


Mr Graeme Irvine  
His Majesty's Senior Coroner  
Walthamstow Coroner's Court  
Queen's Road  
Walthamstow  
E17 8QP



26<sup>th</sup> January 2023

Dear Mr Irvine,

**Report Pursuant to Regulation 28 of The Coroners (Investigations) Regulations 2013**

Further to the Report you issued in your capacity as the Coroner who presided over the inquest into the tragic death of Fatima Abukar and which you sent to Halfords and other major retailers of e-scooters on 15 December, we make the following comments in reply.

You asked for information on the actions that have either been taken, or are proposed to be taken, regarding the warnings about the illegal use of e-scooters.

As you may be aware, Halfords Group Plc, is the UK's largest retailer of motoring and cycling products and services and we agree that such warnings are vital for the safety of riders.

We can confirm that we advise potential buyers about the current legal position in regard to the use of e-scooters (which is that e-scooters can only be used on private land and even then, only with the owner's consent). We provide this advice at every stage of the sales process, both in store and online.

The steps we take also include:

- Prominent signage next to e-scooters in stores, clearly explaining the law, including that they are not to be used on public roads;
- A clear legal statement on all e-scooter price tickets;
- A clear legal statement on all e-scooter warranties;

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- the training we provide to our sales colleagues to outline explicitly the legal position when the customer considers buying an e-scooter (this includes drawing attention to the signage, as well as advising them that, if they fail to adhere to these rules, they would face a criminal offence and possible prosecution);
- that our colleagues are tutored in this process and made aware of this as it is the very first agenda point when they undertake the e-learning e-scooter module of their training;
- having till rolls and cash registers which also have pop-up warnings to remind our colleagues to again inform customers of the law at the point of sale;
- that the headers on all e-scooter product detail pages state that it is illegal to use them on a public road, pavement or cycle lane; and,
- that wherever an e-scooter is referenced in a blog we add our standard wording about the how e-scooter may be used legally.

We started selling e-scooters in April 2019, and have always recognised the need for clear advice regarding the law which applies to the use of e-scooters. For example, after Government Ministers brought forward the introduction of trial hire schemes in 2020, which led to increased interest in e-scooters, we made sure that the detailed guidance we provided (i.e. as set out above) was updated.

As a result, Halfords has previously been recognised as a responsible retailer of e-scooters by the then Secretary of State for Business<sup>1</sup> and a Police and Crime Commissioner<sup>2</sup>. The steps we take are intended to ensure that throughout their purchasing journey every customer is fully aware of the law that applies in this area, and we consider that this shows how seriously we take our responsibilities in this regard. We work hard to maintain our reputation as a responsible retailer of these products. This is why we constantly review the way we inform customers about the law; why we have updated, and will continue to update, our signage and why we adapt our processes extremely quickly if we identify improvements that can be made. We have, for example, just recently sent a communication to our digital teams to make sure they maintain the prominence of messages about the current law, in our on-line and social media platforms, and we have asked them to see if they can find ways of to make this even clearer.

We have also advised the Government that if there is to be a Transport Bill which might address the wider legalisation e-scooters, any change in the law should be introduced in a measured and controlled manner. For instance, we have advocated for a maximum speed limit of 15.5mph, as this would harmonise e-scooters with e-bikes and thus avoid a higher speed differential that could prove dangerous. Another example is in regard to lights and reflectors. We believe that any rules introduced should be consistent with those required of cyclists, and we note that the Highway Code for cyclists says: *'At night your cycle must have white front and red rear lights lit. It must also be fitted with a red rear reflector.'*

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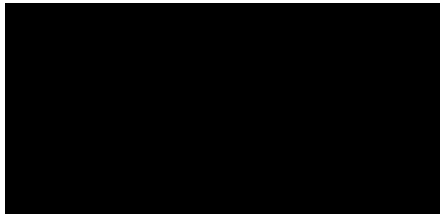
<sup>1</sup> Q239 <https://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/10158/pdf/>


<sup>2</sup> See blue highlighted comment by Kent PCC Matthew Scott <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/15683358/gunmen-e-scooters-ride-by-shootings/>

Finally, we note that the Chief Coroner might wish to publish this response in a completed, redacted or summarised form and that you and/or the Chief Coroner might also wish to send this response to any person to whom it might be useful or of interest. We think it could be beneficial for this response to be circulated, especially if doing so progresses and informs the debate in this area, and so we do not object to that occurring in these circumstances.

I fully understand the seriousness of this tragic case and the concerns raised and so I hope this response meets your requirements. If you need further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



  
Chief Executive Officer  
Halfords Group PLC