

Facebook Ads for Pharmacy

Last Updated: [October 2020](#)

What is this document about?

In this document, we provide Community Pharmacy, online pharmacies and pharmacy-related businesses more clarity as to what the advice is around advertising on Facebook, both organically and via paid methods.

Facebook change their advertising policies on a regular basis and often it is unknown when the policy has changed until we check (which is often) or a paid advert has been rejected.

All the latest policies on Facebook can be found here: <https://www.facebook.com/policies>

We will be updating this document on a regular basis as and when needed.

Why has Facebook changed its policy for pharmacies?

We believe that COVID has played a big role in this but it is also part of the evolution of social media. As more and more healthcare businesses seek to use social media as a marketing/communication tool, Facebook needs to further regulate what is true advertising and what is not.

Since a pharmacy sells regulated medicines and services, more restrictions have been applied across this sector to help control the information being sent out across Facebook.

Posting on a Facebook Page Organically

The clarity from Facebook on organic posting (posting without paying to reach more people) is quite vague in itself and you can [read more about it here](#).

However, as an agency that has been marketing for pharmacies all over the country for a number of years, creating 10,000's of posts, we understand some of the content Facebook does not like.

What **can't a pharmacy post on Facebook organically?**

It is clear from the policy that you are not allowed to post about:

- Prescription-only medication directly e.g Saxenda Pen with an image.

Not only is this against the manufacturer's policy, but this also goes against all advertising policies in the UK.

We have learned that Facebook does not like the following content either:

- Posts of OTC medicines or services that are related to sexual health e.g. Viagra Connect
- Regularly posting about COVID-19-related products and services, hand sanitisers, or masks. If posts are infrequent, this is ok. But Facebook will pick up regularity.

Posts about OTC medicines must be done with caution and in accordance with advertising regulations in the UK and by the manufacturer.

Sponsored Advertising on Facebook

As per recent updated Facebook regulations, pharmacies, both online and offline, **should be verified by Facebook in order to push paid adverts** i.e. boosting a post or through Ads Manager. Before the latest policy update, Facebook allowed brick and mortar pharmacies to push unprohibited ads without being verified. This is now not the case.

While it is still theoretically possible to create paid advertisements through a Community Pharmacy Facebook Page, the **resounding** advice is that:

Both online and offline pharmacies must get written permission from Facebook to sponsor posts relating to pharmaceutical medicines and healthcare services. This written permission will subsequently verify the business to allow such ads to run without restriction.

How does a pharmacy business get verification?

A pharmacy can get written permission and subsequent verification by speaking to Facebook Support and filling out an online application form here :
<https://business.facebook.com/business/m/pharma>

You will need:

- The name of your pharmacy
- The website address (URL) of your pharmacy's website
- A brief description of your business model
- The age range of your target audience
- Country of operation

What if I don't get written permission to advertise?

If you don't seek verification, then it is more likely that a lot of your sponsored adverts that relate to pharmaceutical healthcare will get rejected and there is a risk of your account being disabled or suspended. Once Facebook has placed these restrictions on your Ad account, it is very difficult or impossible to lift or reverse. This means you will have difficulty in advertising at all.

Does it matter if they are an Online Pharmacy or a real physical location?

5. Online pharmacies

Adverts must not promote the sale of prescription pharmaceuticals. Adverts for online and offline pharmacies are only permitted with prior written permission.

You replied to Facebook Business Support

Name of the Online Pharmacy:
- *Link to your website:*...

Because obviously this says Offline Pharmacy as well, but you asked for the name of the Online Pharmacy

