

Sustain response to consultation on banning the sale of high-caffeine energy drinks to children

Objectives and scope

The consultation seeks views on banning the sale of high-caffeine energy drinks to children under the age of 16 years (that is, children aged 15 years and under). This includes proposals on:

- the minimum age of sale for high-caffeine energy drinks
- the products and businesses in scope of the ban
- how the ban will apply in vending machines
- length of time that businesses & enforcement authorities need to implement the ban
- how the ban would be enforced

The proposed ban would apply in England only, since policy relating to high-caffeine energy drinks is a devolved matter.

About Sustain & Children's Food Campaign

Sustain is an alliance of over 100 national organisations working with many more local communities, groups, enterprises and experts across the UK for a better system of food, farming and fishing, and cultivating the movement for change. Together, we advocate food and agriculture policies and practices that enhance the health and welfare of people and animals, improve the working and living environment, enrich society and culture, and promote equity.

The **Children's Food Campaign**, coordinated by Sustain, brings together around 80 organisations including children's and health charities and professional bodies, trade unions, school food experts and environmental organisations. We campaign for policy changes in our schools, in our communities and throughout our society so that all children can easily eat sustainable and healthy food.

Banning the sale of high caffeine energy drinks to children

Do you agree or disagree with the proposal to ban the sale of high-caffeine energy drinks based on age?

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Our response

Sustain's Children's Food Campaign strongly supports this measure. These drinks are already required by regulation to carry warning labels saying 'not recommended for children' and should not be sold to them. A strong evidence base for regulation¹ shows consumption by children associated with increased frequency of headaches, irritation, tiredness, stomach aches; reduced sleep duration/quality; increased risk of stress, anxiety and depression; increased risk of alcohol and substance abuse; links with reduced academic performance. Evidence also shows negative effects on dental health for both sugary and low- or no-sugar drinks (see British Dental Association submission).

Age regulation is a tried and tested measure to protect children's health and wellbeing used with restricting other harmful products including tobacco, alcohol, vapes, and lottery tickets. A legal ban on sales to children strengthens the roles of parents and education settings and establishes a level playing field across the food and drink sector.

Our November 2025 polling with Savanta reveals 76% support of UK adults, and 84% of parents of under-18s [Appendix A].

Voluntary restrictions are inadequate in protecting children. Research indicates adolescents from more deprived areas and lower income households were more likely to consume energy drinks than those in more affluent areas and households.² Young people can easily access drinks and say voluntary restrictions do not work, with 81.8% of young people aged 13-14 consuming energy drinks, including 2-4 times per week.³

¹ Ajibo, C et al., (2024) Consumption of energy drinks by children and young people: a systematic review examining evidence of physical effects and consumer attitudes. Public Health. V.227. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.puhe.2023.08.024>

² Vogel C, Shaw S, Strömmer S, et al. Inequalities in energy drink consumption among UK adolescents: a mixed-methods study. Public Health Nutrition. 2023;26(3):575-585. doi:10.1017/S1368980022002592 <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/36472075/>

³ Stewart, G., Lake, A.L and Moore, H. (2025) A Mixed Method Study Exploring Children and Young People's Perception of Energy Drinks and Analysing Consumption Patterns. Journal of Human Nutrition and Dietetics. V 38 (5). <https://doi.org/10.1111/jhn.70140>

Consumption drivers include marketing, brand associations, peer influence, cost, ease of access. Health halo claims by brands lead to low understanding of health harms.

Minimum Age of Sale

Do you agree or disagree that the minimum age of sale for high-caffeine energy drinks should be 16 years?

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- **Disagree**
- Don't know

Our response

The Government should set the minimum age of sale at 18, for legal, practical and ethical reasons laid out in [our published article](#).⁴

There is greater public support for an under-18 limit. November 2025 polling reveals 50% all adults & 56% parents support under-18 age limit compared to 32% of all adults and 35% of parents supporting under-16 [AppendixA].

