



CASE REPORT

1. Complaint reference number	124/99
2. Advertiser	British Airways
3. Product	Travel
4. Type of advertisement	Print
5. Nature of complaint	Discrimination or vilification Other – section 2.1
6. Date of determination	Tuesday, 11 May 1999
7. DETERMINATION	Dismissed

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

The print advertisement comprises a photograph and text. The photograph is of a baby having its nappy changed. The baby is holding a pink nappy pin in its hands. The text underneath the photograph includes the words (in large print) ‘Great cabin crew are born, not made.’ Underneath this line of text is a smaller body of text which includes the following wording: ‘At British Airways we like to nurture what comes naturally. Every one of our cabin crew is chosen for their natural desire to help others. So you can be sure that when you book your passengers with us, we’ll look after them as well as you do. And who knows, one day, baby Isabella here might be looking after them too.’

THE COMPLAINT

Comments which the complainant made regarding this advertisement included the following:

‘The baby (in the advertisement) is a girl...and she is depicted as naturally growing up to be helpful and nurturing. The unspoken implication is that a boy would not naturally nurture and serve others. I am a mother of three teenage girls and have brought them up to think they can aspire to anything but (this advertisement is) appalling in the message (it is) giving females...(Its) message is: that it is natural for females to put their needs last, that they are the only ender capable of nurturing, that they are happy and fulfilled in subservient occupations...I find (the advertisement) extremely offensive in its promotion of females as a lowly, subservient group in society.’

THE DETERMINATION

The Advertising Standards Board (‘the Board’) considered whether this advertisement breaches Section 2 of the Advertiser Code of Ethics (‘the Code’).

The Board determined that the advertisement did not constitute discrimination or vilification and did not breach the Code on this or any other ground. The Board dismissed the complaint. Board members noted, in passing, the advertiser’s advice that it had also ‘created a “Baby Nicholas” version’ of the advertisement.