

A Consultation on fireworks in Scotland: Your experiences, your ideas, your views

**Analysis of responses to the public
consultation exercise**

October 2019

A Consultation on fireworks in Scotland: Your experiences, your ideas, your views

Analysis of responses to the public
consultation exercise

October 2019



Contents

Executive Summary	i
Introduction.....	1
Background to the consultation	1
Profile of main consultation respondents.....	1
Profile of events.....	2
Social media engagement.....	3
Analysis and reporting	4
Part One: How are fireworks used in Scotland?	5
Part Two: Legislation and regulation	12
Sale of fireworks	12
Use of fireworks.....	23
Part Three: Prevention and community involvement	27
Community involvement	29
Communication and awareness raising.....	32
Part Four: Animal welfare	36
Summary of key themes	41
Annex 1 - Organisations responding to the consultation.....	43
Annex 2 - Results at closed questions by respondent type.....	48
Annex 3 - Summary of social media Polls.....	56

Executive Summary

This summary presents the key themes to emerge from the Scottish Government's consultation on fireworks. The focus of the consultation was on gathering the public's views on the use and regulation of fireworks in Scotland.

In total, 16,420 responses were available for analysis. In addition to the online consultation, 29 events were held across Scotland and a range of social media platforms were used to seek people's views. The main issues and themes raised by participants were similar across the different ways of taking part in the consultation.

Answers to the closed questions to the online consultation

- A majority of respondents, **70%** of those answering the question, reported that they had been **affected by fireworks used in an irresponsible or unsafe way**.
- A very substantial majority, **94%** of those answering the question, thought there should be **more controls over the sale of fireworks**. Individual respondents were more likely than organisations to think there should be more controls – at 94% and 78% respectively.
- A majority of respondents, **87%** of those answering the question, would **welcome a ban on the sale of fireworks to the public in Scotland**. Of the remaining respondents, 10% would not welcome a ban and 4% were unsure. Individual respondents were much more likely than organisations to think there should be a ban - at 87% and 40% respectively.
- A very substantial majority, **92%** of those answering the question, thought there should be **more controls over how fireworks can be used in Scotland**. Individual respondents were more likely than organisations to think there should be more controls – at 92% and 73% respectively.
- A very substantial majority, **93%** of those answering the question, thought there should be **more controls to make sure animals are not caused unnecessary suffering because of the use of fireworks**. Individual respondents were more likely than organisations to think there should be more controls – at 93% and 80% respectively.

Views of those favouring more controls on the sale or use of fireworks or for a ban on sales to the public

A substantial proportion of respondents went on to make further comments at these questions, ranging from 10,940 comments from those who said they had been affected by the use of fireworks up to 14,290 from those looking for more controls on sales of fireworks to the public.

Key themes to emerge from the further comments of those favouring more controls or a ban were:

- General comments in support of a ban on the sale of fireworks to the public or on the general public having access to, and being able to use, fireworks.

- Frequent references to the harm fireworks can do, particularly in relation to pets, wildlife and livestock. There were particular references to dogs, cats and horses. Animal-related incidents and concerns often centred around the noise made by fireworks and the need to put in place special measures to keep animals, and especially pets in the home, safe and well. However, it noted that this anti-stress medication cannot be taken for prolonged periods and that most animals will not be afforded this type of protection.
- Associated concerns about the period over which fireworks may be released and that they are increasingly being used at any time of year, but in particular between October and January. The connection was sometimes made with the period over which fireworks are on sale.
- Reports that fireworks are being used in places which respondents considered inappropriate, such as back gardens in built-up residential areas or near fields containing livestock.
- Concerns about fireworks being set off in locations where it is not legal to do so, such as in the street or other public places.
- Reports of indiscriminate or dangerous use of fireworks in public spaces were often connected with a perception that young people and children have no difficulties in accessing fireworks - either because they are being sold to them in shops/pop-up shops or because adults are buying and passing them on.
- The type of incidents respondents referred to included witnessing or hearing about fireworks being used as 'weapons' against the emergency services, seeing fireworks being thrown at cars or buses and reading about fireworks being used to injure/torture animals.
- A number of respondents referred to either themselves, family members or friends having been injured by fireworks, albeit some of these reports were historic. The resource implications for the NHS of caring for those with firework-related injuries were also noted.
- Respondents also commented that some types of people or people with particular experiences may find fireworks especially distressing or frightening. Examples given included people with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), autistic people, people with mental health problems, people with dementia, people with learning disabilities, some older people and those with a sensory impairment.
- In terms of solutions other than a ban, respondents referred to allowing organised displays only, having a licensing or permit system for selling, purchasing or use, raising the age at which people can buy fireworks, reducing noise levels or only allowing silent fireworks and to increased penalties for misuse.
- On the latter theme of misuse, respondents often spoke of the need to enforce both current and any future legislation or regulation. This was sometimes associated with a view that the Police need to have a more visible presence within communities being adversely affected by fireworks.

Views of those who did not favour more controls or a ban on sale to the public

A substantial proportion of respondents who were not looking for more controls or who did not support a ban also made further comments (ranging from around 280 of the respondents who did not favour more control on sales up to around 920 respondents who did not favour a ban).

