



Department for
Business, Energy
& Industrial Strategy

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Industrial Strategy

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Dear Councillor Williamson,

Thank you for your letter of 11 December to the Rt Hon Alok Sharma MP, on behalf of Group Leaders and Members of the Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council, regarding fireworks. The Secretary of State is grateful to you for having taken the time to write. I have been asked to respond on his behalf.

Thank you for sharing the Council's Resolution on Fireworks. This Department has noted with interest the work that has been undertaken by the Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service to reduce anti-social behaviour linked to fireworks and bonfires and by Local Trading Standards officers to ensure compliance with existing legal requirements on the sale of fireworks.

The Government understands the concerns that some people have about the potential for distress to be caused by fireworks to individuals and animals and I would like to reassure you it takes the issues associated with the sale and use of fireworks seriously.

There is a comprehensive regulatory framework already in place for fireworks that aims to reduce the risks and disturbances to people and animals. Existing legislation controls the sale, availability and use of fireworks, as well as setting a curfew and noise limit.

The Police have powers to tackle the improper possession and use of fireworks as well as anti-social behaviour should it occur.

We note the Council's resolution in support of a noise limit of 90 decibels. As you may be aware, current legislation limits noise from fireworks available to consumers to a maximum of 120 decibels. The Office for Product Safety and Standards is carrying out research on the different levels of noise associated with different types of firework and will consider the outcome once available.

You may also be interested to know that in its 2019 inquiry into fireworks, the House of Commons Petitions Committee concluded that it could not support a ban on the sale of fireworks to the public. Their reasoning identified the potential for unintended consequences that would be counterproductive for public safety, such as individuals sourcing illegal and unsafe products online. The National Fire Chiefs Council also agreed with this conclusion.

The Petitions Committee's conclusion aligns with the Government's own position.

The Government remains committed to promoting the safe and considerate use of fireworks through an effective legislative framework and through non-legislative measures – an action also recommended by the Petitions Committee. Recent actions taken by this Department include:

- running a public awareness campaign for the 2020 fireworks season, working with stakeholders, such as the RSPCA and other animal welfare organisations, to share messaging across differing audiences;
- engaging with animal charities on animal welfare issues;
- engaging with Local Authorities to understand the issues they face with regards to fireworks.

Whilst I appreciate this response may not necessarily allay all the concerns that have been raised with you by residents in the Wirral, the Government receives representations from a wide range of stakeholders, including members of the public, organisations and charities, all with ranging views on what the issues are and what action they would like to see.

Yours sincerely,

U.Fatania
BEIS CORRESPONDENCE UNIT