18 aligns with the current UK legal definition of a child, whilst the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child to which the UK is a signatory also aims to ensure protections of children up to the age of 18. The [EFSA tolerance limits for caffeine](#)⁵, which underpin existing warning labels on energy products as 'not suitable for children' based on body weight, do not set a safe limit for children without distinguishing between 18 and 16.

With highest levels of weekly consumption in the Key Stage 4 age group⁶, setting the limit at 16 would not protect all pupils undertaking GCSEs, and increases risk of transactions between older and younger pupils in secondary schools.

18 provides coherence with other restricted products including tobacco, vapes, alcohol, lottery tickets and scratch cards.⁷ It also provides international policy coherence, as Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia and Poland have already legislated energy drinks sales at 18.

Experience from tobacco legislation suggests a higher age limit strengthens norms, reduces social normalization, and limits availability among younger people.⁸ We note the government raised the minimum age of sale for lottery tickets from 16 to 18 in

⁴ Sustain, A bold ban on energy drinks should boost age limit to 18, 18 November 2025

<https://www.sustainweb.org/blogs/nov25-energy-drinks-ban-age-limit/>

⁵ EFSA tolerance limits for caffeine <https://efsa.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.2903/j.efsa.2015.4102>

⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/parent-pupil-and-learner-voice-omnibus-surveys-for-2024-to-2025/parent-pupil-and-learner-voice-december-2024>

⁷ <https://noidnosale.com/age-restricted-products-and-services-in-the-uk>

⁸ The Khan Review <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/62a0c3f38fa8f503921c159f/khan-review-making-smoking-obsolete.pdf>

2021.⁹ A higher age limit aids visual age checks and ID verification, as many 16-year-olds, especially from low-income households, struggle to acquire ID and cannot afford a provisional licence or have access to car. Some retailers such as Morrison's and Uber Eats already operate an 18 age limit in online purchasing¹⁰.

Products in scope

Do you agree or disagree that the ban should apply to any drink, other than tea or coffee, that contains over 150 milligrams of caffeine per litre?

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Our response

This is in line with the Food Standards Agency recommendation, which states that drinks that contain caffeine from whatever source at a level over 150mg per litre (mg/l) must state: 'High caffeine content. Not recommended for children or pregnant or breast-feeding women'.¹¹

While moderate caffeine from tea or coffee is generally considered safe for older adolescents, energy drinks contain high levels of caffeine combined with other stimulants, sugar and carbonates, along with brand marketing appealing to children, amplify the risk.

Due to current moderate levels of tea and coffee consumption amongst under 18s, we agree plain tea and coffee should be exempt. However, we note that many pre-packaged coffee-based drinks contain very high levels of caffeine, as documented in the submission of our member Action on Sugar. We recommend these products are kept under review and that evaluation includes examining potential displacement to these and other high caffeine products including high caffeine pouches, chewing gums, lollies that are often marketed via gaming and sports/fitness channels, as well as monitoring emergence of any new forms of caffeinated food and drink products. Further restrictive measures should be extended to include any further products that evidenced to be of concern.

⁹ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2021/1009/regulation/3/made>

¹⁰ Morrison's example product listing <https://groceries.morrisons.com/products/Rubicon-Raw-Energy-Pineapple-Passion-Fruit/113883524>

¹¹ Food Standards Agency Food Additives <https://www.food.gov.uk/safety-hygiene/food-additives#:~:text=Caffeine%20in%20drinks,per%20100g%20or%20per%20100ml>

Businesses in scope

Do you agree or disagree that the ban should apply to all sellers, retailers and businesses, both in store and online, who operate in England?

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Our response

We strongly agree that the ban should apply to all sellers, retailers, and businesses, both in store and online, who operate in England. A legal age restriction ensures consistent compliance across all retailers, preventing a postcode lottery and avoiding the inconsistencies seen with voluntary measures. This approach aligns high-caffeine energy drinks with other age-restricted products, reinforcing a clear and consistent public health message.

Our November 2025 polling with Savanta shows strong support for the proposed ban to apply to ALL sellers, retailers and businesses. 76% of adults and 81% of parents of under-18s supporting a ban by online retailers, 75% of adults and 82% of parents supporting a ban in corner shops and other small retailers, and 75% of adults and 80% of parents supporting a ban in supermarkets [AppendixA].

While voluntary codes exist - for example, through the British Soft Drinks Association, the Association of Convenience Stores - these are unenforceable, inconsistently applied, and have not demonstrably reduced consumption among under-18s. A mandatory legal framework is therefore necessary to close loopholes, protect children, and provide a clear basis for enforcement.

For online sales of high-caffeine energy drinks, how should retailers ensure the ban is applied? (optional)

- Age verification at the point of sale
- Age verification at the point of delivery
- Don't know
- Another approach

Our response

We believe a combination of implementing age verification at both the point of sale and delivery is essential for enforcing the ban on high-caffeine energy drinks for children. This dual-layer approach aligns with existing legal frameworks and industry best practices for alcohol (Licensing Act 2003) and tobacco (via proposals in the current Tobacco & Vapes Bill), ensuring that age-restricted products are not sold to minors. The current protocol is through third-party verification services during the transaction, and delivery personnel must also confirm the recipient's age upon delivery, refusing to hand over the order without valid proof of age.

Consideration to how alcohol purchased through online food and drink delivery platforms, such as Just Eat, Deliveroo and Uber Eats should also be taken. This is

emerging as another potential route for minors to acquire age-restricted products with a growing number of supermarkets, corner shops and convenience stores now operating on these apps, and it is unclear what level of training delivery drivers have on conducting such checks. We note Morrison's/Uber Eats online energy drinks listings state that these are restricted products and delivery drivers may ask for proof of ID of being 18 or over [11].

Vending Machines

Do you agree or disagree that the sale of high-caffeine energy drinks should be banned from all vending machines?

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Our response

We strongly support option 1, to ban high caffeine energy drinks from all vending machines, with the aim of achieving maximum reduction of harm to children's health. Our November polling with Savanta reveals 76% of all adults believe sales of high-caffeine energy drinks should be banned in vending machines. This rises to 81% for parents with children under 18s.

Vending machines are often located in spaces used by children and young people, including leisure centres and gyms, FE colleges and entertainment venues. They are often found in lower income and unsupervised settings, where young people are known to be at increased risk of health inequalities.

The vending market is experiencing significant growth since the pandemic, with an estimated 70% of vending machines selling beverages, snacks and food¹². Currently, there is no practical method for age verification on vending machines in these settings, making them a high-risk point of access for children.

The UK Food Standards Agency's guidance on Healthier and More Sustainable Vending already advises against placing high-caffeine energy drinks in vending machines¹³. Extending a legal ban to cover all vending machines is therefore essential to close this potential loophole, protect children from easy access, and ensure a consistent approach across all points of sale.

¹² The Vending and Automated Retailing Association, Annual Report 2024 <https://the-ava.com/downloads/J04016AVA2024YearEndReportv4.pdf>

¹³ Food Standards Agency, Healthier and More Sustainable Vending Guide https://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/media/document/11238-FSA-Healthier%20and%20more%20sustainable%20vending%20guide_Accessible%20%28002%29.pdf

Limiting access in vending machines is a crucial step in reducing these harms and supporting healthier behaviours from an early age. We note concerns about potential loss of sales in private locations and workplaces, raised by the Vending and Automated Retail Association (AVA). However, we believe public health must be prioritised over private profit, and noting the precedents set in enforcing effective age-restricted sales of other health harming products, the proposal to include all vending machines seems both necessary and proportionate. We believe that the industry can and will adapt to mitigate sales losses, by making alternative or healthier products available in their vending machines in place of high caffeine energy drinks in scope of the ban.

Do you agree or disagree that the person who controls or manages the premises where the machine is located should be liable for any underage sales of high-caffeine energy drinks from vending machines? (optional)

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Our response

We agree that the owner, manager, or person controlling the premises where vending machines are located should be held responsible for any illegal sales of high-caffeine energy drinks to children. This approach aligns with established practices for other age-restricted products and is essential for effective enforcement.

The experience with tobacco vending machines demonstrates challenges around preventing underage access through age verification alone, with studies showing that children continue to access products from vending machines, which according to the UK government's 2012 impact assessment, disproportionately serve underage customers.¹⁴ Therefore it is crucial to hold premises accountable for prevention of illegal sales, and banning sales altogether from vending machines is the simplest way to achieve and verify compliance.

Implementing the Ban

Do you agree or disagree that 6 months is an appropriate length of time for businesses and enforcement authorities to prepare to implement the ban?

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

¹⁴ Tobacco Vending Machine Impact Assessment 2012
<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7c9e61e5274a30fa38feac/Tobacco-Vending-Machine-IA-final-04052012.pdf>

Our response

6 months is an adequate amount of time for businesses to prepare to implement the ban, especially given the amount of notice given by the government since election in 2024, and that there are already voluntary measures in place across many retailers. The government must ensure that there is sufficient guidance provided to businesses, as well as sufficient additional resources provided to trading standards teams and local authorities to ensure effective implementation and compliance monitoring. We note that the recent evaluation of the HFSS locations restrictions contained concerns from retailers that the guidance was too complicated and difficult to understand, although ultimately it was achievable and enforceable.¹⁵ We propose any guidance is simplified and clear in its intention.

Local authorities & assessing compliance with the ban

Should powers under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 be extended to allow local authorities to assess compliance with the age restriction on the sale of high-caffeine energy drinks?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Our response

Yes, we agree. Extending powers to assess compliance is a reasonable enforcement approach, provided local authorities are properly resourced to carry out this work effectively. Requiring local authorities to assess compliance will place further pressure on local Trading Standards officers, who are already under-resourced, and have recently also been tasked with compliance with a range of other new measures including sales of single-use vapes, multi-buy and prominent locations promotions of HFSS products, without adequate additional resources being provided.¹⁶

Local authority trading standards teams will be able to apply expertise and knowledge generated via compliance for other age-restricted products such as alcohol, tobacco, vapes and lottery products. However, successful implementation will require:

- **Ringfenced funding:** Resources must be earmarked specifically for enforcing age restrictions on high-caffeine energy drinks, rather than being absorbed into general budgets. This ensures that trading standards teams have the capacity to prioritise this work.

¹⁵ Kininmonth, A. R., Stone, R. A., Jenneson, V., Ennis, E., Naisbitt, R., Johnstone, A., ... Fildes, A. (2025, March 26). "It was a force for good but...": a mixed-methods evaluation of the implementation of the High in Fat, Sugar and Salt (HFSS) legislation in England. <https://doi.org/10.31219/osf.io/3xity.v1>

¹⁶ Dhuria, P., Muir, S., Jenner, S. et al. "If government is saying the regulations are important, they should be putting in funding to back it up."- An in-depth analysis of local authority officers' perspectives of the Food (Promotion and Placement) (England) Regulations 2021. *BMC Med* 22, 514 (2024). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12916-024-03720-5>

- **Adequate staffing and training:** Local authority trading standards teams must have sufficient staff, training, and guidance to carry out checks effectively, including intelligence-gathering and use of test purchases where appropriate.

Alternative approaches, such as industry self-reporting or voluntary compliance schemes, are unlikely to be as robust or enforceable as legally empowered inspections. Adequately resourced enforcement provides both deterrence and accountability, protecting children from illegal sales and supporting broader public health goals.

Process of issuing a fixed monetary penalty

Do you agree or disagree that 28 days is an appropriate length of time to make representations and objections or to discharge liability for a notice of intent?

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Our response

Yes we agree, if this is in line with approaches taken to enforce compliance for other age-restricted products.

Do you agree or disagree that a person or retailer should be able to discharge liability for a fixed monetary penalty at a rate of 50% of the penalty within 28 days of being issued a notice of intent?

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Our response

Yes, we agree if this is in line with approaches taken to enforce compliance for other age restricted products.

Do you agree or disagree that 28 days is an appropriate length of time to pay a final notice?