Key themes to emerge from the further comments of those who did not favour more controls or a ban were:

- Concerns that a ban or further controls would represent a curtailment of freedom of choice and would be a ‘nanny state’ solution to a relatively minor issue. There was also a view that it is neither fair nor reasonable to penalise the responsible majority for the actions of the irresponsible few.
- Pet owners need to take responsibility for the care and training of their animals, including ensuring that they become used to loud noises.
- There was also a view that the Scottish Government is listening to, or risks being swayed by, a small but vocal minority, including amongst them irresponsible pet owners who have not properly trained their animals.

Other issues raised

The consultation also covered prevention and community involvement. One area in which some respondents saw a particular role for key partners, such as national and local government and the Emergency Services, was in relation to enforcement of current regulations or of any future regulations. On a similar theme, some respondents referred to the need to make sure that existing penalties for misuse of fireworks are imposed, including for businesses that mis-sell, and for organisations or members of the public who misuse fireworks.

There was a frequent view that communities could support organised displays or that community groups could arrange displays. It was often suggested that such displays should be safe, well organised and inclusive, in terms of accessibility and affordability.

Arguments that communities cannot or should not be involved in supporting the safe use of fireworks were also made, often by respondents who saw the issue as a matter for government and for law enforcement.

Awareness-raising work, usually in the form of publicity campaigns or advertising, was generally seen as offering benefits, with suggestions that real-life stories should be used, and a hard-hitting approach, including the use of graphic imagery of harm caused to people and animals. There were also calls for a focus on raising awareness through the education system, including through schools and colleges.

Introduction

Background to the consultation

This report presents the analysis of responses to the Scottish Government's consultation on fireworks. The focus of the consultation was on gathering the public's views on the use and regulation of fireworks in Scotland. While much of the current legislation on fireworks is reserved to Westminster the consultation sought to identify gaps, issues or unintended consequences with the current regulatory framework and to hear any views on whether regulations on the use of fireworks needs to be improved.

The consultation was launched on 3 February, ran for 14 weeks, and closed on 13 May 2019. The consultation paper can be found at: <https://consult.gov.scot/safer-communities/fireworks/>.

The consultation asked 10 questions, with seven closed questions and nine opportunities to provide further comments¹.

Profile of main consultation respondents

In total 16,583 responses were received. Of these, 163 were removed as they were either duplicate or triplicate responses². The remaining 16,420 responses were available for analysis.

Most responses were received through the Scottish Government's Citizen Space consultation hub. Where consent has been given to publish the response it can be found at: https://consult.gov.scot/safer-communities/fireworks/consultation/published_select_respondent.

Respondents were asked to identify whether they were responding as an individual or on behalf of a group or organisation. Most responses (16,322 of those available for analysis) were submitted by individual members of the public. The remaining 98 responses were submitted by groups or organisations.

¹ The consultation also provided two opportunities for people to provide examples of good practice - the first in relation to how communities are involved in organising or promoting the safe and responsible use of fireworks, and the second in relation to how individuals or communities act to reduce the impact of fireworks on animals. Responses to these questions have been analysed by the Scottish Government and reports are available on request. These examples of good practice are being considered alongside the analysis of responses to the main consultation questions.

² A response was taken to be a duplicate/triplicate if both the respondent name and email address matched. If the answers at the closed questions matched across duplicate/triplicate responses, the comments at the open questions was merged. If the answers at the closed questions differed, the most recently submitted response was included within the analysis.

Organisational respondents were allocated to one of 15 groups by the analysis team and the Scottish Government³.

A breakdown of the number of responses received by respondent type is set out in Table 1 below and a full list of organisational respondents can be found in Annex 1.

Table 1: Respondents by type

Type of respondent	Number
Organisations:	
Animal-related third sector or community group	19
Animal-related private sector	5
Community council	19
Community group	9
Community safety organisation	2
Community-based firework display	2
Emergency Service	1
Firework events company	1
Fireworks professional or representative body	3
Fireworks retailer or supplier	5
Local authority	15
Professional or representative body	4
Third sector - non animal-related	2
Young peoples' group or service	5
Other	6
Organisations	98
Individuals	16,322
All respondents	16,420

Profile of events

In addition to the online consultation, 24 public events were held across Scotland. All events were advertised on the consultation website on Citizen Space and were promoted via a variety of stakeholders. Event information was also shared on a wide range of social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook, and a letter was issued to every community council and community safety partnership to raise awareness and garner interest.

³ A list of organisation typologies was developed by the analytical team with assistance from the Scottish Government, and organisations were assigned to the most appropriate typology. In many cases organisations could fall into more than one group so the analytical team selected the one they felt was the most appropriate.

Events were held in 12 locations across Scotland and, in most of these locations, an event was run in the afternoon and evening. The locations were:

- Aberdeen
- Ayr
- Dumfries & Galloway
- Dundee
- Edinburgh
- Elgin
- Inverness
- Glasgow
- Paisley
- Perth
- Stirling
- Stornoway.

