Department for Business, Innovation, Science and Trade

Kate Dearden MP
Minister of State for the Future of Work
Department for Business, Innovation, Science and Trade
Old Admiralty Building
Admiralty Place
Whitehall
London
SW1A 2DY

T: +44 (0) 020 4551 0011
E: Dearden.Correspondence@businessandtrade.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk

The Rt Hon Liam Byrne MP
Chair, Business, Innovation, Science and Trade Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

16 November 2026

Dear Liam,

I am writing to provide further information on the Department's current and forthcoming consultations on consumer protection and product safety that was outlined in my recent Committee appearance.

On product safety, the Government is undertaking an ambitious programme of reform to ensure that the UK's regulatory framework keeps pace with changing products, technologies and business models. This programme includes recently concluded consultations on:

- Two packaged consultations on the **product safety framework** and **enforcement and market surveillance.** Although distinct, these ran concurrently and covered the responsibilities of businesses across modern supply chains, new duties for online marketplaces, modernised enforcement powers and the potential introduction of civil monetary penalties. These consultations closed on 23 June;
- **Furniture fire safety**, seeking to maintain a high level of fire protection while better balancing fire risks and the risks associated with exposure to chemical flame retardants. This consultation closed on 23 June;
- **Fireworks**, considering proposals to reduce harm by restricting the loudest fireworks available for consumer use, updating the list of higher-risk fireworks prohibited from public sale, and reviewing the rules applying to certain lower-risk pyrotechnic products. This closed on 7 October;
- A call for evidence on **toy safety**, seeking views on the changing risks to consumers, the impacts of the new EU toy safety legislation and the practicalities of future regulatory changes. This call for evidence closed on 6 October.

We are also developing consultations on the following which we expect to publish in the next few months:

- **Deceptive pricing** - In August, the government announced that it would take action to tackle deceptive pricing practices, including fake "was" prices and misleading recommended retail prices (RRPs). The consultation will seek views on proposals to

address these practices, recognising the need to protect consumers and support effective enforcement while ensuring legitimate discounts and promotions can continue. It will also gather evidence on emerging pricing and promotional practices, and other commercial practices that may require further action to protect consumers.

- **Car clocking** - As part of the wider motoring package announced in October, the Government committed to adding the use of false or misleading vehicle mileage information in the promotion or sale of used vehicles to the list of banned commercial practices in the Digital Markets, Competition and Consumers Act 2024. The consultation will seek views on the scope and design of the proposed prohibition, including how best to implement it while avoiding unintended consequences for legitimate odometer repair, replacement and conversion.

There are statutory duties to consult in these areas and the measures under consideration could have significant implications for consumers, businesses and enforcement bodies. It is therefore important that the Government gathers robust evidence, tests whether proposed interventions are proportionate and workable, and identifies potential unintended consequences before taking final decisions. The number of consultations reflects the breadth and complexity of the reforms being considered.

The Department has considered whether these issues could be covered through a single consultation. However, the individual reforms address distinct markets, harms and legal frameworks, and require evidence from different groups of consumers, businesses and technical specialists. Combining them would risk producing an unduly lengthy and complex exercise, making it harder for respondents to identify the proposals relevant to them and potentially discouraging participation, particularly among smaller businesses, consumer groups and specialist organisations. We will continue to review our approach to consultation in line with updated government guidance.

Separate consultations also allow the Government to tailor questions and evidence requirements to the issues involved. For example, reform of the wider product-safety framework concerns responsibilities across supply chains, including new duties for online marketplaces and the modernisation of enforcement and market-surveillance powers. By contrast, reform of furniture fire-safety regulation requires detailed technical evidence to balance fire risk against concerns about chemical exposure.

The level and nature of engagement also varies considerably between subjects. The fireworks consultation received over 140,000 responses, while the furniture fire safety consultation was nearly 2,000. The product safety framework and enforcement consultations attracted more targeted responses from organisations and individuals with relevant expertise. These differences reinforce the value of allowing each issue to be considered on its own terms and giving officials time to analyse the evidence properly.

Taken together, these consultations form a coherent programme to modernise consumer protection and product regulation. Conducting them separately does not mean that the policies are being developed in isolation. Officials are considering the interactions between

the reforms and will seek to ensure that the resulting requirements are consistent, proportionate and as straightforward as possible for businesses to understand and comply with.

I recognise the importance of giving businesses, consumers and Parliament clarity about the direction and sequencing of this work. The Department will continue to engage closely with affected sectors and will publish its response to each consultation once the evidence has been fully considered.

Best wishes,



KATE DEARDEN MP
Minister of State for the Future of Work
Department for Business, Innovation, Science & Trade