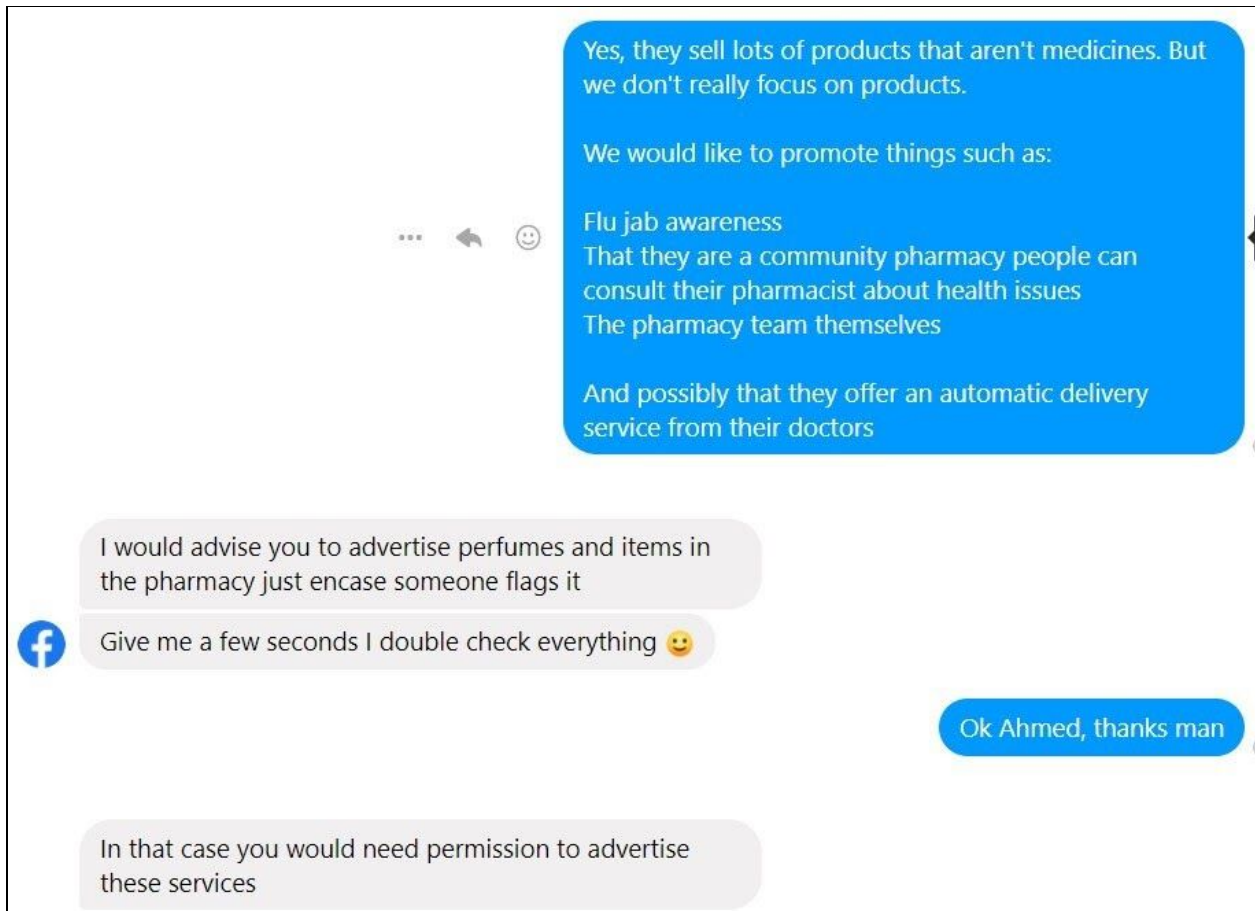
does that matter?

The rules go for both

Our chat with Facebook in Sept 2020

That being said, Facebook have informed us that pharmacies are able to publish Ads without written permission for non-healthcare related posts. For example, advertising perfumes, soaps and other non-healthcare shop floor items. This can extend to Facebook Ads related to promoting the pharmacy team to generate page likes and engagement in the community.

However, as mentioned before, it's totally in Facebook's discretion if these ads pass the approval process and because a "pharmacy" is publishing these Ads, it still poses a risk, especially as the approvals for Facebook Ads is highly automated..



Our chat with Facebook in Sept 2020

Paid Advertising on Facebook *post* business verification

Facebook has recently changed the policy around both online and offline pharmacies,, when advertising. The current stance on Facebook Ads for pharmacies can be [seen here](#). Please see section 5. Again, the policy is vague meaning that it can be interpreted in many ways. Since we have been managing Advertising Accounts for years, we know what you can/can't advertise via the paid route, and what is likely to get your ads rejected/suspended.

You **cannot** sponsor an advertisement for:

- Prescription-only medication directly e.g Saxenda Pen with an image
- Weight Loss Services
- Sexual Health Services
- CBD Products

You **should have** permission to sponsor Ads for:

- Prescription Delivery and Collection Services
- Services related to pharmaceutical medicines and healthcare e.g. flu jab service, medicines use review, UTI services etc

Summary Conclusion

- The Facebook Advertising Policy for pharmacies has changed during the pandemic.
- It is absolutely in your best interest as a pharmacy business to seek written permission and verification from Facebook to advertise with much less restrictions, avoid ads being disqualified and the risk of suspensions.
- To get written permission on Facebook, you should follow this link <https://business.facebook.com/business/m/pharma> or seek the help of a marketing agency.
- You cannot and should not promote prescription-only medicines on Facebook in any circumstance.
- You are theoretically able to conduct ads without written permission and verification from Facebook but you **should only** create Ads that are not pharmaceutically-related. If you do publish sponsored Ads that are related to pharmaceutical care e.g. your prescription delivery service, the Ad may get disqualified and you are at risk of your account being suspended/banned. This is not a “theory”. We’ve seen this happen on multiple occasions.
- Always keep up to date with the [latest advertising policies set by Facebook here](#).
- The safest and most effective way to advertise on Facebook is through an respected and vetted advertising agency or if you have the necessary skills and qualifications to do so.

If you want your business verified on Facebook and get written permission so that you can advertise without restrictions, please get in touch with us on support@pharmacymentor.com.



Disclaimer: It is totally in Facebook's discretion if they are to take posts down, disqualify ads, or suspend accounts. However, there are steps you can take to work on Facebook safely, as pointed out in this document.