

## Appendix 3



Department for  
Business & Trade



Office for Product  
Safety & Standards

# Consultation: The Fire Safety of Domestic Upholstered Furniture

## Response form

### Introduction

This consultation seeks your views on important reforms to how we regulate the fire safety of domestic upholstered furniture.

The proposals set out below reflect the policy aim to maintain a high level of fire safety while meaningfully reducing chemical flame retardant use. They reflect the large volume of stakeholder engagement and evidence gathering that has taken place over a number of years. The Government will:

- Introduce new furniture fire safety requirements based on a smoulder test.
- Pragmatic testing solutions to facilitate innovation.
- Proportionate scope adjustments.

The proposed policy remains subject to review and may change as a result of the evidence and views provided by stakeholders in response to this consultation.

Please return to: [furniturefiresafety@businessandtrade.gov.uk](mailto:furniturefiresafety@businessandtrade.gov.uk)

**Closing: 23:59 on 23 June**

### Confidentiality and data protection

DBT is committed to protecting the privacy and security of your information. Details on how we collect and process your personal data in accordance with data protection legislation when you respond to one of our public consultations are provided in the Confidentiality and data protection section of the [consultation document on GOV.UK](#). You can also read the [Public consultations privacy notice](#).

<b>Your Details</b>	
<b>1. Your name</b>	Siobhan Toland
<b>2. Your email address</b>	tolands@belfastcity.gov.uk
<b>3. Are you responding:</b>	
As an individual? Please go to 'Consultation Questions'	
On behalf of an organisation? Please continue	<b>X</b>
<b>4. Name of organisation</b>	Belfast City Council
<b>5. Number of employees</b>	
1 to 9	
10 to 49	
50 to 249	
250 or more	<b>X</b>
<b>6. Type of organisation</b>	
Business	
Trade Association	
Test House or Laboratory	
Consumer Body	
Local Authority	<b>X</b>
Fire and Rescue Service	
Government Body	
Other (Please specify)	

<b>Consultation Questions</b>	
1. Do you agree with the proposal to introduce reformed furniture fire safety sector legislation, based on a smoulder test?	
<b>Agree</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	
<b>Disagree</b>	
<b>You can provide comments in the space below.</b>	
<p>This proposed approach addresses the potential concerns of chemical flame retardants (CFR's) and their impact on health as there is evidence that they may migrate from products onto surfaces and into house dust as well as contributing to an increase in smoke toxicity. Furthermore, removing such chemicals should make furniture easier to recycle and re-use and for its safer disposal at end of life. It will also bring the UK into line with the legislative requirements already in place in the EU and USA.</p>	
2. Do you agree with the proposal to allow businesses to use composite/ representative sample testing or component testing to demonstrate compliance with the new regulations?	
<b>Agree</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	
<b>Disagree</b>	
<b>You can provide comments in the space below.</b>	
<p>The proposal allows flexibility for manufacturers to decide how they demonstrate their products are safe and compliant avoiding the burden of additional and often unnecessary testing. There should be clear, documented guidelines/standards for manufacturers that will define how to achieve and demonstrate compliance with either testing option. This clearly defined guidance would also provide for consistent enforcement encouraging a level playing field whilst also maintaining consumer safety.</p> <p>We are of the view that this would encourage innovation and future proof for advances in science and technology.</p>	

**3. Do you agree with the proposal to use the General Product Safety Regulations to regulate re-upholstery and repair of upholstered furniture?**

<b>Agree</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	
<b>Disagree</b>	

**You can provide comments in the space below.**

Re-upholsterers advised they would like clear advice as the guidance previously issued was confusing. Hence the provision of clear definitions and guidelines as to what constitutes upholstery, repair and a safe product under GPSR will reduce the risk of inadvertent non-compliance, support small businesses and enhance consumer safety and regulator confidence in product safety.

This is essential to support these small, often independent businesses and provide confidence to the public and regulators that the products are safe. It will also prevent any confusion or ambiguity from the outset for all stakeholders

The unique situation of NI having to be aligned to both EU and UK markets and legislative requirements needs to be taken into consideration as this is key to enforcement, the achievement of business compliance and will avoid any potential divergence issues.

**4. Do you agree with the proposal to use the General Product Safety Regulations to regulate second-hand upholstered furniture?**

<b>Agree</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	
<b>Disagree</b>	

**You can provide comments in the space below.**

Using the General Product Safety Regulations (GPSR) to regulate second-hand upholstered furniture is appropriate, provided clear and proportionate guidance is issued. This would protect consumers from unsafe products while recognising the practical challenges faced by charities, re-use organisations and small second-hand retailers. The increase in reliance on charity and second-hand shops was an issue already identified by the 11 Councils in Northern Ireland who have produced guidance for this sector, and we feel that having clear guidance/a checklist for second hand upholstered furniture would be extremely beneficial as clear criteria for assessing safety will be essential to support compliance and consistent enforcement.

The unique situation of NI having to be aligned to both EU and UK markets and legislative requirements needs to be taken into consideration as this is key to enforcement, the achievement of business compliance and will avoid any potential divergence issues.

**Please email response form to: [furniturefiresafety@businessandtrade.gov.uk](mailto:furniturefiresafety@businessandtrade.gov.uk)**