



Department for
Business, Energy
& Industrial Strategy

Margot James MP

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Dear Mr. Dodds

Thank you for your letter dated 8 March to the Rt Hon Greg Clark MP, about the potential to implement a ban on the retail sale of fireworks. I am replying as this matter falls within my Ministerial portfolio.

Thank you for letting me know the views of the Tyne & Wear Trading Standards Joint Committee.

I was pleased to hear that Trading Standards are working closely with the fire and rescue and police services in Tyne and Wear to raise awareness of responsible firework use and to enforce fireworks legislation.

I appreciate the Joint Committee's concern about the irresponsible use of fireworks in Tyne and Wear. There is already legislation, which regulates the use of fireworks, both by the general public and professional display operators. Restrictions on the sale and use of fireworks are required under the Fireworks Regulations 2004 and the Pyrotechnic Articles (Safety) Regulations 2015. These contain provisions to minimise the risk of fireworks harming people, property and animals. A complete ban on the purchase and use of fireworks by the general public has been carefully considered in the past. Although a small minority of people continue to use fireworks in a dangerous, inconsiderate or anti-social manner, the evidence is that the majority use them sensibly and responsibly and as such a complete ban would not be proportionate.

A ban on the sale of fireworks to the general public could also lead to the illegal production and sale of potentially dangerous home-made fireworks. Rather than a blanket ban on their domestic use, the Government believes that an ongoing programme of public education on the dangers of fireworks, and enforcement of existing health and safety legislation, will further reduce accidents and nuisance.

I share the Committee's concern over assaults on firefighters. Any assaults against the emergency services, including those where fireworks are involved, are completely unacceptable, and are already a criminal offence.

I believe that the current Regulations strike the right balance between the enjoyment of fireworks by the public and restricting the sale and use of fireworks for public safety reasons.

The best way to continue to reduce the number of accidents is to work with industry, retailers and others, to promote the safe and responsible use of fireworks through guidance and public education, and to ensure that appropriate action is taken against those that break the rules.

I hope you find this response helpful and will share it with members of the Joint Committee.

Best wishes
Margot

MARGOT JAMES MP

Minister for Small Business, Consumers & Corporate Responsibility