Each event was facilitated by Scottish Government officials and the majority were supported by the Scottish Community Safety Network. In addition to the 24 public engagement events, three additional events were held for specific population groups – one for the South Asian community in Pollokshields, and two for young people, one through Young Scot and one through a fire skills course for young people run by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS). A further two events for young people, held in Edinburgh youth centres, were supported by the Scottish Community Safety Network.

A total of 258 people participated in discussion across the 29 events.

Social media engagement

During the consultation, a range of social media platforms were also used to seek people's views and opinions. Four polls were carried out - two on Facebook on Sunday 3 February and Monday 15 April, and two on Twitter on the same dates, asking the following questions:

- **Poll 1:** Do you think we should have tighter control over the public sale of fireworks? (Facebook, 3 February).
- **Poll 2:** Do you think we should have tighter control over the public sale of fireworks? (Twitter, 3 February 2019).
- **Poll 3:** Do you think there should be more controls on the use of fireworks to make sure animals are not caused unnecessary suffering? (Facebook, 15 April).
- **Poll 4:** Have you ever been affected by fireworks being used in an irresponsible or unsafe way?" (Twitter, 15 April).

The first two polls carried out on Facebook and Twitter on 3 February, which coincided with the launch of the consultation, received the highest number of responses: 15,300 and 12,745 respectively. The Facebook poll carried out on 15 April received 5,500 responses and the Twitter poll carried out on the same date received 358 votes. Analysis of social media activity was carried out by the Scottish Government and a summary of findings is included at Annex 3.

Analysis and reporting

The remainder of this report presents a question-by-question analysis of the comments made to the main consultation and at consultation events. Summary results for the closed questions are presented in chart form. The full breakdown by respondent type is provided at Annex 2.

A small number of respondents did not make their submission on the consultation questionnaire but submitted their comments in a statement-style format. This content was analysed qualitatively under the most directly relevant consultation question.

The comment rate was very high across all the questions, with the themes raised across the questions often very similar. To avoid repetition, the most detailed analysis of each broader theme raised is presented at the most directly relevant question.

The analysis presented below is designed to give an overview of the type and range of views expressed. Please note that the language used within the report reflects that used by respondents. This includes in relation to the irresponsible use, misuse or illegal use of fireworks. However, further comments sometimes suggested that use of fireworks which some respondents referred to as misuse or illegal would not contravene current legislation or regulations.

As with any public consultation exercise, it should be noted that those responding generally have a particular interest in the subject area and the views they express cannot be seen as representative of wider public opinion.

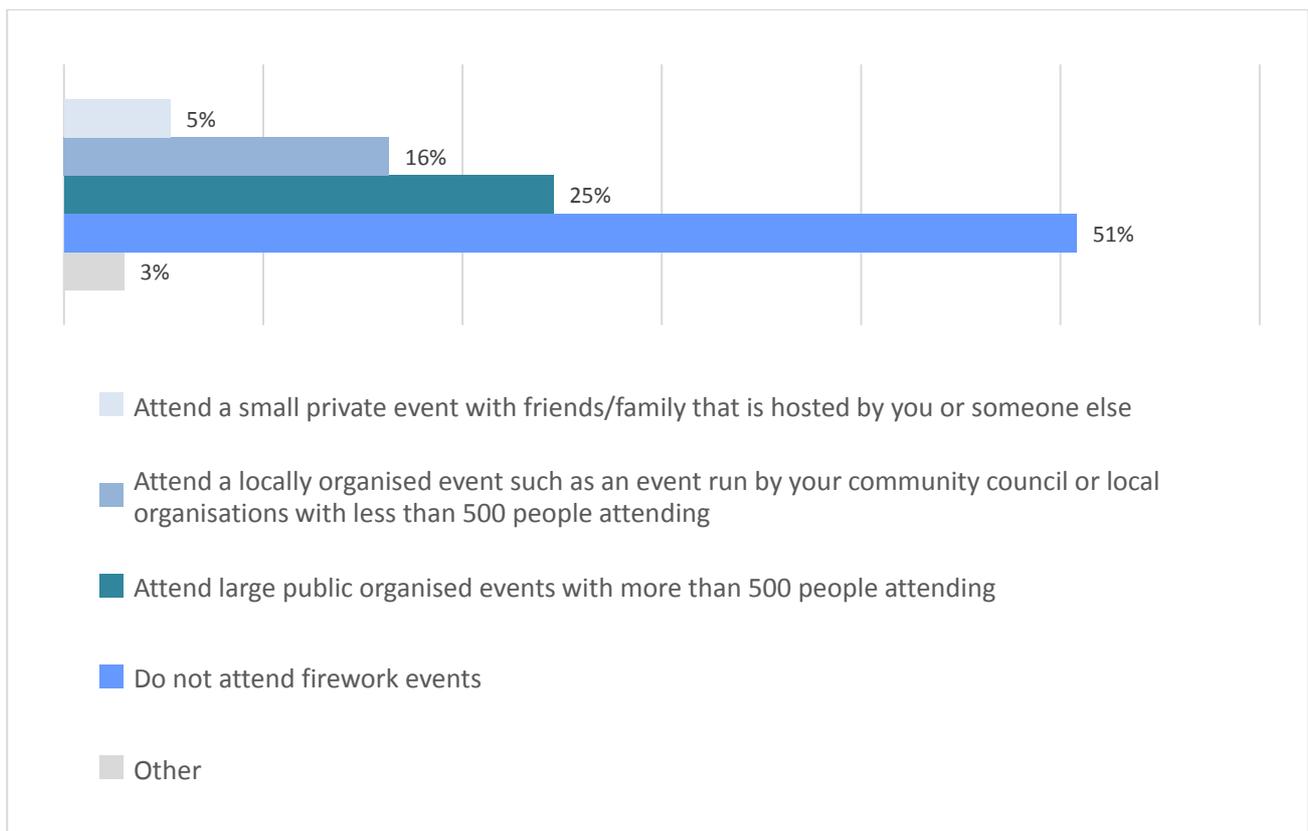
Part One: How are fireworks used in Scotland?

