

UK opens up TV; radio product placement

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LONDON, UK: The UK's regulator, Ofcom*, has released new proposals to relax restrictions on product placement during TV and radio programmes.



The new proposals, which are designed to allow broadcasters access to new revenue streams, will allow product placement in UK-produced films, TV series, entertainment shows and sports programmes.

Under the guidelines, broadcasters would be required to place a symbol at the start and end of programmes where product placement occurs. However, product placement will still be banned in children's and news programmes including any current affairs, consumer affairs and religious programmes. Any tobacco, alcohol, gambling, foods and drinks that are high in fat, salt or sugar, medicine and baby milk products will also be excluded.

The restrictions also prohibit any influence from advertisers on editorial content.

Meanwhile, UK radio stations may be offered the opportunity to include paid-for commercial references in programming, provided listeners are made fully aware of any commercial arrangement. Once again news and children programmes would not be included in any change.

The move follows a UK government decision to allow product placement on TV in the UK after changes to EU legislation.

**Ofcom is an independent organisation which regulates the UK's broadcasting, telecommunications and wireless communications sectors. It also sets and enforces rules on fair competition between companies in these industries.*