



Carolyn McCall
Chief Executive Officer
ITV
2 Waterhouse Square
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2nd July 2018

Dear Ms McCall

I am writing to express concern about the strategically placed cosmetic surgery advertising that appear during the programme *Love Island*.

We believe that we all have a role to play in strengthening our young people's resilience. We acknowledge the role that cosmetic surgery can have in boosting a person's mental health, for example, in the aftermath of a serious operation. But we believe that strategically placing cosmetic surgery adverts during programmes that target young adults and paint a false picture of perfection is not only patronising but is adding to young people's insecurities and contributing to distress among vulnerable people.

Given that three quarters of mental health problems are established by the age of 24, it is vital that society tackles this as a national priority. This is why, for example, we have called for mental health literacy to be prominent in our classrooms and for teachers to have the training and skills to explore mental health in our schools. This includes how we help young people to critically explore the influences of popular culture on every day life.

Our latest report published in May, "*Stress – Are we Coping*", argued that this generation is under a real pressure to succeed – be it exam stress, relationships or indeed the way they look. It shows that 47% of young people aged 18-24 have felt so stressed by body image and appearance that they have felt overwhelmed or unable to cope. And 49% felt that comparing themselves to others was a source of stress – higher than any other age group.

It is shocking that 39% of young people across the UK have experienced suicidal feelings as a result of distress and that 29% have self-harmed.

ISABELLA GOLDIE

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Recent reports have warned that many more young people are coming forward for professional help and mental health services are overwhelmed with long waiting lists and rejected referrals. These problems need to be addressed. But as a prevention charity, our focus is to address the root causes of mental ill health and prevent people from reaching crisis point in the first place. We believe that pressure around body image is a root cause of mental ill health in young people and the time has come to tackle it head on.

Capitalising on our young people's insecurities for commercial gain is wholly unacceptable. That's why we are urging you to take action and prohibit the advertising of cosmetic surgery alongside TV programmes that are watched by millions of young people every year.

I look forward to hearing from you.



Isabella Goldie
Director, Development and Delivery

cc Rt Hon Matt Hancock MP, Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport
Advertising Standards Authority

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