The consultation paper notes that fireworks are often associated with celebration and events that bring communities, friends and families together. These events can be formally organised by the local authority, a local community council or organised community group, but can also be set off in private spaces such as people’s back gardens. Some of these celebrations are:

- Diwali
- New Year
- Bonfire night – or “Guy Fawkes night”
- Festival fireworks
- Weddings.

Question 1 - What is the main way you typically enjoy and experience fireworks?

Figure 1: Question 1 - What is the main way you typically enjoy and experience fireworks? (n = 16,274)



Just over half of respondents, 51% of those answering the question, reported that they did not attend fireworks events. Of the remaining respondents, 25% said they attend large public organised events with more than 500 people attending, and 16% a locally organised event with fewer than 500 people attending. Only 5% of

respondents said they attend a small private event hosted by themselves or someone else.

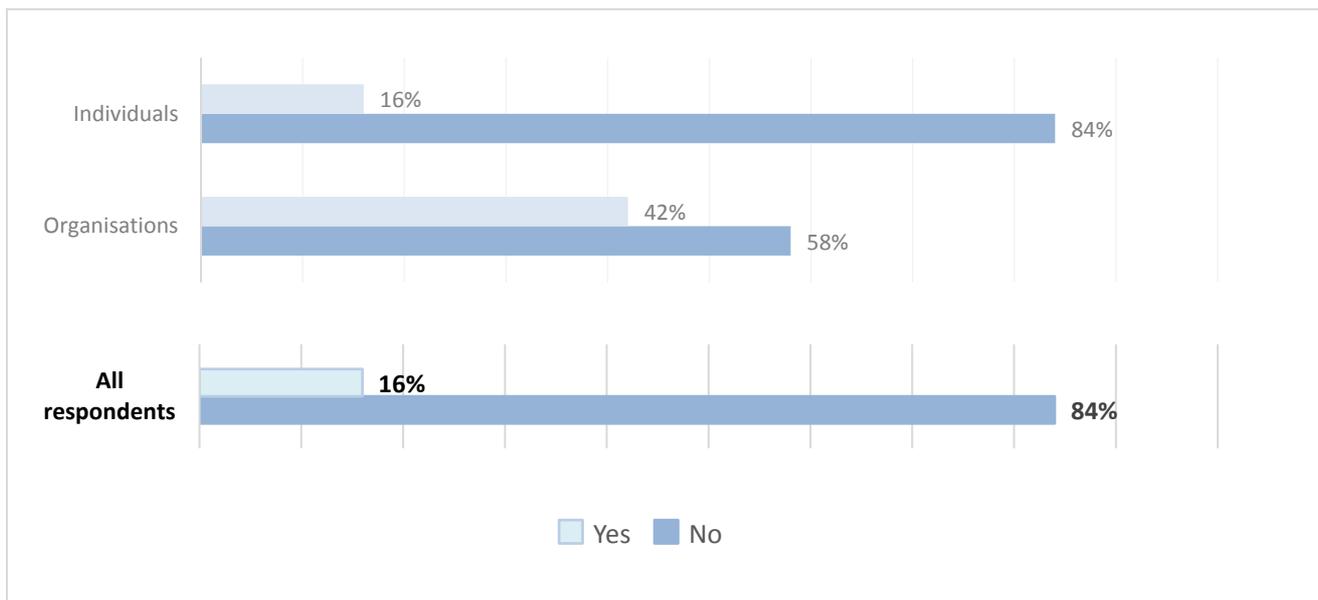
Of the 491 respondents who answered 'Other', 487 went on to make a further comment. Most frequently, respondents explained that they do not go to events because they need to stay with pets or that they simply do not like fireworks.

Ways of enjoying fireworks identified included watching displays from their home or garden, only attending professional displays, attending a mix of the types of event set out in the question, or watching firework displays on television.

Question 2 - Would you say that fireworks form an important part of celebration events for you?

