



Rt Hon Oliver Dowden MP
Secretary of State
Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport
100 Parliament Street
London SW1A 2BQ

4 June 2020

Dear Secretary of State

Expected Online Harms Legislation

I write to you in my role as Chair of the APPG Online and Home Electrical Safety regarding the Government's expected Online Harms legislation.

This legislation was discussed at the most recent meeting of the APPG and there is cross-party agreement that the Government should consider including the sale of unsafe and counterfeit electrical and other such consumer goods on online marketplaces in the legislation. **We understand that there may be the intention to introduce a 'Duty of Care', and we firmly believe the legislation's remit must be broadened to include illegal and unsafe goods being sold online.**

This issue is an area that the APPG has been working on for some time, and I have attached a copy of our recent report "*The Sale of Electrical Products Online*". In order to better protect consumers, we believe online marketplaces need to take greater responsibility for the goods bought and sold on their sites, and implement mechanisms to help ensure that those goods are safe, whether new or second-hand.

Whilst the APPG focuses on electrical safety, we recognise this issue goes beyond that of electrical goods and covers many types of consumer products. I have recently spoken to other organisations in relation to this campaign. The Anti-Counterfeiting Group, British Toy & Hobby Association, Chartered Trading Standards Institute, Electrical Safety First, London Fire Brigade, National Fire Chiefs Council, Together Against Counterfeiting Alliance and Which? have all expressed to me their concerns around online sales.

The Online Harms legislation provides an opportunity to address this longstanding issue which we have already raised with the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and the Office for Product Safety and Standards. We believe that it presents a real opportunity for two government departments to work together and demonstrate effective collaboration and really deliver improved public safety at this time of increased risk.

I hope you agree that given the dangers presented by unsafe goods this issue must also be considered under the remit of this legislation. Indeed, it occurs to me that with an ever-increasing number of people shopping online and particularly as a result of having to stay at home for the Covid-19 lockdown, this is now more pressing than ever.



I look forward to hearing from you and trust that you will give serious consideration to improving the upcoming Online Harms legislation in order to prevent the sale of unsafe goods online and to better protect UK consumers. I would also welcome an opportunity to meet with you, along with a small delegation of stakeholders, to discuss this matter further.

Yours sincerely

Carolyn Harris MP
APPG Chair
Swansea East

Rt. Hon. Sir Iain Duncan Smith MP
Chingford & Woodford Green

Yvonne Fovargue MP
Makerfield

Gerald Jones MP
Merthyr Tydfil & Rhymney

Margaret Ferrier MP
Rutherglen & Hamilton West

Lord Graham Tope

Jim Shannon MP
Strangford

Lesley Rudd
Chief Executive
Electrical Safety First

Phil Lewis
Director General
The Anti-Counterfeiting Group
Also representing Together Against
Counterfeiting Alliance

Natasha Crookes
Director of Public Affairs and
Communications
British Toy & Hobby Association



Sue Davies
Head of Food and Consumer Protections
Which?

Leon Livermore
Chief Executive
Chartered Trading Standards Institute

Charlie Pugsley
Deputy Assistant Commissioner
London Fire Brigade

Neil Odin
Prevention Lead
National Fire Chiefs Council

CC: **Paul Scully MP**,
Minister for Small Business, Consumers and Labour Markets