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Our response

Yes, we agree if this is in line with how enforcement works for other age restricted products

Do you agree or disagree that failure to pay or appeal a final notice within 28 days should result in the penalty being increased by 50%?

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Our response

Yes, we agree if this is in line with how enforcement works for other age restricted products

Do you agree or disagree that the proposed amounts for fixed monetary penalties are appropriate?

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Our Response

We believe the proposed fixed monetary penalties for underage sales of high-caffeine energy drinks are insufficient and inconsistent with penalties for other age-restricted products. The current proposals suggest fines of up to £3,750, which are lower than those for alcohol, tobacco, and vaping products.

Alcohol: The maximum penalty for underage sales is £5,000, as outlined in the Licensing Act 2003, reflecting the high threshold needed to act as incentive for compliance and prevent breaches.

Tobacco and Vaping Products: Retailers can face on-the-spot fines of £200, with potential fines up to £2,500 for other nicotine products/ repeated offences (Nicotine Inhaling Products (Age of Sale and Proxy Purchasing) Regulations 2015).

Lottery Tickets: Penalties can reach up to £5,000, with potential imprisonment for serious offences up to 2 years (Licensing Act 2003).

Impact on Groups with Protected Characteristics

Do you think that this proposal would be likely to have an impact on people who share a protected characteristic in a way that is different from those who do not share it?

- Yes

- No
- Don't know

Which protected characteristics do you think this applies to? Select all that apply.

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin)
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

Our response

The proposed age of sale restriction primarily has a positive impact in relation to **age**, protecting children and teenagers from the harmful effects of high-caffeine energy drinks. While **socio-economic status** is not a protected characteristic, there is a strong correlation between deprivation and increased risk of food-related ill health. We note that lower income groups are also more likely to use local, convenience stores which are least likely to be implementing voluntary restrictions at present, and where children also disproportionately make their own purchases. Given consumption of energy drink is greater in deprived areas, we believe that this policy will have an overall positive contribution to narrowing health inequalities amongst children under 18.

However we believe there would be additional positive impact for additional protected characteristics:

Pregnancy and maternity: Raising awareness among teenagers can help reinforce the risks of high caffeine consumption during pregnancy and breastfeeding, supporting efforts to reduce teen pregnancy-related harms. Whilst not explicitly targetting pregnant or breastfeeding women, there could be a positive knock-on effect from the implementation of an age-based restriction in building adult awareness of the harms of these drinks and the presence of warning labels saying that they are also not recommended to be consumed by this group of consumers. Any additional measures, such as more prominent labelling or awareness campaigns to accompany launch and enforcement could further strengthen protection for this group.

Sex: Evidence indicates that high-caffeine energy drinks have historically been more heavily marketed to boys and young men. Restricting sales to under-18s may help address this gendered consumption pattern and reduce related harms.

Disability: Children living with neurodiversity and special educational needs and development (SEND) are more likely to face additional challenges in cognitive development, and emotional regulation. High consumption of energy drinks has been associated with increased risk of ADHD. Whilst there have been limited studies involving UK children, a US study involving 123 undergraduates (aged 18-30) revealed neurodivergent students were more likely to consume energy drinks (30.8% vs 18.5% for neurotypical students) and also had a lower tolerance to caffeine, with 69.4% of neurodivergent students reporting increased experienced greater stress following intake of caffeine than their neurotypical counterparts (29.3%).¹⁷ Restricting sales to under-18s could therefore support children living with neurodiversity.

Further matters for consideration

In **Appendix A**, we present findings from Savanta nationwide polling of 2,018 UK adults, including 707 parents, undertaken in November 2025 on behalf of Sustain's Children's Food Campaign in relation to the proposals in this consultation.

In the survey, we also asked respondents their views on additional measures to limit consumption of energy drinks by children. The most popular measure, supported by 79% of UK adults, and 83% of parents of under-18s, is to apply more prominent warning labels to the drinks.

According to FSA regulations, all high caffeine energy drinks, products should be clearly labelled in the same line of vision as the product name as "not recommended for children".

