



All Party Parliamentary Group on Home Electrical Safety  
Call for Evidence

## Terms of Reference

**The Home Electrical Safety All Party Parliamentary Group is pleased to announce a call for evidence concerning Product Recall and electrical product safety in the UK.**

### 1. Purpose

This call for evidence is intended to help provide potential workable solutions which can be represented to the Department for Business, Innovation and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) on electrical product safety in the UK. This follows a very successful meeting in December with the Minister, Margot James MP, in attendance.

There have been many reviews and reports on the current situation with product safety, particularly in regards to Brexit. At this stage there has been sufficient assessment of the current landscape to show that there are many failings in the current product safety system, particularly recently with the BEIS Parliamentary Select Committee undertaking a one-off session on product safety and several Parliamentary debates

What this investigation proposes, through stakeholder contribution, is to take stock and propose a series of concrete solutions from stakeholders that can be summarised in a short report and sent to Margot James MP, Minister for Consumers at BEIS.

### 2. Background

Whilst the UK enjoys one of the best product safety regimes in Europe, there is still significant room for improvement, which has been highlighted by recent tragic events and several high-profile product recall actions that have been largely ineffective. Public recognition of the risks has also been growing, in particular those posed by “white goods” – appliances at the heart of domestic life, which are either always switched on or used on a daily basis.

The UK product recall system was the subject of a major review, led by Lynn Faulds Wood and published in February 2016<sup>1</sup>, and subsequently the Minister for Small Business, Consumers and Corporate Responsibility, Margot James, requested a report on Product Recalls and Safety from a

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/consumer-product-recall-review>

working group of the same name<sup>2</sup>. These reviews identified many failings and proposed a number of recommendations to improve the efficacy of product recalls and similar safety actions, but since publication there is so far little sign that the recommendations have been taken on board, and therefore millions of potentially unsafe appliances remain in unsuspecting homes.

Additionally, there is concern over the effectiveness of the product safety enforcement regime for protecting the public, due largely in part to cuts to trading standards services but also potential need for new legislation to tackle safety issues associated with the rise of internet sales.

The internet has provided a new sales platform for counterfeit, second-hand and substandard electrical products. This further puts the public at risk and undermines legitimate brands and retailers.

Finally, there has been growing public concern over the safety of domestic fridge freezers, focusing in particular on the non-flame retardant material on the backs of some fridge freezers. Typically made of highly flammable material, fridge freezers with these types of back have been identified by bodies such as the London Fire Brigade<sup>3</sup> as posing a serious safety risk, significantly accelerating the rapid spread and severity of any fire involving the appliance. This risk can be mitigated by enclosing the entire back of fridge freezers in fire resistant material to limit the spread of fire, but at present there is no universal means for consumers to identify which appliances have this type of protective measure.

This call for evidence is intended to inform a report covering the above issues and to provide clear, achievable recommendations for improvement.

### 3. Questions

The group has agreed to examine and invite written submissions on any or all of the following questions:

1. **Product Recall.** Given the recent assessments of the problems affecting consumer product recall, such as the Lynn Faulds-Wood review and Working Group report, do you agree that insufficient progress has been made, and what steps would provide effective and achievable remedies?
2. **General Electrical Product Safety.** Besides product recall, what do you consider to be the most significant risks to consumers posed by domestic electrical products, and how could these most effectively be mitigated?
3. **Brexit and Product Safety impacts:** After Britain leaves the EU, what challenges and opportunities do you envisage for providing a product safety system that will protect

---

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/report-to-margot-james>

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.london-fire.gov.uk/news/LatestNewsReleases\\_gaping-hole-in-fridge-freezer-safety.asp](http://www.london-fire.gov.uk/news/LatestNewsReleases_gaping-hole-in-fridge-freezer-safety.asp)

consumers. What needs to be protected in terms of electrical safety and what must the UK Government need to improve in terms of legislation after the UK leaves the EU?

4. **Fridge / Freezer safety marking:** How effective would a consumer-orientated marking or logo for identifying fridge freezers fitted with a flame retardant back, safety tested to an agreed standard, be in the current UK market? What would need to be considered for any such scheme?

#### **4. Conditions and confidentiality**

Submissions will be included in the report. The APPG reserves the rights to reference the content of all submissions in future reports and publications and/or to use them as case studies.

If you wish the information that you provide to be treated as confidential please state so clearly in writing when you send your submission.

#### **5. Responding to the Call for Evidence**

The APPG welcomes submissions of evidence from as wide a range of organisations and respondents as possible. Electrical Safety First is acting as the Secretariat of the group and will collate and draft the report.

If you make a submission of evidence to the APPG, please ensure that:

- You state clearly who the submission is from, i.e. whether from yourself in a personal capacity or sent on behalf of an organisation.
- You include a brief description of yourself/your organisation.

#### **6. Submissions**

The Committee invites written submissions from interested parties on the questions set out above by the **23<sup>rd</sup> of February 2018**.

Please send submissions to [William.Wright@Electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk](mailto:William.Wright@Electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk)