A 404 page appears when someone follows a link to a page that cannot be found. It is usually a brief interruption: the visitor wants to get back to the information they were looking for, not read a long explanation about how the website earns money.

So, should a 404 page mention affiliate partners? Usually, it does not need a full affiliate disclosure of its own if it contains no affiliate links or product recommendations. But if the page includes affiliate links, commercial suggestions or other content that could earn the site a commission, the relationship should be made clear. Whatever you decide, the page should prioritise useful navigation and explain the site's commercial links in plain English.

This guide covers 404 page trust and navigation, affiliate disclosure placement, information-only wording, liability limitations and how to encourage readers to do their own research. It is general information about website copy, not legal or financial advice.

What a 404 page is for

A 404 page tells a visitor that the requested page is unavailable. The cause might be a mistyped address, an old bookmark, a broken link or a page that has moved. The message should state the problem clearly and help the visitor find another route through the site.

A useful 404 page typically includes:

- a clear message that the page could not be found;
- a link to the homepage or a relevant section;
- a search box, if the site has one;
- an option to report a broken link, where practical; and
- only a small number of relevant suggestions.

Too many promotional messages can make a frustrating moment worse. If a visitor lands on a missing page and immediately sees product offers, the page may feel more interested in earning a commission than helping them recover their journey. That can undermine trust, even if the offers are legitimate.

When should a 404 page mention affiliate partners?

The key question is not simply whether the website has affiliate relationships. It is whether the 404 page itself contains content that could lead to a commercial benefit.

What the 404 page contains Should it mention affiliate links? A basic error message, homepage link and search box A separate disclosure is not usually necessary on that page if there are no affiliate links or commercial recommendations. Links to ordinary site categories or editorial pages Explain the affiliate relationship on the destination pages wherever relevant. Consider a short site-wide disclosure link if it is easy to see and understand. Product suggestions, retailer links or "shop" recommendations Disclose the commercial relationship clearly and close to those links or suggestions. A banner or button that may earn commission Make the nature of the link clear before the visitor clicks, rather than relying on a disclosure hidden elsewhere.

For example, a 404 page might link to a buying guide that contains affiliate links. The disclosure on that guide should be easy to notice before or alongside the relevant links. A visitor should not have to guess that

a retailer link may earn the publisher money.

Affiliate disclosure placement: make it visible and relevant

Affiliate disclosure placement matters because a disclosure only helps if people can find and understand it. A general statement buried in a footer may be less useful than a short explanation near a commercial link. The exact wording and placement depend on the page and the way its links are presented, so publishers should check current rules and guidance that apply to their site.

For instance, if a 404 page includes a button leading to a product retailer, a plain-English label near that button could say that the site may earn a commission if someone buys through the link. Do not label an affiliate link as an ordinary navigation link if its commercial purpose would otherwise be unclear.

Sites using Amazon Associates should explain the relationship wherever relevant to readers. A publisher participating in the Amazon Services LLC Associates Program may use a statement such as:

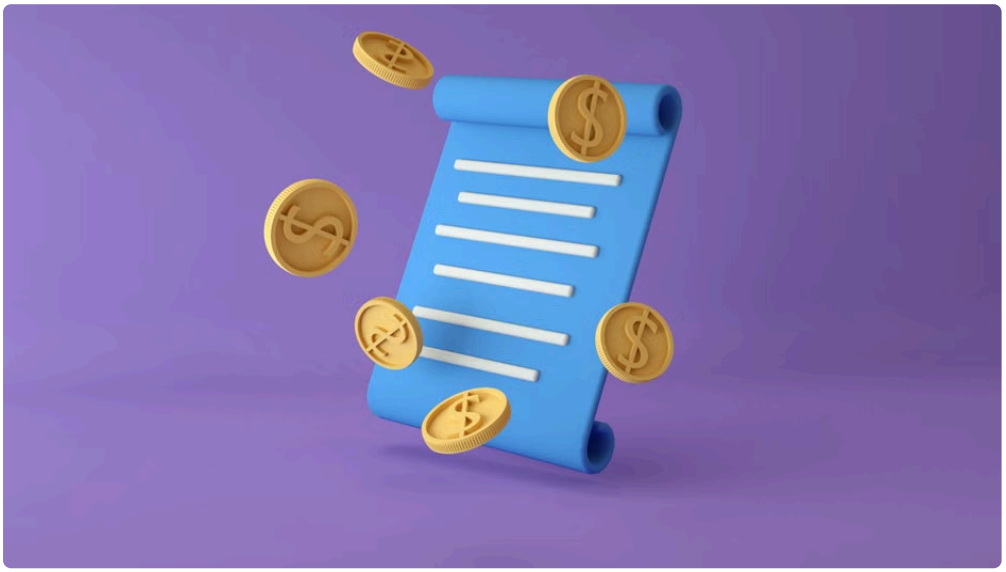
"As an Amazon Associate, we earn from qualifying purchases."

Use the wording required by the programme's current terms, and make sure any disclosure is suitable for the page and links in question. Mentioning Amazon Services LLC Associates Program in a policy page does not, by itself, make every individual link clear to a visitor. Likewise, naming Amazon.com in a list of retailers is not a substitute for explaining that a link may be an affiliate link.

