



Department for
Business, Energy
& Industrial Strategy

Rt Hon Graham Stuart MP
Minister of State for Climate

Department for Business, Energy &
Industrial Strategy
1 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0ET

Rt Hon Sir George Howarth MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Website: www.gov.uk

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14 November 2022

Dear George,

Thank you for your email of 1 November to the Home Office, on behalf of a number of your constituents, regarding fireworks. Your email has been passed to my Department, and I am responding on behalf of the Department.

I would like to reassure your constituents that the Government takes the issues associated with the sale and use of fireworks seriously. There is a comprehensive regulatory framework already in place for fireworks. The Government's aim is to strike the right balance for people to enjoy fireworks, whilst aiming to reduce risks and disturbances to people, animals, and property.

Existing legislation controls the sale, availability and use of fireworks. For example, there is an 11pm curfew in place for the use of fireworks, with later exceptions only for the traditional firework periods of November 5th, Diwali, New Year's Eve and the Chinese New Year. Using fireworks outside the curfew hours is a criminal offence enforced by the Police and can lead to imprisonment and a substantial fine. There is also a 120-decibel noise limit on the fireworks available to consumers.

Current legislation restricts retailers to only selling consumer fireworks during seasonal celebrations as set out above. Retailers may only supply fireworks outside these traditional periods if they obtain a license from their local licensing authority. Local Authority Trading Standards work with retailers to ensure fireworks sold are safe, and they have powers to enforce against those who place non-compliant fireworks on the market. Trading Standards (and local fire and rescue authorities in metropolitan counties) can also enforce against those selling fireworks without an appropriate licence, for example, outside the normal selling period.

The Government has no current plans to place further restrictions on the sale of fireworks to the public, but we continue to monitor the situation. We have, however, been carrying out 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;
- Commissioning noise research to test the decibel level of commonly used fireworks, in response to issues raised around noise and disturbance. The ob-

jective 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. The results of the testing will be available in due course;

- Engaging with Local Authorities and animal welfare organisations to better understand what specific issues they face;
- Engaging with 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 general public. The 2021 campaign had double the reach on Twitter of the 2020 campaign.

Your constituents may also be interested to know that the main environmental impact of fireworks is the emission of particulates. Fireworks events are normally short-lived and localised events, so whilst there are likely to be localised spikes around these events for short periods (hours) which may lead to exceedances of the 24-hour air quality objectives under the Air Quality Standards Regulations 2010, these high concentrations will be short lived and not impact the annual mean objective. The Air Pollution in the UK report provides an annual assessment of air quality in the UK, including an assessment of the impact of fireworks and bonfire night. The most recent report, published in 2020, can be found through the following URL:

https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/library/annualreport/viewonline?year=2020_issue_1#report_pdf.

Thank you again for taking the time to write. I hope you and your constituents find this response useful.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Rt Hon Graham Stuart MP
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