

Energy drinks: Open letter to the press from Jamie Oliver and children's health organisations

Tomorrow, 17th June, marks exactly 700 days since the government said they would ban the sale of energy drinks to children - you know, like it says on the tin!

Yet nothing has changed.

In the 60 seconds it takes you to read this letter, another 300 cans of high caffeine and sugar drinks will be consumed by children across the country. That's 300 hearts racing, blood pressure soaring, teeth rotting, anxiety and panic spiking. For many students, in the most important exam season of their school career.

Since the Government made this promise because the Prime Minister said he would, in his own words, "always take the tough decisions necessary to keep our children healthy", more than 280 million energy drinks have been consumed by children. Now energy drinks have overtaken Cola as the number one soft drinks category for the first time. Far from being brought under control, the market has boomed while the promised protections for children remain undelivered.

The case for action is overwhelming. Teachers identify excessive energy drink consumption as one of their biggest concerns, even greater than illegal substances such as cannabis. Eight in ten parents support a ban on sales to children. Even retailers have called for regulation to create a level playing field.

The evidence is clear, the consultation long concluded, and the Government's options are well understood. So why the silence? What is missing is not evidence, but action.

If the Prime Minister is looking for a legacy, he does not need to look far. Keep your promise. Ban the sale of high-caffeine energy drinks to children now.

Children's health cannot wait.

Yours sincerely,

Jamie Oliver, Chef and Child Health Campaigner

D'Arcy Williams, CEO, Bite Back 2030

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Greg Fell OBE, President of the Association of Directors of Public Health
Professor Sheena Ramsay, Director of Fuse, the Centre for Translational Research in
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