In **Appendix B**, we document a range of energy drinks purchased during November 2025 from local convenience stores and supermarkets, along with an analysis of their labelling. Overwhelmingly, warning labels appear in very small writing, often buried in longer text on the back of the product. Caffeine references on front-of-pack are linked to energy, stamina, performance and other health halo claims made by brands.

The government is more likely to achieve the positive health impact in reducing child consumption, if there are further supportive measures, all of which also have high levels of public support in our polling. These include consideration of:

- **More prominent labelling**, including exploring introduction of mandatory front-of-pack warning label stating "High caffeine content. Not recommended for children."
- **Extending existing HFSS location and price promotion restrictions, and TV/online advertising regulations** to all high caffeine energy drinks, not just high sugar products.

¹⁷ Dridi, M. (2025). The impact of caffeine consumption on non-neurotypical student stress levels. *American Journal of STEM Education*, 9, 35-48. <https://doi.org/10.32674/8ihzh585>

- **Restricting sports sponsorship and promotion by high profile influencers** popular with teenagers and children.
- **A public awareness campaign** on the potential dangers of consuming large amounts of high caffeine energy drinks.

Appendix C contains source references for our submission.

Appendix A - Energy drinks public polling highlights – November 2025

Sustain's Children's Food Campaign commissioned Savanta to carry out polling exploring public views on the proposed government ban on the sale of energy drinks by age. This briefing highlights the key results.

All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from Savanta. Total sample size was 2018 adults, of which 707 are parents of under-18s. Fieldwork was undertaken between 15-16 November 2025. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all GB adults (aged 18+).

Further information or the full data tables are available upon request by contacting naema@sustainweb.org. If you wish to cite these results, please use the paragraph above to reference field work by Savanta on behalf of Sustain's Children's Food Campaign.

Headline stats

- 70% of parents are concerned about children's consumption of drinks, only 4% are not concerned at all
- 76% of all adults, and 84% of parents support a ban on sales to children
- 50% all adults & 56% parents support under-18 age limit. 32% of all adults and 35% of parents support under-16 age limit.
- 76% want vending machines included in the ban. This rises to 81% for parents of under 18s. Support for a ban on sales is consistent across multiple outlets including supermarkets (75%), corner shops and newsagents (75%) and online sales and websites (76%).
- There is strong support for further supportive measures to protect children and raise awareness. The strongest support is for more prominent warning labels (79% support, 83% parents). Other measures with overall support include public awareness campaigns, advertising restrictions on TV, online and outdoor, and limits on sports sponsorship by high caffeine energy drinks brands.

Concern about energy drinks

- 62% of all adults are 'very concerned' or 'somewhat concerned, 9% are 'not concerned at all'
- 71% of parents with children under 18 are 'very concerned' or 'somewhat concerned', 4% are 'not concerned at all'.
- 46% of 18 – 24 years old are 'very concerned' or 'somewhat concerned, 9% are 'not concerned at all'

Support for the proposal

- 76% all adults are in support a ban on sales to children, 5% oppose
- 84% of parents with children under 18 support a ban on sales to children, 3% oppose
- 56% of 18-24 years olds support a ban on sales to children, 7% oppose

Age-based restrictions

Polling revealed a broader support for under 18 age limit.

- 50% all adults & 56% parents support under-18 age limit.
- 32% of all adults and 35% of parents support under-16 age limit.
- 17% of all adults do not support age-based restrictions for high-caffeine energy drinks or don't know.

