



Petitions Committee

Press release: 04.11.19

Petitions Committee Report: MPs demand action against irresponsible fireworks use

STRICTLY EMBARGOED UNTIL 00:01 Tuesday 5 November
[Embargoed copy of full report attached]

"Inconsiderate and irresponsible use of fireworks should be considered as socially unacceptable as drink driving."

The Petitions Committee has today launched its landmark report calling on the Government to take action on irresponsible fireworks use and improve industry regulation.

Over the last three years, petitions calling for tighter restrictions on the sale and use of fireworks have been signed more than 750,000 times by UK citizens, resulting in three debates in the House of Commons.

But the Government's responses to these petitions, and Ministers' replies to the debates, left petitioners feeling frustrated and ignored. We undertook this inquiry to hear their concerns and propose changes in response to them.

One petition that received more than 307,000 signatories called for the Government to "Ban the sale of fireworks to the public. Displays for licenced venues only." However our investigation found that banning fireworks could have unintended consequences for community groups and the good causes they support, the wider economy, and may even lead to a dangerous black market.

While the Petitions Committee doesn't support calls for an outright ban, the Committee inquiry found clear evidence that action is needed to protect animals and some groups of people from serious adverse effects.

The report recommendations come following consultations with groups including people with a wide range of health conditions and disabilities and organisations that support them, military veterans and animal rights charities. The inquiry also collected evidence from the RSPCA, the British Fireworks Association, the National Police Chiefs Council, and the National Fire Chiefs Council.

The recommendations were made after listening to all sides of the debate through formal evidence from a number of interest groups during the inquiry and in public consultation events, and it was clear to see that these petitions have been motivated by

genuine concerns. Fireworks can be detrimental to animal welfare, can impact the wellbeing of those with disabilities or health conditions such as PTSD or autism, and could pose a risk to small children – particularly when the products look like toys.

Key recommendations made in the report include:

- The Government and agencies must collate and publish data on problems associated with fireworks in a consistent way, to facilitate local responses.
- Legislation must be introduced to empower local authorities to tackle this issue head on, so permits can be introduced in communities where the irresponsible use of fireworks is a particular problem for residents.
- Many consumer fireworks are packaged in a way that will appeal to children – creating a risk that children could be tempted to play or tamper with fireworks stored in the home. The Government should act swiftly to remove this risk through new packaging regulations.
- The Government needs to review the decibel level limit of consumer fireworks, with animal welfare in mind, with a view to setting a workable reduced decibel limit that would diminish the risks to animals' health.
- The Government should act quickly to close a loophole around the storage by retailers of up to 5kg of fireworks without a licence. It should also conduct a review of online sales of fireworks, particularly over social media, establishing a strategy to tackle illegal online sales.
- The Government must fund and coordinate major, national awareness campaigns, from October 2020 and annually thereafter, on responsible use of fireworks to raise awareness of the dangers of fireworks for those with health conditions such as PTSD or Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Chair of the Petitions Committee, Helen Jones MP, said: *"Our inquiry has shone a light on the troubling human impact of failing to regulate the fireworks industry effectively. From affecting the mental health of veterans, to harming animal welfare, and even threatening the health of young children, the consequences are widespread.*

"It is not good enough for the Government to repeatedly claim that the law protects these people and animals from harm. It does not. Now is the time for action, not apathy.

"While we do not support a ban on public sales and use of fireworks, further failure to act from the Government and agencies could mean that a ban becomes the only option."

The Petitions Committee have submitted the report for consideration, and expect to receive a response from the Government in the new Parliament.

Notes to editors

- The Committee's report on Fireworks is published on the Committee's website and will be made available [here](#).
- The Fireworks inquiry page is available [here](#)
- Please note that during Dissolution of Parliament - starting on 6 November, all select committees, including the Petitions Committee, cease to exist. Until the committees are reappointed in the new Parliament following the General Election on 12 December, there are no chairs or members of committees.
- The Government will not be able to respond to this report during a dissolution of Parliament. Therefore any response to this inquiry will need to come from a future Government.
- For news and updates follow the Petitions Committee on Twitter [@HoCPetitions](#). Find further information on Petitions Committee, including details of how the Committee handles e-petitions, at: www.parliament.uk/petitions. To unsubscribe from these emails, please contact: hocmediacorporate@parliament.uk.
- The Petitions Committee is set up by the House of Commons to look at e-petitions and public (paper) petitions. It can:
 - ask for more information in writing—from petitioners, the Government, or other relevant people or organisations
 - ask for more information in person—from petitioners, the Government, or other relevant people or organisations. This might be in Parliament or somewhere else in the UK
 - write to the Government or another public body to press for action on a petition
 - ask another parliamentary committee to look into the topic raised by a petition
 - put forward petitions for debate in the House of Commons
- The Committee is currently made up of [11 backbench Members of Parliament](#) from Government and Opposition parties. The number of seats each party has is calculated to reflect the membership of the House as a whole. The Chair of the Committee [was elected](#) on 12 July 2017. The members of the Committee are:
 - Helen Jones (Chair) - Labour
 - Martyn Day - Scottish National Party
 - Michelle Donelan - Conservative
 - Steve Double - Conservative
 - Luke Hall - Conservative
 - Mike Hill - Labour
 - Catherine McKinnell - Labour
 - Damien Moore - Conservative
 - Paul Scully - Conservative
 - Liz Twist - Labour
 - Daniel Zeichner – Labour

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