

*From Anna Soubry MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Public Health*



POC4_800734

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James Lowman
Chief Executive
Association of Convenience Stores Ltd
Federation House
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Dear James,

Underage Access to Butane Cigarette Lighter Refills

Under the Cigarette Lighter Refill (Safety) Regulations 1999 the sale of butane refills to under 18s was prohibited. However, since that legislation was passed 64 children have died from inhaling butane cigarette lighter refills. I believe that your members can help to reduce the number of these deaths and I am writing to you to seek your help in making changes happen.

No major supermarkets display Butane refill products on the shop floor, and many are considering a limit on sales of the product to 1 tin per customer, with Morrisons already imposing this limit. Did you know that an individual smoking 20 cigarettes a day would only need to purchase one 250ml tin of this product per year? Reports into volatile substance misuse suggest people can use up to 20 refill tins a day. It is important that your members are aware of this and I hope they will agree to take responsible action to limit multiple sales. Furthermore your members could reduce the risk of children illegally accessing these products by removing them from shop floors where they are they are more accessible to shoplifters.

I hope you will agree that these deaths are avoidable and your members could play a key role in improving children's safety with some small changes to the way they handle these products.

If you would like further information to assist in putting the case to your members please contact my officials in the Drug and Alcohol branch:
Ray.Smith@DH.gsi.gov.uk or 02079724460.

with all good wishes,

As

ANNA SOUBRY MP