

Written evidence submitted by Sainsbury's (END0040)

1. In January 2018, we made the decision to voluntarily restrict the sale of high-caffeine energy drinks to children under the age of 16. As of 1st March 2018, the sale of these products has been restricted across all Sainsbury's stores and through our website. Sainsbury's takes our responsibilities as a retailer very seriously and we have a strong track record in helping our customers to live healthier lives, including children. Our own brand high-caffeine energy drinks have always been clearly labelled as not suitable for children. The decision to roll out a voluntary ban on the sale of energy drinks to under 16s was taken with this in mind.
2. As of 1st March 2018, the sale of these products has been restricted across all Sainsbury's stores and through our website. Sainsbury's was one of the first retailers to introduce a 'Challenge 25' approach throughout our grocery and groceries online businesses to prevent the underage sale of alcohol and tobacco. We have been able to draw on that experience and use many of the same robust training exercises and procedures – such as prompts on tills - to make sure all of our required colleagues are implementing our voluntary ban on the sale of high-caffeine energy drinks to children under the age of 16 successfully.
3. As part of the voluntary ban we have put in a number of measures specific to high-caffeine energy drinks, including an internal policy which details our procedure for any new products we list. At the time of implementation communications were sent to stores to ensure all colleagues were made aware of the change, a Q&A was written for our Careline advisers and we have provided customer notices both at our customer service desks and via in-aisle barker cards.
4. Overall we believe the voluntary ban has been implemented successfully and we have had very few negative responses from colleagues and customers. We operate a digital refusal register which tracks the refusal to sell all age restricted products across the business which also covers the sale of high-caffeine energy drinks to under-16s. As part of our internal process we have a weekly review of the challenge process implemented by our staff across all age restricted products which would highlight any specific trends or patterns occurring across the business. There are also regular store level store manager checks to verify that the age related sales process is robust.
5. Sainsbury's takes our responsibilities as a retailer very seriously and this is the case with our approach to the sale of high-caffeine energy drinks to children. Our decision to introduce a voluntary ban on the sale of high-caffeine energy drinks to children under the age of 16 was taken with this in mind and was right for our business. It is for the Government to decide if further measures are required.

August 2018