

Energy Drinks consultation

Should businesses be prohibited from selling high-caffeine energy drinks to children?

Yes. Energy drinks are potentially playing a role in the obesity crisis. A link between energy drink consumption and sedentary behaviour has been noted in some studies and sugar sweetened beverage consumption is linked with diabetes, dental decay and increased BMI in young people. (1) Obese children are more likely to consume energy drinks than healthy weight children. (2) The significant additional health impacts, physical and mental, associated with energy drink consumption related to caffeine including increased blood pressure, sleep disturbance, headache and stomach-aches all warrant further action.

The EFSA data indicates that adolescents aged 10-18 are by far the greatest consumer of these drinks despite health concerns.(3) It also highlighted that young people in UK consumed more energy drinks on average than their counterparts across the other EU countries.(3)

(1) SACN. Carbohydrates and Health (2015)

(2) Visram, S et al. Consumption of energy drinks by children and young people: a rapid review examining evidence of physical effects and consumer attitudes (2016) BMJ Open 6: e010380

(3) Visram, S and Hashem, K. Energy drinks: what's the evidence? 21st July 2016. Food Research Collaboration Policy Brief.

Are there any other approaches that you think should be implemented instead of, or as well as a prohibition on sales of energy drinks to children, in order to address the issue of excess consumption of energy drinks by children?

Yes measures should be taken to restrict the marketing of these drinks in a way that makes them attractive or desirable to children/adolescents such as via cartoon style adverts, social media, you tube, celebrity endorsements. There should be no sponsorship or hosting of events, sports events or competitions aimed at children by energy drinks companies. (1)

(1) (1) Visram, S and Hashem, K. Energy drinks: what's the evidence? 21st July 2016. Food Research Collaboration Policy Brief.

What age limit would be most appropriate for a prohibition on sales of energy drinks to children?

We believe that 18 is the most appropriate age.

Article 1 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child uses 18 as the upper boundary of childhood and article 24 outlines that States Parties recognise the right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health. It goes on at article 36 to state that States Parties shall protect the child against all other forms of exploitation prejudicial to any aspects of the child's welfare.

Eighteen is already recognised as the appropriate age for other health harming commodities such as alcohol and tobacco.

Should a prohibition on sales of energy drinks to children apply to all retailers who operate in England, including online businesses and the out of home sector?

Yes we think the prohibition should apply to all premises selling food and drink to the public and we will call on the Scottish Government to take the same action.

Should children be prevented from buying energy drinks from vending machines?

Yes

If children are prevented from buying energy drinks from vending machines, how would this be done?

- **All sales of energy drinks from all vending machines should be prohibited, regardless of age of the person buying them?**
- **Sales of energy drinks from vending machines should be subject to age restrictions, to be enforced by the businesses or organisation on whose property the vending machine is located**
- **All sales of energy drinks from vending machines should be prohibited in specific locations with high child footfall, for example educational establishments, sports centres and youth centres**
- **Other approach**

We believe that the first approach is the most appropriate approach and that such products should be prohibited from vending machines. This would be consistent with approaches for tobacco and alcohol and other age-restricted health harming products.

Options to child-proof tobacco vending machines were proposed by the tobacco industry before the ban on tobacco vending machines but these were deemed unsuitable and open to abuse. While tobacco vending machines were in operation staff responsible for the machines frequently failed to ask for ID. (1)

(1) ASH Briefing. Tobacco Vending Machines. December 2011.