



Department for Business & Trade

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Darren Jones MP
Chair, Business and Trade Committee
House of Commons
London
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Dear Darren,

SMARTER REGULATION – UPDATE ON PRODUCT SAFETY

My Department is today announcing the UK Government's intention to continue to recognise the CE marking for the UK market, indefinitely, beyond December 2024. This will form part of the next stage in the Government's Smarter Regulation programme, which began in May, with publication of [Smarter Regulation to Grow the Economy](#). We will also be tomorrow launching a review of the product safety framework with the publication of two consultations: one setting out proposals to reform the current regulatory framework for product safety, and another on a proposed new approach to the fire safety of domestic upholstered furniture.

INTENTION TO EXTEND CE RECOGNITION

Extending recognition of CE marked products will continue to allow goods that meet EU requirements, using the EU conformity marking (including the CE marking) to be sold in England, Scotland and Wales. This CE recognition approach will apply to regulations owned by the Department for Business and Trade, covering 18 regulations. There are different timeframes and rules for other products.

The CE marking is already recognised in Northern Ireland. Businesses manufacturing goods in Northern Ireland will continue to enjoy unfettered access to the GB market and the EU single market. As such, the CE marking will be an acceptable method of demonstrating compliance for a wide range of goods on the UK market.

The decision to extend recognition of the CE marking in Great Britain will provide flexibility for businesses to use either the CE or UK Conformity Assessment (UKCA) marking and minimise duplicative costs. This approach will support economic growth, provide longer-term certainty for business and a foundation for the UK to set our product regulations in the future.

The UKCA marking will continue as the UK's own robust regulatory regime.

DBT officials have engaged extensively with industry to understand concerns about the requirement to use the UKCA marking on many products from December 2024. We have

heard that the planned transition to UKCA poses challenges for businesses. Government will continue to take a pragmatic approach to improving regulation in dialogue with industry and consumer needs. Over August we will be holding a further series of roundtables across 7 locations in the UK (London, Manchester, Birmingham, Cardiff, Edinburgh, Darlington and Southampton).

PRODUCT SAFETY CONSULTATIONS

Responses to our Product Safety Review call for evidence indicated that the current framework, which is a mix of domestic regulation, retained EU law and technical standards, is complex, ambiguous and highly prescriptive, stifling innovation and hindering growth.

The Product Safety Review consultation aims to:

- **Make the existing law clearer:** By removing duplication and simplifying legislation, we can better regulate, supporting new entrants to the UK market, encouraging innovation and enabling growth.
- **Look to the future:** The new framework needs to be ready to deal with the challenges of a digital world, such as third-party sales through online marketplaces, and able to protect consumers from new and emerging hazards quickly and effectively.
- **Consider the global stage:** We want to ensure that our framework reflects international best practice and standards wherever possible, maximising the opportunity for trade on a global stage.

Under the Windsor Framework, applicable EU rules on product safety will continue to apply in Northern Ireland.

In developing our policy proposals as part of the Product Safety Review, we will engage closely with counterparts in Northern Ireland. In terms of territorial extent, the final proposals will take account of the devolved settlements and also ensure our international obligations are met.

The new approach to the fire safety of domestic upholstered furniture will replace the Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988. The proposed new approach will align with modern approaches to product safety, focusing on safety outcomes underpinned by essential safety requirements which all domestic upholstered furniture must meet before being placed on the market.

The new approach will enable a reduction in the use of chemical flame retardants, including in respect of babies at a significant stage in their development where the fire risk is lower as they are not exposed to the same risks of accidental ignition, by cigarettes or similar ignition sources. The proposals will better represent the safety of the product as it appears in consumers' homes, facilitate innovation and support compliance and effective enforcement, to ensure that manufacturers place only safe products on the UK market.

The proposals set out in both consultations have the potential to positively impact hundreds of thousands of businesses in the UK regulated by the current framework, the overwhelming majority of which are small or micro businesses. They will allow businesses to innovate and grow while ensuring consumers are protected from unsafe products.

Both consultations will launch tomorrow, and more information can be found via the following links:

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/smarter-regulation-uk-product-safety-review>
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/smarter-regulation-fire-safety-of-domestic-upholstered-furniture>

While the consultations are open, officials will be hosting engagement events to discuss all the proposals.

I hope you find this update useful, and officials in the Department for Business and Trade, will continue to engage with you and your committee as this work develops.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kevin', with a stylized flourish at the end.

KEVIN HOLLINRAKE MP

Minister for Enterprise, Markets and Small Business