

Written evidence submitted by Asda (END0039)

Thank you for asking for Asda's input into your inquiry. Our answers are below.

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

Ans: It was a decision by the Chief Executive because it seemed the right thing to do. We were being approached by campaigners and teacher unions who were pointing out the problems being caused to and by under-16s of over-consumption of these products. From the limited data we had, we believed that we did sell quite a lot of these products to under-16s but concluded that if they were causing the problems highlighted to us, then we should take that financial hit and prevent sales to under-16s.

2. How have you enforced the ban?

Ans: We have used an "age check" process rather than "challenge 25". Our thinking was that if we used challenge 25 the age-range was too great as we were only trying to prevent sales to children aged 15 or less. The "age check" process is used for other non-18 age-restricted goods such as DVDs. As well as the prompt on the till, we have point of sale material explaining the policy and have training for our colleague on check-outs.

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

Ans: The most difficult aspect is that the products don't have an age limit on their packaging. By contrast the DVDs say that they are 12 or 15, so our colleagues know what age is permissible. That isn't the case with these products. If it becomes law, it would be very helpful to insist on this on future packs. There is also the issue that most 16 and 17 year olds don't usually carry proof of age cards, so in reality we may have refused sales to many in that age bracket too.

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

Ans: We have various programmes of test purchases which we use on all age-related sales items.

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

Ans: We would be very happy with a legal ban accompanied by clear labelling. We are not medical experts but at the time of our ban (Jan 2018) the experts were asking us to implement an under-16 ban, presumably based on the evidence that they have.

August 2018