

**Office for Product Safety and Standards**

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Lydia Brown
Senior Coroner
West London Coroner Service
25 Bagleys Lane
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21 February 2025

Dear Mrs Brown

Thank you for your Report to Prevent Future Deaths, dated 12 December 2024, following your investigation and inquest into the tragic death of James Alderman, known as Jimmy, who died on 11 October 2023 from injuries sustained following accidental suffocation whilst in a baby carrier.

I was extremely sorry to hear of Jimmy's tragic death. If you have the opportunity, please extend my deepest sympathies to the family.

The Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS), within the Department for Business and Trade, is the UK's national product regulator. Our purpose is to protect people and places from product-related harm, and we take a risk-based approach to our activities. This means we prioritise issues where people who experience vulnerability, such as children, may be at risk. We undertake product sampling and testing of high-risk products and, when necessary, may take action to prevent the supply of dangerous products on the market. OPSS also works with charities such as the Child Accident Prevention Trust and the Lullaby Trust to help raise awareness among parents and healthcare workers of advice that promotes safe use of consumer products aimed at or used by children.

The safety of baby carriers, including soft carriers such as slings, is regulated by the General Product Safety Regulations 2005 (GPSR). These Regulations require that only products which are safe in normal or reasonably foreseeable use can be placed on the market. They also place obligations on manufacturers and importers to make sure the products they supply are safe, to consider any risks that may arise from the product in normal or foreseeable use, and to take action to avoid or mitigate against them. This includes providing appropriate warnings relating to any risks the product may pose during its use, and supplying any instructions that may be needed for the product to be used safely. Product distributors must pass on any such warnings or instructions with a

product, whether it is for loan, rent or sale. Both OPSS and Local Authority Trading Standards have powers to enforce the regulations.

There is also a voluntary standard EN 13209-2:2015 (Child use and care articles - Baby carriers - Safety requirements and test methods - Part 2: Soft carrier), which is designated by the Government under GPSR, meaning goods produced in line with the standard are presumed to comply with those Regulations.

Merton Council Trading Standards are leading the investigation into the circumstances of this case, and on communication with the business that supplied the product, as they are based in the London Borough of Merton. We understand that the manufacturer of the product is based outside the UK. Initial intelligence gathering by OPSS has indicated that the product cites compliance with an earlier version of the standard for these types of products, which is not designated by Government. These matters will be the subject of investigation as to whether the product was compliant with the relevant regulations at the time of supply.

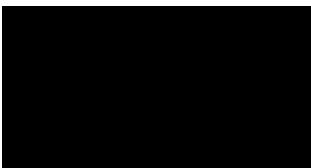
You also raise matters of concern regarding the availability and promotion of advice on the use of baby carriers and breastfeeding. I understand that the Department for Health and Social Care and NHS England will write to you separately on this issue.

Should there be any updates to Government or NHS advice regarding the safety of infants when in a baby sling or carrier, OPSS will bring this to the attention of relevant trade associations, including the Baby Products Industry Association. OPSS would also review the designation of the voluntary standard, to consider whether any amendments, accompanying notes or restrictions to the standard may be required. Changes to the standard itself would be a matter for the British Standards Institution, who I understand also received a copy of your Report.

It will remain businesses' responsibility to ensure that their product instructions for safe use take account of the latest safety advice.

Thank you for writing to OPSS on this matter. I would be grateful if you could share a copy of this letter with any of your colleagues who may find it useful.

Kind regards,



Chief Executive

Office for Product Safety and Standards

