[Government to modernise product safety laws to ensure they're fit for 21st century](#)

- Government exploring changes to product safety laws that are over 30 years old to ensure they work for emerging technologies like Artificial Intelligence and 3D printing
- call for evidence to also see how e-commerce can be made safer following huge increase in online shopping during pandemic
- now the UK has full control over its laws, we can go even further than the EU to make our product safety regime one of the best in the world, exploring better regulation whilst maintaining high standards

Plans to review and strengthen the UK's product safety laws and ensure they are fit for the 21st century have been set out by Business Minister Paul Scully today (Thursday 11 March).

Much of the UK's product safety regime has been underpinned by EU law and some dates back to 1987. Now the UK has full control of its product safety laws and we can set our own rules in the best interests of British businesses and consumers, the UK government is considering how to ensure our product safety regime reflects recent innovations, new consumer products and cutting-edge technologies like AI and 3D printing.

The [Call for evidence](#) will also explore how the growth of online shopping and new technologies such as internet connected devices like smart watches, artificial intelligence and 3D printing, are making responsibility for product safety more complex – for example, if a smart fridge is operated unsafely following a software upgrade.

Exploring and introducing better regulation will be a key part of making the most of opportunities outside of the EU, stimulating growth, innovation and competition in the UK, whilst attracting new investment, enabling businesses to grow dynamically, and maintaining high standards.

Business Minister Paul Scully said:

> Now the UK has the freedom to set our own standards, we are determined to power ahead with a new, modern product safety regime which will unleash the creative potential of our businesses while keeping consumers safe.
>
> Much of the product safety system was devised in 1987 when The Terminator was still out on Betamax. Now we want to make sure artificial intelligence and robotics are working for us and not against by making the UK a world-leader for both safety and cutting-edge innovation.

Through software updates and AI techniques like machine learning, these products and their safety implications can continually change over their lifetimes, while modern manufacturing techniques like 3D printing mean products can be built in consumers' homes.

The call for evidence will help to ensure regulations are kept up-to-date with these technological breakthroughs as well as the transition to Net Zero, and what they mean for consumer safety.

The call for evidence will also explore how product safety can be improved to reflect the needs of everyone in society. Research suggests that some virtual reality headsets can be associated with higher levels of motion sickness in females compared to male users, and there are some examples of voice recognition technologies that do not respond as well to female voices, or facial recognition technologies less able to recognise certain skin tones.

The Office for Product Safety and Standards is the UK government body tasked with ensuring that the public is protected from potentially unsafe products and that businesses understand their obligations.

- The call for evidence opens today and will close in 12 weeks (Thursday 3 June). The government is seeking views from manufacturers, distributors, consumers and the wider public, and intends to publish a summary of responses and evidence paper within 12 weeks of the close of the call for evidence
- the pandemic has accelerated the trend towards online shopping, with the proportion of online sales in August 2020 being 47% higher than February's pre-pandemic levels
- there are expected to be 50 billion devices connected to the internet globally by 2030 – including everything from smartphones to toasters to complex robots – meaning a five-fold increase in such devices in 10 years
- today's announcement is the first step in updating the legal framework for product safety, some of which dates back to the Consumer Protection Act of 1987. The call for evidence explores issues such as the extent to which safety issues arise from new technologies like AI systems and 3D printers and where responsibility for safety should sit.

The Office for Product Safety and Standards, the UK government's product safety body, is seeking views on the longer-term approach to product safety and how to ensure that the framework is fit for the future. Among other issues, it will consider whether our product safety framework:

- takes account of new risks and opportunities, so it delivers both safe outcomes and supports business growth and innovation
- can respond quickly to new and emerging threats and opportunities for product safety, including digital technologies and new ways of supplying products
- supports regulators and business to be open and transparent about product safety so consumers can make informed decisions

View the UK product safety review: call for evidence and respond online.