



## Online & Home Electrical Safety

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Department for Digital, Culture,  
Media and Sport  
100 Parliament Street  
London | SW1A 2BQ

Rt Hon Kwasi Kwarteng MP  
Department for Business,  
Energy and Industrial Strategy  
1 Victoria Street  
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Dear Secretary of State,

1<sup>st</sup> July 2022

### **Regulating the sale of unsafe goods on online marketplaces**

We are writing to you regarding the need for better regulation of online marketplaces. At present, consumers are not afforded the same protections when they are shopping on an online marketplace as they are when shopping on the high street. Indeed, online marketplaces are not recognised as actors in the supply chain, and so have no responsibility for ensuring the safety of products advertised and sold on their platforms.

Research from organisations including Electrical Safety First, the British Toy and Hobby Association, and Which? have consistently found unsafe products being sold on online marketplaces. This is further evidenced by the Office for Product Safety and Standards' (OPSS) own research<sup>i</sup>.

Furthermore, an investigation by the National Audit Office (NAO) found that 'there are gaps in regulators powers to regulate online marketplaces'<sup>ii</sup>. Similarly, a House of Commons' Public Accounts Committee (PAC) report found that online marketplaces were a 'significant source of potential product safety harm'<sup>iii</sup>.

Indeed, OPSS' own CEO, Graham Russell, has himself said that 'there is too much evidence of non-compliant products being sold by third party sellers [on online marketplaces]'<sup>iv</sup>. However, since this comment from OPSS in November 2021, the Government has taken no action to improve the safety of products sold on these platforms.

In that time, consumers continue to be placed at risk from unsafe products sold on online marketplaces. This is worsened by these platforms having no legal obligations to remove these products. For instance, despite one investigation finding unsafe products listed on Facebook Marketplace, Facebook failed to remove these products, which continued to be available to consumers<sup>v</sup>.

It is, therefore, crucial that the Government publish the Product Safety Consultation promised 'later this spring'<sup>vi</sup> and introduce new legislation that ensures that only safe products can be sold on online marketplaces. This would achieve the Government's ambitions of ensuring that only safe products are legally placed on the market now and in the future<sup>vii</sup> and that the UK is the safest place in the world to be online<sup>viii</sup>.

Without this legislation, consumers continue to be placed at risk every day. Consumers deserve equal protections regardless of where they are shopping.

Yours sincerely,

Yvonne Fovargue MP  
Darren Jones MP  
Carolyn Harris MP  
Rt Hon Sir Stephen Timms MP  
Rt Hon Sir George Howarth MP  
Clive Betts MP  
Mick Whitley MP  
Sir Tony Lloyd MP  
Kim Johnson MP  
Geraint Davies MP  
Ian Mearns MP  
Rosie Cooper MP  
Mohammed Yasin MP  
Emma Hardy MP  
Bob Blackman MP  
Rt Hon Sir Iain Duncan Smith MP  
Derek Thomas MP  
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Tim Loughton MP  
Sir Peter Bottomley MP  
Rt Hon Sir Ed Davey MP  
Daisy Cooper MP  
Sarah Olney MP  
Jamie Stone MP  
Wendy Chamberlain MP  
Helen Morgan MP  
John Nicolson MP  
Alison Thewliss MP  
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Alan Brown MP  
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Kenny MacAskill MP  
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Patricia Gibson MP  
Rt Hon Liz Saville Roberts MP  
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Jonathan Edwards MP  
Ben Lake MP  
Jim Shannon MP  
Baroness Jolly  
Baroness Walmsley  
Baroness Altmann CBE  
Baroness Hayter of Kentish Town  
Baroness Royall of Blaisdon PC  
Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick  
Baroness Healy of Primrose Hill  
Baroness Scott of Needham Market  
Baroness Kennedy of The Shaws QC  
Lord Tope CBE  
Lord Clement-Jones CBE  
Lord McNally PC  
Lord Fox  
Lord Dholakia OBE PC DL  
Lord Bradshaw  
Lord Campbell-Savours  
Lord Pendry PC  
Lord Foster of Bath  
Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth  
Lord Jones of Cheltenham  
Lord Goddard of Stockport

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<sup>1</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/941095/opss-delivery-report-2019-2020-annex-product-safety.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/941095/opss-delivery-report-2019-2020-annex-product-safety.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.nao.org.uk/press-release/protecting-consumers-from-unsafe-products/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://committees.parliament.uk/work/1292/protecting-consumers-from-unsafe-products/publications/77>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-issues-online-sales-product-safety-message>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.independent.co.uk/business/meta-fails-to-act-over-dangerous-goods-on-facebook-marketplace-charity-says-b2103629.html>

<sup>6</sup> <https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2022-03-29/debates/32AEC984-5AFF-42DD-BD3F-46425BC29D5C/BuildingSafetyBill>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/uk-product-safety-review-call-for-evidence>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/world-first-online-safety-laws-introduced-in-parliament>