

Leighton Andrews AC / AM  
Y Gweinidog Gwasanaethau Cyhoeddus  
Minister for Public Services



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Ann Jones AM  
National Assembly for Wales

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*Dear Ann*

In Plenary on 19 May you raised the issue of fire safety in relation to children's fancy dress clothing and the recent high-profile case in which the daughter of a well-known TV presenter suffered severe burns when the Halloween costume she was wearing caught fire.

I acknowledge your concerns. Items of children's fancy dress clothing are currently treated as toys for the purposes of product safety and are, therefore, not subject to the stringent standards set for children's nightwear to be fireproof and flame retardant. Fancy dress costumes are clearly clothing, not toys and are often made of low-cost but highly flammable fabrics which can melt on to the skin, causing severe burns.

The obvious solution is for fancy dress clothing to be subject to the same fire safety standards as children's nightwear and the Chief Fire Officers' Association has called strongly for this change. In response, Sainsbury's has already decided that, from Halloween 2015, it will only sell fancy dress which meets these standards. Others, including Marks and Spencer, Tesco and Asda, have also made positive commitments in this area.

I fully support their stance, but we should not have to rely solely on the goodwill of retailers. Parents have the right to expect that clothes they buy for their children are safe. However, product safety standards for children's clothing are not devolved to Wales. Instead, it is for the UK Government to respond to this issue, and to change the law accordingly.

I will ensure the Fire and Rescue Services incorporates appropriate fire safety advice in its safety campaigns, especially around Halloween and Guy Fawkes Night.

*Best wishes*  
*Leighton Andrews*

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*Wedi'i argraffu ar bapur wedi'i ailgylchu (100%)*

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