

Written evidence submitted by Boots (END0042)

Please find Boots response to the Select Committee's queries:

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

Evidence suggests that excessive consumption of energy drinks by children is linked to negative health outcomes; affecting children's physical and mental health. As the UK's leading pharmacy-led health and beauty retailer, we believe that Boots UK has a role to play in helping everyone tackle obesity and lead a healthier lifestyle and therefore in March 2018, we introduced a voluntary ban on children below the age of 16 purchasing energy drinks from Boots stores in the UK and the Republic of Ireland. We were one of the first non-food retailers to introduce a voluntary ban in the UK and one of only 2 retailers in the Republic of Ireland.

2. How have you enforced the ban?

All relevant staff in our stores which sell food, were briefed as to why we wanted to introduce the ban and their responsibilities to enforce the ban. This was supplemented with point of sale information stating we will not sell these products to anyone below the age of 16.

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

Overall our experience has been positive.

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

Products classed as energy drinks are categorised in our system. When scanned, either at our manned or self-service tills, a clear notification, both audible and visible, appears on the screen. The sale cannot proceed until our store colleagues use challenge 25 procedures to authorise or refuse the sale. We are very used to selling other restricted items such as alcohol, knives and e-cigarettes, using challenge 25 procedures.

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

We currently have a voluntary ban on the sale of energy drinks to children under the age of 16 however we would support a legal ban at 18, if that is the conclusion of the government's ongoing consultation.

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