To the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State
Minister for Employment Rights and Consumer Protection

Dear Minister Dearden, 27.10.25

Many congratulations on your appointment as Minister for Employment Rights and Consumer Protection. We wish you every success in your new position. We are writing to ask that as Minister responsible for the Office for Product Safety and Standards and the regulation of children's toys, that we update the UK's 2011 Toy Safety Directive in line with the new EU Toy Safety Regulation. This was agreed in April this year and is due shortly for publication in the Official Journal.

The EU Commission decided to revoke and replace the 2009 Toy Safety Directive because it found that it did not adequately reflect the latest science on harmful chemicals in children's toys, including endocrine disrupting chemicals. The new regulation bans known and suspected endocrine disrupting chemicals, (EDCs), chemicals toxic to the respiratory system and specific organs and introduces group bans on bisphenols and per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS).

Children are especially vulnerable to the impacts of EDCs because their organs and nervous systems are still developing, which entails complex processes highly sensitive to disruption. Young children also explore the world by putting objects in their mouths, which puts them at higher risk of exposure. Tests conducted across Europe show EDCs such as bisphenols are used in toys. Toys are designed to promote child development and learning, and the presence of harmful chemicals in toys undermines the purpose for which they are created. We know children are widely exposed to EDCs. A human biomonitoring study conducted across 30 European countries shows children are exposed through air, dust, food and water on top of consumer products, and were often found to have higher levels of harmful chemicals in their bodies than adults.

EDCs have been shown to affect the normal functioning of the body's organs including the heart, liver, brain and endocrine glands. A large body of peer-reviewed scientific evidence highlights the association between childhood exposure to EDCs and the onset of diseases, including hormonal cancers, obesity and diabetes, impacts on the immune and neurological systems and early puberty. The UK has very high incidences of some of these associated diseases. Exposure to EDCs is linked to the development of breast and prostate cancers, which affect 1 in 7 women and 1 in 8 men in the UK, respectively. 64% of UK adults are either overweight or obese, and an estimated 5.6 million people live with diabetes. Therefore, it is imperative that we take all opportunities to prevent exposure to chemicals linked to these diseases and the substantial social, clinical, and financial burden they place on the NHS.

The EU revised the Toy Safety Directive because it was not adequately protecting children from harmful chemicals and we urge you to match this science-led approach. Unless we follow suit, children in the UK will be playing with toys deemed unsafe for children in the EU and continue to be exposed to chemicals which can have long-term, irreversible effects on their health.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Anna Watson, Director of Policy and Advocacy, CHEM Trust
Julia Priestley, CEO, British Thyroid Foundation
Mrs Jo Grey, CEO, The Association for Multiple Endocrine Neoplasia Disorders, (AMEND)
Jackie Lodge, CEO, Prader-Willi Syndrome Association-UK
Arlene Smyth, Executive Officer, Turner Syndrome Support Society UK
Josian Phillips, Committee member, Improving the lives of those with thyroid eye disease (TED)
Born in Bradford, Bradford Institute for health research
Professor Paul Fowler, Chair in Translational Medical Sciences, University of Aberdeen
Dr Ruth Slater, academic, nutrition, University of Aberdeen
Professor Frank Thies, human nutrition, University of Aberdeen
Ausra Lionikiene, academic, cardiovascular disease, University of Aberdeen
Dr Mark Richards, academic, biogeochemical modelling, University of Aberdeen
Charles Harrington PhD, academic, neuroscience, University of Aberdeen
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Professor Valerie Speirs, academic, breast cancer, University of Aberdeen
Laetitia Lecante, academic, toxicology, University of Aberdeen
Dr B.J Tura, academic, bladder cancer, University of Birmingham
Professor Luisa Orsini, academic, systems biology and pollution impacts, University of Birmingham
Dr Mohamed Abdallah, academic, environmental health, University of Birmingham
Dr Danie Drage, academic, environmental health, University of Birmingham
Emeritus Professor Stuart Harrad, academic, assessment of human exposure to consumer chemicals, University of Birmingham
Dr David Megson, academic, environmental pollution, Manchester Met University
Professor Michael Antoniou, academic, toxicology of pesticides and EDCs
Professor Lisa Connolly, academic, toxicology and endocrine disrupting chemicals, Queen's University Belfast
Professor Patrick Byrne, academic, water quality, Liverpool John Moores University
Dr Michelle Bellingham, academic, endocrine disruptors and health, University of Glasgow
Dr Olwenn Martin, academic, chemical and plastic pollution, University College London
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Dr Karen Joash, Doctor in Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Imperial NHS
Dr Anthony Kong, Doctor and Researcher, breast cancer, Kings College London
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Esther Chow, sustainability officer, Newcastle hospitals
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Allyson Julie Miller, public health professional, reproductive healthcare, Newcastle hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
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Elizabeth Murphy, nurse, NHS
Dr Sarah Peters, Doctor
Sarah Aldelemi, doctor, medical education
Dr India Lunn, doctor, psychiatry
Dr Alisa Wai, doctor, general surgery
Zoi Vardavaki, academic, midwifery lecturer, City St George's University of London
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Dr Amy Manning, doctor, obstetrics and gynaecology, Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Gateshead