

News story: Public asked for views on banning energy drink sales to children

The government is seeking views from the public on ending the sale of energy drinks to children and young people in England, the Prime Minister has announced.

The [consultation](#) proposes that a ban would apply to drinks that contain more than 150mg of caffeine per litre and prevent all retailers from selling the drinks to children.

It follows the publication of the latest chapter of the government's [childhood obesity plan](#) in June 2018, which outlines a series of measures as well as a commitment to halve childhood obesity by 2030.

Questions in the consultation include:

- whether the restrictions should apply to children under 16 or under 18
- whether the law should be changed to prevent children from buying them in any situation

Energy drinks are already banned for sale to children by many major retailers, but children can still buy them from vending machines and many independent convenience stores, for example.

More than two-thirds of 10- to 17-year-olds and a quarter of 6- to 9-year-olds consume energy drinks. A 250ml can of energy drink can contains around 80mg of caffeine – the equivalent of nearly 3 cans of cola. On average, non-diet energy drinks also contain 60% more calories and 65% more sugar than other, regular soft drinks.

Excessive consumption has been linked to a number of health issues in children, including:

- headaches
- sleep problems
- stomach aches
- hyperactivity

Prime Minister Theresa May said:

Childhood obesity is one of the greatest health challenges this country faces, and that's why we are taking significant action to reduce the amounts of sugar consumed by young people and to help families make healthier choices.

Our plans to tackle obesity are already world leading, but we recognise much more needs to be done and as part of our long-term plan for the NHS, we are putting a renewed focus on the prevention

of ill-health.

With thousands of young people regularly consuming energy drinks, often because they are sold at cheaper prices than soft drinks, we will consult on banning the sale of energy drinks to children.

It is vital that we do all we can to make sure children have the best start in life and I encourage everyone to put forward their views.

Public Health Minister Steve Brine said:

We all have a responsibility to protect children from products that are damaging to their health and education, and we know that drinks packed to the brim with caffeine, and often sugar, are becoming a common fixture of their diet.

Our teenagers already consume 50% more of these drinks than European counterparts, and teachers have made worrying links between energy drinks and poor behaviour in the classroom.

We are asking the public for their views on the matter, to ensure energy drinks are not being excessively consumed by children.