



Rt Hon. Sir Stephen Timms MP  
Minister for Social Security and Disability  
Department for Work and Pensions  
Caxton House  
Tothill Street  
London SW1H 9NA

20 May 2026

Dear Minister,

**Draft Chemicals (Health and Safety) (Amendment, Consequential and Transitional Provision) Regulations 2026**

We write in response to your letter of 28 April 2026 on the above Regulations, which the Northern Ireland Scrutiny Committee considered at its meeting on 20 May 2026.

We note your statement that “the new fast-track evaluation pathway will enable GB to align more rapidly with EU decisions in most cases” and that the Government priorities explicitly emphasise maintaining high levels of health and environmental protection and ‘leaning into alignment’ with EU decisions unless scientifically justified otherwise, therefore divergence will occur only in exceptional circumstances.” What are the exceptional circumstances in which the Government anticipates divergence? What are the implications of the possibility of divergence, albeit in exceptional circumstances, for Northern Ireland and the UK internal market?

We further note that “policy development is underway to give effect” to the Government’s “commitment to amend GB CLP to safeguard the United Kingdom (UK) Internal Market” and that the “HSE intends to circulate a voluntary survey shortly to collect operational data from supply chain and other actors with responsibilities under GB CLP, to understand the impacts” ahead of a future consultation. We would be grateful for a further update once the consultation has been published.

Finally, we note that these “changes need to be implemented under separate legislation, as the Retained EU Law (REUL) Act powers utilised by the Chemicals (Health and Safety) (Amendment, Consequential and Transitional Provision) Regulations 2026 cannot be used to increase regulatory burden.” What are the timelines for the separate legislation?

We request a response within our usual 10-day period.

I am copying this letter to Tonia Antoniazzi MP, Chair of the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee, Ciara Ferguson MLA, Chair of the Northern Ireland Assembly Windsor Framework Democratic Scrutiny Committee, and Colm Gildernew MLA, Chair of the Northern Ireland Assembly Committee for Communities.



HOUSE OF LORDS

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Yours sincerely,

Lord Carlile of Berriew CBE KC,

Chair, Northern Ireland Scrutiny Committee