

The Rt Honourable Kemi Badenoch MP  
Department for Business and Trade  
1 Victoria Street  
London  
SW1H 0ET

8<sup>th</sup> March 2023

Dear Secretary of State,

**Impact of Delayed Publication of Product Safety Review – Consumers at Risk from  
Legislative Vacuum**

The Product Safety Review was promised in spring 2022 but has yet to be published. The Review is, amongst other things, expected to contain proposals that protect people from purchasing dangerous products from online marketplaces. While the Review has been delayed, multiple investigations have continued to highlight the risks faced by unsuspecting consumers purchasing dangerous goods online.

The rise in online shopping has been accompanied by a sharp increase in the number of dangerous and unsafe goods available from online marketplaces - supplied by third-party sellers. This growing problem has been exacerbated by unscrupulous sellers' exploitation of the cost-of-living crisis and an accelerated shift toward online shopping following the Covid-19 pandemic. Yet while we wait for the outcome of the Review – and any proposals it offers – consumers are put at risk daily:

- Electrical Safety First recently found highly dangerous e-bike chargers for sale via the most popular online marketplaces - [nearly 60 listings](#) all failed to meet basic safety standards. This is particularly concerning due to the risk associated with substandard charging devices powering lithium-ion batteries. In the event of a fire occurring from the charger, its close proximity to the e-bike battery could cause a ferocious and devastating fire in the home if the battery is then ignited.

- Over the last year Which? tests have uncovered a wide range of dangerous, and in many cases illegal, products being sold on online marketplaces including ‘energy-saving’ devices, baby carriers, Christmas lights, electric blankets, mini plug-in heaters and more. Despite this evidence being shared with the government, regulators and the online marketplaces, hundreds of identical-looking products remain available online, showing the industry’s approach is failing consumers.
- The British Toy & Hobby Association’s latest [investigation](#) found that 90% of the 40 toys purchased from third party sellers on online marketplaces failed independent testing against the Toys (Safety) Regulations. One toy had 152 times the legal limit of a restricted phthalate that can cause adverse health effects. A still on sale search was also conducted for the 101 notified lines to the UK Unsafe Product Report from the Association’s 2021 study, with 65 seemingly identical lines found on sale.
- Between May 2022 and February 2023, Brent & Harrow Trading Standards removed 625 listings from an online marketplace for skin lightening products claiming to be cosmetics that contained various corticosteroids. These steroid creams are available on prescription only and as such are actually unlicensed medicines. Some of the creams contained double the amount of active steroid ingredients than what are legally allowed in UK prescription products. In addition, they also removed 152 listings for skin lightening cosmetic products containing a prohibited ingredient – Hydroquinone, the biological equivalent of paint stripper.
- The Ladder Association found that [82% of surveyed ladders](#) purchased from a range of shops, with an emphasis on online marketplaces, were not compliant with required safety standards. These faults greatly increase the risk from a fall from height when using the product.

The proliferation of dangerous goods sold via online platforms has arisen through a legislative gap – the absence of adequate safety regulations for online marketplaces. Unlike the traditional high street store, online marketplaces are not recognised as actors in the supply chain, so the General Product Safety Regulations 2005 does not apply to them. Consequently, they have no responsibility for preventing unsafe goods sold on their platforms, and no legal obligation to inform consumers if they have purchased unsafe goods.

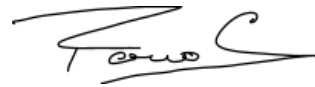
In the spring of 2022, we were informed that the Product Safety Review was imminent. Almost a year on, we are still waiting – and consumers are being put at risk every day. We urge the government to immediately release the Product Safety Review and address the sale of dangerous goods from online marketplaces once and for all. Further delays are unacceptable and may have serious or even fatal consequences.

Yours Sincerely,



**Electrical  
Safety First** 

Lesley Rudd  
Chief Executive  
Electrical Safety First



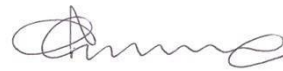
**Which?**

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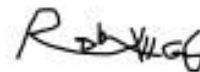
**ctsi** Chartered Trading  
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The Ladder Association



Kent Fire &  
Rescue Service

together

Ann Millington  
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Chair of the London Safety Group  
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