



Craig Whittaker MP

CALDER VALLEY

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Fireworks, Animals and Public Safety

Thank you for contacting me about fireworks.

I appreciate your concern about the use of fireworks. While many people enjoy their use on special occasions I know others do not like them. Fireworks can of course be very dangerous and I am glad the use and sale of them is controlled. Events where fireworks are used should be well planned and safety should be paramount.

Firework regulations allow fireworks for home use to be sold during the traditional firework periods of Bonfire Night, New Year's Eve, Chinese New Year and Diwali. Suppliers who wish to sell fireworks outside the traditional periods must comply with stringent conditions before being granted a licence by their local licensing authority. This means the availability and use of fireworks outside the traditional periods has been greatly reduced.

I understand concerns about the distress noisy fireworks can cause to pets, livestock and wildlife. This is one of the reasons that there is a noise level limit of 120 decibels on fireworks for home use. The Government recognises, however, that even at this level fireworks noise can be distressing to some animals and refer owners to advice on keeping animals safe during fireworks periods. This is freely available from animal charities, such as the Blue Cross which gives both general and species-specific advice on its website.

I know that, regrettably, both children and adults suffer injuries during the fireworks season, mainly as a result of misuse and carelessness. However, following campaigns on firework safety over the years, and the wide availability of advice and guidance on their safe and considerate use, fireworks-related injuries have fallen to about 1,000 per year.

Police are able to issue penalty notices to persons aged 16 and over for a range of offences related to the misuse of fireworks. These include throwing fireworks, possession of a firework designated only for displays, possession by a person under 18 of an adult firework and breach of the fireworks curfew.

In addition, there is Government-sponsored advice and guidance on the safe and considerate use of fireworks on the Safer Fireworks website.

The regulations also created a curfew preventing the use of fireworks between 11pm and 7am all year round with the exception of 5 November, when the curfew starts at 12 midnight, and New Year's Eve, Chinese New Year and Diwali, when the curfew starts at 1.00 am on the night of celebration.

Excessive noise from fireworks, or noise during the curfew period, can be considered a statutory nuisance and local authority environmental health officers have the power to investigate complaints of fireworks noise and act to prevent it where appropriate.

Although there is some use of fireworks outside the traditional periods, the Government believes that the majority of people who use fireworks do so at the appropriate times of year and have a sensible and responsible attitude towards them. There are no plans at the moment to place further limitations on their use.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Craig Whittaker', with a stylized flourish at the end.

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