



Department
for Business
Innovation & Skills

The Rt Hon Anna Soubry MP
Minister of State for Small Business,
Industry and Enterprise

1 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0ET

T +44 (0) 20 7215 5000
E enquiries@bis.gov.uk

www.gov.uk/bis

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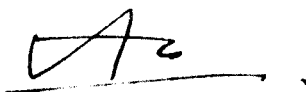
Dear Andrew

Thank you for your letter of the 21 July, to the Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP, in which you enclosed a copy of your report on the unfortunate death of Irene Hamilton-Parker. I am replying as this matter falls within my portfolio.

I fully recognise your concerns with regard to the flammability of clothing and agree that we should take action to reduce the risk to consumers where this is proportionate. However, there are a number of issues which must be considered.

Most clothing is flammable due to the inherent properties of the materials used in their manufacture. To reduce the flammability of cloth generally requires the use of flame retardants, about which there are growing concerns over issues relating to the toxicity, respiratory and skin irritant properties of these chemicals. While recognising the serious nature of clothing fires, current concerns with regard to exposure to high levels of flame retardants cannot be ignored.

Action to reduce flammability of clothing therefore needs to be based on an assessment of the various risks. Within the UK, there are specific additional flammability requirements for certain children's nightwear and for children's clothing which is classified as a toy, such as fancy dress costumes. I do not believe that there is sufficient evidence to extend these requirements to other types of clothing at present and I therefore do not propose to take further action at this time. However, I thank you for raising your concerns and my officials will keep this issue under review.

with all good wishes,


THE RT HON ANNA SOUBRY MP