

10th March 2022

Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP
Prime Minister's Office
10 Downing Street
London
SW1A 2AA

Dear Prime Minister,

Obesity Regulations and Local Shops

I am writing in relation to your answer to a question from John Stevenson MP at Prime Minister's Questions yesterday (09.03.22) on the introduction of regulations banning the promotion and placement of high fat, salt and sugar (HFSS) products in shops in England from October 2022. Local shops across England, and many of your backbench MPs, are urging you to urgently review the introduction of these regulations.

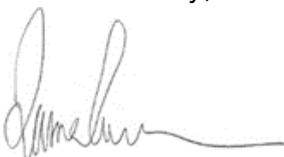
In your answer to the question, you stated that industry had been given more time to adjust to the regulations. Despite an extension to the implementation, we are no clearer about the specifics of the regulations. Your officials have not issued guidance to industry or answered any queries since the regulations were passed through Parliament last year.

This means, with less than seven months left until the implementation of the biggest regulatory change to the sale of grocery products in England for a generation, there remains a huge amount of uncertainty for local shops, supermarkets and food suppliers. At present, your Officials cannot indicate to industry, including thousands of small local shop owners, a clear definition of the products impacted by the regulations or the promotional mechanism that can be used to sell them. In particular, there is concern about how 'meal deals' and 'dine in deals', that are greatly valued by families and households across the country, could be undermined by the regulations.

In addition, the regulations will place additional burdens on hard-pressed local shops that are dealing with rising energy and product cost increases. Our sector is having to spend over £92 million in relaying their stores to move products from store entrances, checkouts, queuing areas and aisle ends. You should also be aware that thousands of independent businesses will be caught by the regulations due to them trading as part of a symbol group. This means independent stores operating as a SPAR, Londis or Costcutter are likely to have to comply with regulations drafted with supermarkets and discounters in mind.

We urge you to urgently review the introduction of the Food (Promotion and Placement) (England) Regulations 2021. There are more targeted and effective alternatives that help advance the UK Government's important health policy objectives without the costs and disruption these regulations would cause.

Yours sincerely,



James Lowman
Chief Executive

Association of Convenience Stores Limited
Federation House, 17 Farnborough Street
Farnborough, Hampshire, GU14 8AG

T 01252 515001 @ACS_Localshops W acs.org.uk

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