

Written evidence submitted by Tesco (END0034)

1. Why did you decide to roll out the voluntary ban on sale of energy drinks to under 16s?

Our customers and colleagues tell us that even with the best intentions, taking decisions to be a little healthier can be difficult. Our ambition is to make it easier to eat a little better every day with a range of simple, realistic and practical actions.

Since 2013 energy drinks have not been marketed or promoted to under-16s and all energy drinks carry a recommendation that they are not for children. However, our customers told us that they wanted more help in preventing children from buying these drinks. As a result in March 2018 we introduced measures to prevent the sale of energy drinks to under 16's through our 'Think 25' policy across the UK.

2. How have you enforced the ban?

We have taken a 'Think 25' approach to the ban. All energy drinks with a caffeine content greater than 15mg/100ml are subject to the ban. When these products are scanned, a till prompt will remind colleagues to ask customers to demonstrate they are over 16. All customers who look 25 or younger will be asked for proof of age. Our colleagues are trained on our approach to ensure they can identify restricted products and support customers.

We are supportive of the #notforchildren campaign and promote our approach to the responsible sale of energy drinks in store and online.

3. What has been your overall, as well as your staff's, experience of enforcing the ban?

Within our stores, our colleagues have understood the need for the voluntary restrictions and our implementation of the ban has gone smoothly to date.

4. How do you monitor compliance of the ban, ensuring that all staff are enforcing it?

Our policy on energy drinks and under 16s now forms part of our training on age restricted sales. This is compulsory training for all store staff and occurs twice yearly.

Our stores are checked during our unannounced store audit programme to ensure the training has taken place. We also carry out mystery shopping exercises to all stores using 19 and 20 year olds to ensure they are using the Think 25 policy consistently.

5. Based on your experience of the voluntary ban, would you be in favour of a legal ban? If so, from which age?

Tesco would not be opposed to a legal ban, which would create a level playing field across the industry, as our policies are already in place. However, we would encourage the Government to keep the age restriction set at under 16 year olds, so that responsible retailers enforcing the ban on a voluntary basis are not penalised through needing to re-communicate to and retrain colleagues.

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