

Jim McMahon OBE MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Dr Carolyn Wilkins
Chief Executive
Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council
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Civic Centre
West Street
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Our Ref: SM/WILK01005/01170741

13 December 2017

Dear Dr Wilkins

Please find enclosed a copy of a reply I have received in response to my letter on your behalf. This response concerns safety regulations for children's fancy dress costumes.

I hope the reply is helpful. If not, or if you wish to respond to the letter, please do not hesitate to contact my office again.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim McMahon".

Jim McMahon OBE MP
Member of Parliament
Oldham West & Royton

Encl.

Serving the Communities of Chadderton, Royton and Oldham



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13 December 2017

Dear Jim

Thank you for your letter dated 27 November to the Rt Hon Greg Clark MP, regarding Oldham Council's concern about the fire safety requirements that apply to children's fancy dress. I am replying as this matter falls within my Ministerial portfolio.

The Government takes product safety very seriously and keeping our children safe is, of course, a priority.

Children's fancy dress is currently regulated under the Toys (Safety) Regulations 2011, which requires all Halloween and other party and fancy dress costumes for children to be safe when they are sold. The Toys Standard (EN71-2) contains a specific chapter on fancy dress costumes which includes tests relating to rate of spread of flame and which takes into account all the potential hazards likely to affect children wearing the costumes, such as drawstrings and small parts.

You have commented on the possibility of regulating fancy dress safety under regulations for clothing rather than those for toys. I want to ensure that the regulations and standards that apply to fancy dress remain the most appropriate for delivering safety.

I recently met with the British Retail Consortium (BRC) on 25 October to discuss their new voluntary code of practice for fancy dress and I have also asked my officials to continue to work with the British Standards Institution (BSI) to propose further improvements to the current Toys standard to ensure it takes account of industry best practice.

I will keep this issue under review and will consider all the options available to ensure that the system we have provides the highest levels of protection.

Thank you for raising this issue with me. I hope that this information is helpful in responding to Oldham Council.

Best wishes
Margot

MARGOT JAMES MP
Minister for Small Business, Consumers & Corporate Responsibility