

Petitioner submission of 6 November 2023

PE1919/R: Ban the sale of high caffeine products to children for performance enhancement

I am writing to thank the Committee and the Chair for all their work over the past two years in gathering evidence of the dangers of high strength caffeine gum for performance enhancement, and for their efforts to have the Scottish Government meet its obligations under the UN Convention on Children's Rights to protect children from substances harmful to their health. It appears the Scottish Government have not considered concerns raised by Food Standards Scotland, a public body established to protect the health and well-being of consumers as set under the Food (Scotland) Act 2015.

A senior environmental health officer, who has followed the petition closely, thought high strength caffeine gum should have a health warning with clear labelling on the potential health risks. Based on the evidence presented, I believe any warning should consider 'at risk' groups such as under 18s and unscreened athletes, particularly when taking it immediately before or during intense physical exercise for performance enhancement.

Furthermore in the absence of a ban on the sale to under 18s, I was hoping that there was at least a chance the Scottish Government would introduce legislation to require organisations holding running events or athletics events to keep a record of all adverse events, including deaths, and to make enquiries in each case of potential cardiac arrest or collapse, whether caffeine was taken before the event, and to record the answer, and to make this information publicly available on request. This would be similar to an employer's obligation in relation to accidents at work.