A majority of respondents, 84% of those answering the question, said that fireworks do not form an important part of celebrations for them, while 16% said they did. Organisational respondents were more likely than individuals to say that fireworks form an important part of celebration events for them (42% and 16% respectively).

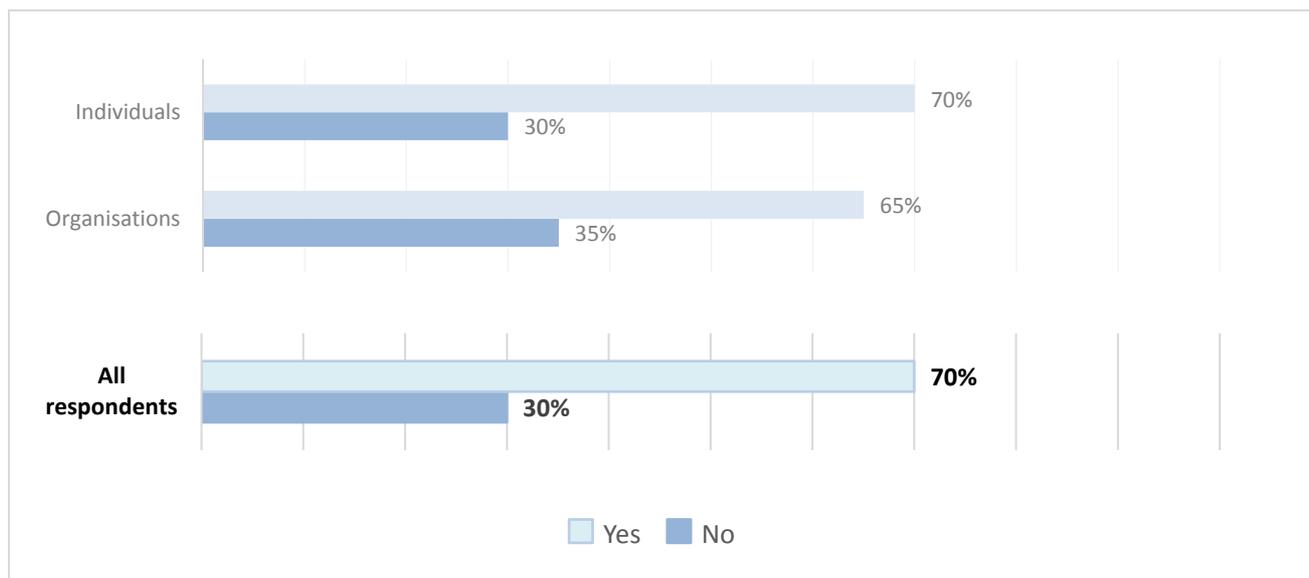
Figure 2: Question 2 - Would you say that fireworks form an important part of celebration events for you? (n = 16,323)



Question 3 - Have you been affected by fireworks being used in an irresponsible or unsafe way?

A majority of respondents, 70% of those answering the question, reported that they had been affected by fireworks used in an irresponsible or unsafe way. The remaining 30% said they had not.

Figure 3: Question 3 - Have you been affected by fireworks being used in an irresponsible or unsafe way? (n = 16,320)



Around 10,940 respondents who said they had been affected went on to provide details, with some of the experiences recounted referring to events from many years ago and others to very recent events.

Impact on pets, livestock and wildlife

Most frequently, respondents commented on the impact on pets, raising concerns or reporting incidents of pets being upset or traumatised as a result of the use/misuse of fireworks. This was very often connected with the more frequent, some said year-round, and apparently random use of fireworks, and with being unable to take measures to protect their pets. A number of animal-related third sector or community group respondents were amongst those raising these issues. For example, an animal-related third sector or community group respondent noted their concerns that fireworks can have a negative impact on the welfare of dogs, including that it is impossible for dog owners to predict or prepare their dogs in advance of fireworks being set off.

Many of the other concerns or reports were also focused on dogs and often noted that, while not all dogs are affected, those that are may experience symptoms ranging from general unease through to extreme distress. The very sensitive nature of dogs' hearing was sometimes highlighted, including because it means dogs can hear fireworks at a much greater distance than humans. A professional or representative body respondent reported that animals have a different hearing range to humans and, as a consequence, many show stress, fear or even phobia responses to loud and high-pitched noises. They went on to note that, while for some animals these fear responses may be transient and decrease as the animal gets used to the noise, a significant proportion will become sensitised and that it is estimated that 45% of dogs show signs of fear when they hear fireworks.

From other respondents, there were reports of their dogs shaking, cowering and hiding, not being able to leave the home (leading to fouling indoors) and being unable to eat. As pet owners, respondents sometimes reported feelings of upset

and helplessness when having to watch the effects on their pet and being unable to alleviate those effects:

My little dog is petrified for a month leading up to 5th November, and then the same at Christmas. A usually happy dog she cowers in corners and refuses to go outside. She shakes and is so scared, I have purchased stress relief tablets and sprays, a thunder shirt, but nothing works. It is so upsetting to watch this, and we feel totally helpless...

