CMA opens competition investigation into Meta’s terms for publishers and advertisers

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Press release

CMA opens investigation into Meta’s commercial terms

Investigation will examine concerns that Meta’s terms and conditions unfairly harm news publishers and other content businesses.

From:

Competition and Markets Authority

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The CMA will examine whether Meta is abusing a dominant position by imposing exploitative terms on publishers and advertisers

The terms allow Meta to access and use content from news publishers’ websites to develop and provide its own products and services

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has launched an investigation into whether Meta’s commercial terms for businesses using its platforms and services breach competition law.

The terms, which Meta planned to revise on 20 November but has since put on hold, could allow it to collect content from the websites of businesses and publishers that use its services and then use it to develop and provide its own products and services, including its AI features – without those businesses getting a choice on if or how their content is used.

The CMA is concerned that Meta requiring news publishers and other content businesses to accept these terms could amount to an unlawful imposition of unfair trading conditions for thousands of UK businesses that rely on its services to reach customers and audiences.

The CMA is using its Competition Act 1998 (CA98) powers so it can urgently investigate the concerns it has heard from stakeholders including the News Media Association and Movement for an Open Web (MOW).

The investigation will assess whether Meta holds a dominant position in a relevant market in the UK and, if so, whether its terms amount to an abuse of that position under the CA98.

Meta had originally planned to introduce changes to its commercial terms on 30 October but, following active engagement with the CMA, announced that implementation would be delayed until 20 November. Meta has since announced, on 28 October, a pause to the roll out of its commercial terms, pending a consultation with industry groups.

Sarah Cardell, Chief Executive of the CMA, said:

Digital platforms play an important role in helping UK businesses reach millions of customers around the world. But where a company holds a dominant position, it must not use that position to impose unfair terms.

We’ve heard concerns from news publishers and other businesses and are acting swiftly to investigate whether Meta’s proposed changes may breach competition law, using the most appropriate powers available to us to examine these issues in detail. We will be working to reach a swift and satisfactory resolution to this case.

As this is only the start of the CMA's investigation, no decision has yet been made on whether Meta has broken the law. The CMA will now gather and assess evidence, including from Meta and affected third parties.

Separately, the CMA is seeking information from Meta on its new Meta One business subscription service and the concerns raised by the Federation of Small Businesses about the potential impact on small businesses of posting external links on Facebook and Instagram without paying a subscription fee. No decision has yet been taken on whether the CMA will take formal action in this area and these issues fall outside the scope of the CA98 investigation launched today.

Further information and updates will be published on the CMA's case page .

Notes to editors:

At this stage, no assumptions should be made about whether competition law has been broken. Further detail of the CMA's procedures in competition cases is available in its guidance .

The relevant legislation is the Competition Act 1998. The Chapter II prohibition prohibits conduct by one or more undertakings that amounts to an abuse of a dominant position in a market and may affect trade within the United Kingdom.

The Competition Act 1998 also allows for the CMA to impose interim measures where temporary action is needed to prevent significant damage or protect the public interest.

The CMA may launch an investigation under the Competition Act 1998 where it has reasonable grounds to suspect an infringement of competition law.

The CMA has limited powers to take action under the digital markets competition regime (DMCR) for businesses that have not been designated with strategic market status. To date, Meta has not been designated with this status under the DMCR. The CMA continues to keep potential candidates for SMS designation under active review, with the next set of proposals due to be considered by the CMA Board in spring 2027.

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