

CMA investigates Adobe over concerns about cancellation fees

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Investigation examines whether Adobe's early cancellation fees are unfair and misleading.

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has launched an investigation into Adobe following concerns that early cancellation fees on membership plans for certain products may breach consumer protection law.

Customers who cancel more than 14 days after signing up to its 'annual billed monthly' plan - where they agree to a yearly contract and pay monthly - must pay 50% of the remaining yearly cost. After they cancel, customers will have access to the product until the end of that month's billing period.

The investigation will examine whether these terms are unfair and if customers are given clear and timely information upfront about the early cancellation fees, which are likely to influence their decision to purchase the product.

Adobe's products - including Photoshop, Illustrator and Adobe Premiere - are widely used by consumers to create and edit content such as photographs and videos.

At this stage, the CMA has reached no conclusions about whether Adobe has broken the law.

Emma Cochrane, Executive Director for Consumer Protection at the CMA, said:

From students to content creators, millions of people rely on digital design tools - and they should feel confident that businesses selling these services play by the rules.

Our investigation will consider whether Adobe customers are getting a fair deal and if they have enough information upfront about the cancellation fee.

This is the ninth business the CMA is investigating under its new direct consumer enforcement powers.

These powers allow the CMA to determine whether consumer law has been breached - rather than going through the courts. The CMA can also take direct action where it finds wrongdoing such as securing redress for consumers and imposing fines on companies where appropriate.

How the investigation unfolds will depend on the nature of the evidence obtained. The investigation may result in a finding of unlawful conduct, the imposition of remedies, or closure of the case.

Further information about the investigation can be found on the CMA's website.

Notes to editors:

1. According to the Design Council, the digital design sector is worth nearly £60 billion, equivalent to 2.7% of the UK economy. Digital design grew in the UK by 138% between 2010 and 2019, becoming the largest and fastest growing area of design.

2. Under the CMA's new direct consumer enforcement powers, if a company infringes consumer protection law, the CMA can fine them up to 10% of their global turnover.
3. Failure to provide information when requested (without a legitimate reason), concealing evidence, or providing false information can likewise result in a fine, with penalties of up to 1% of a business' global turnover and additional daily penalties.
4. The government consulted on changes to the legislative framework for subscription contracts under the Digital Markets, Competition and Consumers Act 2024. The CMA's investigation is separate to this consultation and draws on existing and established legislation relating to unfair contract terms and misleading omissions.
5. Further details about Adobe's subscription and cancellation terms can be found on their website.
6. Media enquiries should be directed to press@cma.gov.uk or 020 3738 6460.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/cma-investigates-adobe-over-concerns-about-cancellation-fees>