Individual respondent

Some dog and other pet owners spoke of seeking veterinary advice or treatment, usually in the form of tranquilisers. However, it was noted that while tranquilisers may be used for a short while, the lengthening of the main fireworks season makes this an increasingly impractical option. The costs associated with trying to help their dog or other pet, including by seeking veterinary treatment, were highlighted by some.

In terms of other types of pets that may be particularly distressed by fireworks, respondents spoke of cats, rabbits and birds. There were also reports of horses or ponies becoming distressed by the sound of fireworks, with the challenges associated with protecting an animal which lives primarily out of doors, and potentially at some distance from their owner, highlighted. As with other animals, respondents spoke of horses being traumatised and sometimes injuring themselves. There were a small number of reports of broken limbs or other bones meaning horses had to be euthanised.

There were also reports of dogs and cats injuring themselves or being injured or killed as a result of running onto roads or railway tracks, or of animals dying from heart attacks or extreme stress reactions. Some respondents also noted that they had read or heard about animals being deliberately injured or killed, for example by youths attaching fireworks to their tails.

There were some specific references to support dogs, including guide or hearing dogs, and the adverse impact that fireworks can have on their training and/or their ability to do their work. These included comments from those responsible for their training.

Respondents also commented on the impact that fireworks can have on other animals, including livestock and wildlife. For example, there were reports of sheep and cattle stampeding or injuring themselves, and a small number of respondents who identified themselves as being farmers spoke of occasions where fireworks have impacted negatively on lambing and marketing cycles, meaning financial loss for their business. A Professional or representative body respondent reported that their members have experienced problems with livestock being spooked or injured as a result of fireworks being used irresponsibly and spent fireworks littering grazing land and crops.

When fireworks are being used

Respondents also commented on when fireworks are being used, often (as above) making the connection with the impact on animals and the inability to plan.

Respondents spoke of the 'core' fireworks season as no longer being restricted to Bonfire night and the closest weekend, but as extending from Halloween through to New Year and beyond.

For some, the perceived increase in the number of occasions when fireworks are being let off in their community was a source of annoyance or distress. This was sometimes compounded by where and by whom those fireworks were being used:

Every year our area is blighted by youths and young men throwing fireworks in the street and in common back courts at all hours of the day and night. In the worst years this begins in September and continues until January peaking in October/November.

Individual respondent

Concerns were raised about the times of day when fireworks were being let off in their communities, including reports that they are being used during daylight (with possible consequences for the safety of people and animals) and late at night. In the latter case, a number of people spoke of their own or their children's sleep being disturbed, sometimes over prolonged periods. The impact on shift workers of fireworks being let off during the daytime or early hours of the morning was also noted.

While many of the references to animals becoming upset referred to the use of fireworks after dark, there were also a number of reports of dogs being exposed to fireworks being let off during the day and to this being impossible for pet owners to predict and plan for.

Types of fireworks

In addition to the times of day or night at which fireworks were being let off, respondents also commented on the impact of the noise levels and strength of fireworks being used. There was a clear perception that manufacturers are making louder fireworks, and that louder and more powerful fireworks that would once have been confined to organised displays are now easily accessible to the general public.

The impact of higher noise levels, combined with higher frequency of use, was occasionally described as making people feel as if they were living in a war zone. Although noise-related concerns were usually associated with what respondents saw as misuse of fireworks (in terms of being let off in the street, at unpredictable times in back gardens etc), there were also references to noise levels associated with both public, organised displays and displays at private venues/for private events such as weddings.

In terms of references to particular types of fireworks, there were suggestions that bangers have been, or remain, an issue⁴ and in particular that they are falling into the hands of young people and children who let them off in the streets.

There were also concerns that some types of fireworks, most especially those that leave debris some distance from where fireworks are let off, are having a serious environmental impact. There were reports of people finding firework litter in their garden or on the roof of their home, in public parks, in the street or on beaches.

Misuse of fireworks, including targeted misuse

As noted above, respondents often highlighted aspects of their lives that are being, or have been, affected by other people's use of fireworks. A community safety organisation respondent reported that they are aware of a significant number of injuries from the use of fireworks in Scotland and that some are caused by irresponsible use.

Respondents often referred to what they considered the antisocial use, misuse or illegal use of fireworks. However, comments suggested that at least some of this activity (for example people letting off fireworks during the evening in their back garden) would fall within current legal parameters governing the use of fireworks. This also applied to many of the comments referring to young people or children misusing (as opposed to purchasing) fireworks. Controls over sale and use of fireworks are discussed further at Questions 4 and 6 in particular.

Other comments did suggest clear misuse and/or possible illegal use, particularly in relation to letting off fireworks in the street, throwing fireworks or deliberately using fireworks in a way that could result in injury to a person or animal, or damage to property. Other respondents referred to witnessing fireworks being thrown, usually by young people, at pedestrians, animals, or passing cars. The connection between such behaviour and being under the influence of alcohol was sometimes made.

Some respondents referred to either being the target, witnessing or hearing about someone being the target of a firework-related incident or attack. These included reports having been a target when simply walking along the road, or in a public space, often with their dog(s). There were also a number of reports of fireworks being thrown at prams, pushchairs and children. For example:

In 2018 my 3 year old daughter and I had a firework thrown at us in the street around the corner from where we live. It nearly blew up in her face and has made her (and myself) terrified of them.

