

PE1687/B

Minister for Small Business, Consumers and Corporate Responsibility of 8 June 2018

Thank you for your letter of 16 May, about the petition PE1687 on regulation of fireworks displays in Scotland.

The Government is aware of concerns about the distress noisy fireworks can cause to individuals, livestock, pets and wildlife particularly around fireworks displays in rural locations. We consider that if users follow the correct and sensible use of fireworks combined with owners of animals taking certain precautions, these can help to avoid or reduce any detrimental effects. Although a small number of people use fireworks in a dangerous, inconsiderate or anti-social manner, we believe that most people use fireworks with consideration and common sense.

As you are aware, the use and discharge of fireworks is a devolved matter and comes under the Fireworks (Scotland) Regulations 2004 and there are a number of powers which allow for the restrictions on the use of fireworks. Under the Scotland Act 1998, the regulation of the sale and supply of goods and services to consumers and product safety and liability is reserved. The regulation of these matters is covered by the Fireworks Regulations 2004 and the Pyrotechnic Articles (Safety) Regulations 2015, which are the responsibility of this department.

There are strict guidelines in place for the private use of fireworks, and legal penalties for individuals who use them irresponsibly. The existing legislation limits the sale of fireworks, provides specific curfews for their use, sets maximum allowable noise levels and sets strict penalties, including possible imprisonment, in certain circumstances.

I hope you will agree with me that the Westminster Hall debate in January on the issue of fireworks was an opportunity for the views of the House to be heard, with many Members contributing to a lively and informed debate. My officials are in the process of setting up a meeting with interested MPs to hear their views in more detail.

I understand, it is possible that issues may still arise in terms of private fireworks displays in rural locations, but I would suggest that the Scottish Government and local agencies work together to identify what measures can be adopted within the current devolution settlement to tackle any issues.

I believe the best way to continue to reduce the distress caused by fireworks 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 this information is helpful.