Reasons given by respondents supporting age-based restrictions at 18:

- *"It should be for adults only"*
- *"It's not healthy and so should be pushed to 18 for people to decide for themselves."*
- *"18 is no longer a child"*
- *"Because they are still classed as a teenage person and still growing - energy drinks are bad for you"*
- *"Because they are still developing"*
- *"I feel 16 and 17 year olds are still children."*
- *"Because caffeine can be bad for kids' concentration"*

Reasons given by respondents supporting age-based restrictions at 16:

- *"Because by this age they are still developing their brains and they need to take in more healthy things"*
- *"There is no need for kids to have caffeine at that age"*
- *"Because of the health implications"*
- *"After 16 they should be capable of understanding the risks"*
- *"I feel like it's not as potentially harmful as other things that are 18+"
To allow for college or year 11 students to access these as they have exams"*

Scope of ban

Vending machines

- 76% of all adults believe sales of high-caffeine energy drinks should be banned in vending machines. This rises to 81% for parents with children under 18s.
- Only 55% of 18-24 year olds believe high-caffeine energy drinks should be banned in vending machines. However only 17% disagree.

Online retailers or websites

- 76% of all adults believe sales of high-caffeine energy drinks should be banned for children online retailers or websites. This rises to 81% for parents with children under 18s.
- 63% of 18-24 year olds believe high-caffeine energy drinks should be banned for children online or websites

Corner shops / Newsagents / Local independent shops

- 75% of all adults believe high-caffeine energy drinks should be banned for children in corner shops, newsagents and local independent shops. This rises to 82% for parents with children under 18s.
- 59% of 18-24 year olds believe high-caffeine energy drinks should be banned for children in corner shops, newsagents and local independent shops.

Supermarkets

- 75% of all adults believe high-caffeine energy drinks should be banned for children in supermarkets. This rises to 80% for parents with children under 18s.
- 61% of 18-24 year olds believe high-caffeine energy drinks should be banned for children in supermarkets.

Additional measures

We asked about public support for additional measures that could be taken to protect children in relation to high-caffeine energy drinks. The wording of this question was as follows: "There are various additional measures that could be taken to protect children in relation to high-caffeine energy drinks. For each measure below, please indicate whether you would support or oppose its introduction."

More prominent warning labels

- 79% of all adults support more prominent warning labels. This rises to 83% for parents with children under-18s.
- 62% of 18-24 year olds support more prominent warning labels.

Public awareness campaigns

- 78% of all adults and 82% of parents of under-18s support the introduction of public awareness campaigns about potential risks of consuming high-caffeine drinks.
- 60% of 18-24 year olds support public awareness campaigns.

Advertising restrictions online

- 72% of all adults and 75% of parents of under-18s support restrictions on advertising high-caffeine energy drinks online.
- 42% of 18-24 year olds support online restrictions

Advertising restrictions on high-caffeine energy drinks on TV before 9pm

- 72% of all adults and parents of children under 18s support restrictions on advertising of high-caffeine energy drinks on TV before 9pm
- 48% of 18-24 year olds support as well.

Outdoor advertising restrictions on high-caffeine energy drinks (e.g., billboards, posters, etc.)

- 70% of all adults and 73% of parents of children under 18s support outdoor advertising restrictions on high-caffeine energy drinks (e.g., billboards, posters, etc.)
- 48% of 18-24 year olds support these measures.

Sports sponsorship by energy drink companies

- 68% of all adults and 71% of parents support restrictions on sports sponsorship by energy drink companies.
- 47% of 18-24 year olds support restrictions on sports sponsorship.

Appendix B: Too Cool to Resist? A Pictorial Analysis of Energy Drink Packaging

Energy drinks attract young people through their bold colours, striking graphics, and eye-catching packaging. They also often use marketing tactics such as buzz words that can be misleading and intentionally appealing to younger audiences. Meanwhile, the health warning labels are typically placed on the back of the can in small, unclear print, making them easy for consumers, especially young people, to overlook. Sustain have completed a pictorial analysis of the most popular energy drinks for young people.



All image credits: Barbara Crowther, Sustain

sustain
the alliance for better food and farming

Click the link to see Children's Food Campaign [full pictorial analysis of energy drinks](#)

Appendix C – Ending the Sale of High Caffeine Energy Drinks to Children

List of source documents referenced in Sustain Submission

[1] Ajibo, C et al., (2024) Consumption of energy drinks by children and young people: a systematic review examining evidence of physical effects and consumer attitudes. Public Health. V.227. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.puhe.2023.08.024>

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