Individual respondent

A number of reports referred to fireworks being thrown at or into cars, and the potential for a very serious accident was sometimes highlighted. More generally, some respondents spoke of either themselves or friends or family members being physically injured; most frequently the references were to burns and/or serious

⁴ Fireworks associated with antisocial behaviour such as bangers, air bombs and jumping jacks are already banned. It was not always clear whether respondents were referring to historic or more recent/current use of bangers.

injuries to eyes and faces. An Emergency Service respondent reported that in 2017 a Police Sergeant sustained serious injuries as a result of fireworks being thrown and fired at officers. They noted that, in addition to this, there were a number of incidents where emergency service personnel were deliberately targeted by groups of youths at unauthorised bonfires and elsewhere.

Respondents also highlighted both the potential for damage and actual firework-related damage to property that they had seen. As at other questions, some of the comments made direct reference to the area in which respondents lived and covered a diverse range of primarily urban areas. There were also specific references to recent events in Glasgow:

My wife and I have lived in Pollokshields, Glasgow which every autumn is plagued with problems caused by fireworks misuse. We've witnessed a Mini in flames from a box of fireworks placed underneath the chassis, young people blowing up bins and filming the vandalism on their phones, as well as difficulty walking home from work - essentially running a gauntlet of teenagers aiming fireworks at each other, cars and the public.

Individual respondent

Part Two: Legislation and Regulation

The consultation asked three questions about legislation and regulation.

Legislation regulates the sale and use of fireworks. There are controls on who can sell fireworks, which types are available to the public, who can buy and possess fireworks, how they must be stored, and where and when fireworks may be used.

Further detail on the controls and legislation surrounding fireworks sale and use is provided in a technical annex to the consultation paper, which can be accessed at <https://consult.gov.scot/safer-communities/fireworks>.

Sale of fireworks

For most of the year fireworks can only be sold by licensed traders. Licensing the sale of fireworks is done by local authorities, and traders have to meet very strict criteria to receive a licence. In the run up to New Year, Chinese New Year and Diwali, and for the three weeks before Bonfire night, traders registered with their local authority to store fireworks do not require a specific sales licence. Instead they are required to register with the relevant local authority. Local authorities have no powers to refuse registration at these times.

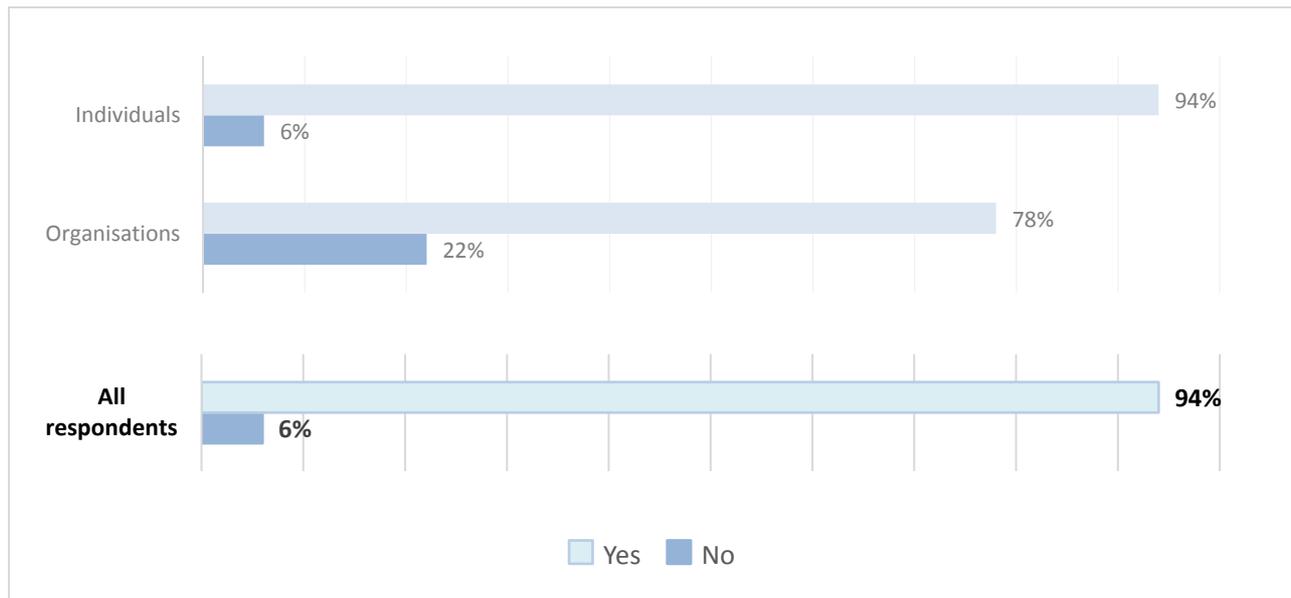
It is illegal to sell outdoor fireworks to anyone who is less than 18 years old. It is illegal to sell indoor fireworks (such as sparklers) to anyone who is less than 16 years old.

