

Age restricted products

UK legislation prohibits the sale, supply, offer to supply, or hire of specified products to persons under the minimum legal age. There are age restrictions (under the age of 18) applicable to tobacco products, offensive weapons (knives and similar), crossbows, adult fireworks, solvents, airguns, lighter refills containing butane, and alcohol. There are age restrictions (under the age of 16) applicable to low hazard, low noise fireworks (party poppers and similar products), lottery tickets, aerosol paint, and liqueur confectionery. The age restriction for Christmas crackers is 12. There are different age restrictions on videos, DVDs, and Blu-Ray discs (collectively referred to here as 'video recordings' - 12 and over, 15 and over, and 18 and over) and video games (12 and over, 16 and over, and 18 and over).

Legislation also provides requirements for certain warnings and notices to be displayed when selling particular products. Traders should always ask young people to produce proof of their age, such as the national Proof of Age Standards Scheme (PASS) card, a photocard driving licence or a passport. Any refusals of restricted products to underage children should be logged on a refusal sales sheet or in a refusal book.

Other products that carry or are accompanied by a minimum age indication (based on requirement for compliance with a standard or on the manufacturer's own risk assessment) should not be sold to a child under that age. For example, uninflated balloons should not be sold to unaccompanied children under eight because they pose a choking risk when young children try to inflate them.

Importers of clothing should be aware that UK standards restrict the use of cords (and some other features) on garment sizes intended for children under a certain age, and that Trading Standards Authorities frequently make test purchases of these items to check compliance.