular products or to the firm's wider practices

Sarah Cardell, interim Chief Executive of the CMA, said:

People who want to 'buy green' should be able to do so confident that they aren't being misled. Eco-friendly and sustainable products can play a role in tackling climate change, but only if they are genuine.

We'll be scrutinising green claims from ASOS, Boohoo and George at Asda to see if they stack up. Should we find these companies are using misleading eco claims, we won't hesitate to take enforcement action – through the courts if necessary.

This is just the start of our work in this sector and all fashion companies should take note: look at your own practices and make sure they are in line with the law.

The CMA has written to the 3 firms outlining its concerns and will use its information gathering powers to obtain evidence to progress its investigation. How the review develops will depend on the CMA's assessment of the evidence before it. Possible outcomes include securing undertakings from the companies to change the way they operate, taking the firms to court, or closing the case without further action.

The move comes after the CMA published its [Green Claims Code](#) in September 2021. The code aims to help businesses understand how to communicate their green credentials, while avoiding the risk of misleading shoppers.

The CMA's [wider investigation into misleading environmental claims](#) is ongoing and other sectors will come under review in due course.

1. ASOS sells fashion items through the website ASOS.com. George at Asda sells fashion items online at direct.asda.com/george and in store. Boohoo sells fashion items through a number of websites, including Boohoo.com, BoohooMan.com, DorothyPerkins.com, Oasisifashion.com and PrettyLittleThing.com.
2. The CMA is at the initial stage of its investigation. Accordingly, it should not be assumed that any business under investigation has broken consumer protection law.
3. The key piece of consumer protection legislation relevant to the CMA's Green Claims Code, and to the enforcement cases announced today, is the Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008 (CPRs). The CPRs contain a general prohibition against unfair commercial practices and specific prohibitions against misleading actions and misleading omissions.
4. Examples and case studies can be found in the CMA's [The Green Claims Code: Environmental Claims on Goods and Services](#).
5. Read more about how the CMA is supporting low carbon growth in its [2022/23 Annual Plan](#).
6. Media enquiries should be directed to press@cma.gov.uk or 020 3738 6460.
7. All enquiries from the general public should be directed to the CMA's

General Enquiries team on general.enquiries@cma.gov.uk or 020 3738 6000.