For a 404 page with no commercial links, it may be simpler to keep the page focused on navigation and provide a clear link to the site's affiliate disclosure or advertising policy. That offers a route to more information without turning the error message into a lengthy legal notice.

Transparent monetisation without distracting from navigation

Transparent monetisation means being open about how a website may earn money. It does not require every page to carry a long disclaimer. It does mean that readers should not be misled about the purpose of commercial links or the publisher's relationship with the companies mentioned.



A practical approach is to separate the 404 page's jobs:

1. **Help the visitor recover.** Say what happened and offer useful routes to working content.
2. **Identify commercial links.** If the page itself contains affiliate links, say so close to them.

3. **Link to fuller information.** Provide a visible route to the site's affiliate or advertising policy for people who want more detail.

A https://helpandadvice.co.uk/getting-a-medical-cannabis-prescription-in-the-uk-a-practical-guide/ short, relevant disclosure is generally more helpful than a block of broad legal wording. Avoid adding unrelated partner logos or a row of retailer links simply because the page has empty space. Every extra element should help the visitor, and its commercial purpose should be clear.

Information-only content is not the same as advice

A 404 page can link to articles, guides or resources. If the site covers financial, legal, health or other consequential subjects, take care not to make a navigation message sound like a personalised recommendation. A generic link to an article is not automatically individual advice, but its wording and context matter.

For example, "Read our guide to comparing savings accounts" describes the content. "Choose this account now" sounds like a direct recommendation. A disclaimer cannot reliably fix wording that otherwise gives a misleading impression.

Where appropriate, a site can explain that its articles are for general information and are not tailored to a visitor's circumstances. That should be accurate and consistent with the actual content. Calling a page "information only" does not settle every question about how its content may be understood or treated.

When referring to the FCA, be precise. The Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) is a regulator for relevant financial services and activities in the UK. Its role does not mean that every website discussing money, or every affiliate publisher, is regulated or approved by the FCA. Do not imply FCA approval, authorisation or endorsement unless that is accurate and can be substantiated. A 404 page is rarely the right place for a broad statement about FCA status; explain any relevant regulatory position in the appropriate part of the site and check the facts before publishing.

Liability limitation language: keep it accurate

Publishers sometimes want a disclaimer saying that they are not responsible for losses, errors or decisions made by readers. Be cautious with broad claims. A statement on a website does not automatically remove every legal responsibility, and a disclaimer should not suggest that a reader has no rights or that the publisher can never be held accountable.

On a 404 page, an extensive liability notice is also unlikely to help someone find the missing content. If a short notice is genuinely needed, keep it relevant. For example, a page might explain that the site's articles are general information and that prices, availability or details can change. Avoid claiming that all content is complete, current or suitable for every person unless you can support that claim.

For terms that may affect legal rights, financial promotions or regulated activities, seek appropriate professional review. Plain-English copy helps readers understand a notice, but it is not a substitute for checking that the notice is suitable for the site's actual business and content.

Encouraging readers to do their own research

"Do your own research" can be useful when it tells readers what to check. On its own, it is vague and can sound like the publisher is shifting responsibility without helping. Make it practical by pointing people

towards relevant details, such as:

- the date an article or price was last checked;
- the provider's current terms, fees and eligibility criteria;
- independent sources that can help readers compare options; and
- qualified or official sources where the subject calls for them.

For example, a destination article could remind readers to check a retailer's current delivery costs and returns policy before buying. A financial article might direct readers to verify details with the provider and consult appropriate sources for their circumstances. Keep such prompts proportionate and factual: they should support careful decision-making, not imply that a particular outcome is guaranteed.

A simple 404 page structure

For many sites, the following structure is a sensible starting point:

- **Headline:** "We can't find that page."
- **Explanation:** "The link may be out of date, or the address may have been entered incorrectly."
- **Navigation:** Offer a homepage link, site search and a few relevant sections.
- **Commercial disclosure:** Add a clear note beside any affiliate links on the page.
- **Further information:** Link to the affiliate disclosure or advertising policy if useful.
- **Feedback:** Give visitors a way to report a broken link, if the site can respond to reports.

Example wording might be:

"We can't find that page. Try searching the site or visit our homepage. Some links on this site may be affiliate links, which means we may earn a commission if you buy through them. See our affiliate disclosure for details."

Use the affiliate sentence only if it accurately describes the site and is appropriate for the page. If the 404 page has no affiliate links, you may prefer to keep the message shorter and link to the disclosure from the site navigation or footer instead.



What to do next

Before publishing or updating a 404 page:

1. Check whether the page contains affiliate links, product recommendations, paid placements or other commercial content.
2. Place a clear disclosure near any commercial links, and confirm that programme-specific requirements are met.
3. Keep the main message focused on helping visitors reach working content.
4. Review the wording for accidental claims of personalised advice, guaranteed outcomes or regulator approval.
5. Test the page on mobile and check that the search, navigation and disclosure links work.
6. Review the site’s wider disclosures and relevant current rules; seek professional input where the legal or regulatory position is unclear.

A 404 page does not need to be a miniature legal policy. If it contains no affiliate links, a short route to the site’s disclosure information may be enough. If it does include commercial links, make the relationship clear where visitors encounter them. In both cases, useful navigation, accurate wording and transparent monetisation are more likely to preserve trust than a long, generic disclaimer.