

Lee Waters AS/MS
Y Dirprwy Weinidog Newid Hinsawdd
Deputy Minister for Climate Change



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1172
Ein cyf/Our ref LW/10808/21

Jack Sargeant MS
Chair – Petitions Committee
Senedd Cymru
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1SN
petitions@senedd.wales

24 August 2021

Dear Jack,

Thank you for your letter of 22 July regarding Petition P-06-1172, calling for a ban on fireworks for public sale. I am replying as representations on this matter tend to focus on noise, which falls within the Climate Change portfolio.

The Welsh Government is very concerned about the effect of loud firework noise on animals and vulnerable people. In November of last year, both the First Minister and the then Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs spoke about this issue in the Senedd. In those exchanges, cross-party support was voiced for tightening regulations in this area.

In responding to this petition I must point out that fireworks come in many shapes and sizes. They range from sparklers and quiet garden fireworks to the very largest fireworks, which are only suitable for professional use. When used responsibly, they all bring pleasure to a great many people. However, when used irresponsibly or without providing advance warning, loud fireworks cause distress and anxiety to vulnerable people and animals. On balance, the Welsh Government does not believe the current legislation is sufficient to adequately protect those groups.

Powers to regulate the sale and use of fireworks in England and Wales exist under the Fireworks Act 2003. These powers currently sit with UK Government Ministers, specifically the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS).

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1SN

Gohebiaeth.Lee.Waters@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Lee.Waters@gov.wales

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

In 2020 Welsh Government Ministers wrote to BEIS, endorsing House of Commons Petitions Committee recommendations to improve fireworks regulations. Then in early 2021 Lesley Griffiths MS met with Ministers responsible for fireworks policy in the UK and Scottish Governments. There they discussed the merits of tightening the regulations around fireworks across Great Britain. Following this meeting, the Welsh Government wrote again to the responsible BEIS Minister, Paul Scully MP, urging UK Government action. Once again we said we would like to see a reduced maximum decibel limit to reduce risks to animal health.

In the absence of a UK Government commitment to tighten the rules, we raised the question of transferring functions to Welsh Ministers. This would enable us to make the regulations we consider appropriate for Wales. However, we recognise the proximity of Wales' most populated areas to shops in England, and the ease of shopping online. Therefore, we would ideally like to see concerted action across Great Britain. We want the fireworks available to people in Wales to be quieter and used at more predictable times in future. To this end, we would like to see tighter regulations apply on both sides of the border. Joined-up action across Great Britain would help us to send clear, consistent messages to the public. It would also make it harder for people to get around geographically limited restrictions on sales introduced by a single administration.

I trust this shows the Welsh Government takes this issue seriously and has been pressing for improvements in this area.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lee Waters', with a long vertical stroke extending upwards from the top of the signature.

Lee Waters AS/MS
Y Dirprwy Weinidog Newid Hinsawdd
Deputy Minister for Climate Change