



Department for
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& Industrial Strategy

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Philip Davies MP
House of Commons
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5 August 2022

Dear Philip,

Thank you for your letter dated 21 July, addressed to the Secretary of State, enclosing correspondence from Cllr Susan Hinchcliffe regarding ideas the Government could take regarding fireworks. I am replying as this matter falls within my ministerial portfolio.

I would like to reassure Ms Hinchcliffe, and the members of the Council's Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee, that the Government takes the issues associated with the sale and use of fireworks seriously. There is a comprehensive regulatory framework already in place that strikes the right balance for people to enjoy fireworks, whilst aiming to reduce risks and disturbances to people, animals, and property.

Existing legislation already controls the sale, availability, and use of fireworks. There is a 120-decibel noise limit on the fireworks available to consumers and this maximum level is kept under constant review by the Government to ensure it is still fit for purpose.

Current legislation also restricts retailers to only selling consumer fireworks during the seasonal celebrations of November 5th, Diwali, New Year's Eve, and the Chinese New Year. Retailers may only supply fireworks outside these traditional periods if they obtain a licence from their local licensing authority. Local Authority Trading Standards work with retailers to ensure the fireworks sold are safe, and they have powers to enforce against those who place non-compliant fireworks on the market. This includes category F4 fireworks, the most powerful fireworks, which are not available to consumers and can only be sold to, and used by, professional operators. Additionally, storage controls are in place for fireworks and so, any individual wishing to buy and store certain quantities of fireworks may need a licence to do so.

The Government has provided the police, local authorities, and other local agencies with a range of tools and powers that they can use to respond quickly and effectively to all forms of ASB through the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014. These powers are deliberately local in nature, and it is for local agencies to determine whether their use is appropriate in the specific circumstances of each individual case.

Using fireworks as a weapon to attack any individual is a criminal offence and will be treated as a police matter. This includes attacks on emergency service workers, where the Assaults on Emergency Workers (Offences) Act 2018 doubled the maximum penalty for assaulting an emergency worker.


We have an ongoing programme of work on fireworks, in response to concerns raised by the public. This has included:

- Commissioning research by Ipsos Mori that provided evidence on consumer attitudes towards, and behaviours around, using fireworks in the UK. The key findings have informed our public awareness campaigns and support the need to educate consumers on fireworks use. This research can be found in our published fireworks evidence base available on GOV.UK;
- Commissioning noise research to test the decibel level of commonly used fireworks, in response to issues raised around noise and disturbance. The objective of the testing work is to help us understand the decibel level associated with a range of fireworks and whether they are compliant with the regulations; and
- Engaging with Local Authorities and animal welfare organisations to better understand what specific issues they face and the fireworks industry to consider what action they can take to promote consumer safety.

The Office for Product Safety and Standards also runs an annual public awareness campaign, working in partnership with animal welfare organisations, safety charities and the industry, to promote the safe and considerate use of fireworks to the public. The 2021 campaign had double the reach on Twitter of the 2020 campaign and we will look to build on this success for the 2022 campaign.

Thank you for taking the time to write. I hope you and Ms Hinchcliffe find this information is useful. I would also like to take this opportunity to add my support to your statements urging everyone to act responsibly and respectfully when using fireworks.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Jane', is centered on the page. The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

JANE HUNT MP

Minister for Small Business, Consumers & Labour Markets