Fireworks which make a noise of over 120 decibels when they are set off, or fireworks that require specialist knowledge to use safely, cannot be sold to the general public at any time. Fireworks associated with antisocial behaviour such as bangers, air bombs and jumping jacks are also banned at all times.

Question 4 - Do you think there should be more controls over the sale of fireworks?

A very substantial majority, 94% of those answering the question, thought there should be more controls over the sale of fireworks. Individual respondents were more likely than organisations to think there should be more controls - 94% and 78% respectively.

Figure 4: Question 4 – Do you think there should be more controls over the sale of fireworks? (n = 16,349)



Views of those who favoured more controls over sale

Around 14,290 respondents who favoured more controls over the sale of fireworks to the public in Scotland went on to make a further comment. The focus of the analysis presented below is on types of control of sale. Issues relating to why respondents were looking for greater controls on sales, or a ban on sales to the public, are covered at Question 5.

The two most frequently raised issues were that there should be no sale of fireworks to members of the public and that fireworks should only be available to purchase for use at organised displays. Many respondents connected these two points but made no other comment. For example:

No public sale and used for organised events only with permits required.

Individual respondent

Licensing

Many respondents referenced licences or permits, and again a connection was often made with organised displays and that a licensing or permit system, either for the displays themselves or for the purchaser of fireworks, should be in place. Comparisons were sometimes made to other instances where licensing of sales is in place, particularly in relation to potentially dangerous articles or substances, such as guns, explosives or alcohol.

Calls for licensing were often associated with sales of fireworks being restricted to people trained in the use of fireworks and/or there being a named person, with appropriate training or qualifications, for any event or company purchasing fireworks. Others commented on possible arrangements if fireworks are available for purchase by members of the public, with a common position summed up as follows:

If they are to be sold to the public then surely some sort of registration procedure should be introduced. This could be applying and registering to be allowed to buy and use fireworks. Without registering you should not be allowed to buy/use fireworks. This would make the people buying them more accountable.

Individual respondent

A suggestion from the consultation events was that a more onerous licensing regime could help deter impulse purchasing as well as providing the opportunity to improve recording, management and traceability of how fireworks are being used.

Where and when fireworks should be sold

Other comments related to where, when or to whom fireworks should be sold. Respondents sometimes explained that their preference would be for a ban on sales to the public and that the further comments they were making were either in case that were not possible or were in relation to sales for organised displays.

In addition to general references to the need to tighten regulations or restrictions relating to the sale of fireworks, there were suggestions that:

- Fireworks should only be available from specialist, licensed shops.
- Supermarkets are not appropriate places to buy fireworks.
- Smaller, local outlets are not appropriate places to buy fireworks.

In their comments about supermarkets or smaller shops, some respondents expressed a view that they are less likely to carry out the necessary age-related checks or are less able to give safety advice to purchasers. A theme from the consultation events was that point of purchase can be key both for education and for awareness raising and sharing messages on good practice. It was suggested that guidance could be developed to support sellers to ask the right questions, such as where someone is planning to set off fireworks and who will be in charge.

In terms of when fireworks can be sold, comments included that the sales period for fireworks should be constrained or reduced relative to the current time frames. This sometimes translated into fireworks only being available for purchase over a shorter period, for example for a few days or a week prior to 5th November. This issue was also highlighted at the consultation events, with the length of time that fireworks are available for sale generally considered to be too long. Tightening up on the period of sale was seen as a good way of reducing the length of time when fireworks are being set off. A local authority respondent suggested that fireworks should only be available for public purchase in the one week lead up to the celebrations and festivals set out in the consultation paper.

Taken together, an example of the comments about when and where fireworks could be sold is:

There is no need to sell fireworks several weeks before events such as New Years, Diwali and Bonfire night. The sale of these fireworks should be restricted to certain, dedicated, licensed fireworks stores and the free sale should only be permitted within 1 week of a publicly

recognised event. Supermarkets and other stores should not be able to sell fireworks at all. They should not be an "easy" thing to get hold of or be encouraged as part of the weekly shop at certain times of year.

Individual respondent

If fireworks are to be sold through shops, there were calls for tighter regulation or checks of those shops and their practice. Specific suggestions included that local authorities should refuse shops a licence to sell fireworks if either there are too many firework outlets in the area, or the area has experienced firework-related antisocial behaviour in the recent past.

Mystery shopping or test purchasing were also proposed; the focus was often on checking that shops are not selling to under-18s and are carrying out all appropriate ID checks to ensure that to be the case.

Two local authority respondents were amongst those suggesting that a challenge 25 system could be introduced and that this would replicate the regime for tobacco, alcohol or vaping.

There were associated suggestions that any shops found to be selling fireworks contrary to regulations should have licences to sell removed and/or that those operating shops should be prosecuted or fined. A local authority respondent proposed introducing a fixed penalty notice and a retailer's banning order regime, similar to the current controls on the sale of tobacco, with enforcement by Trading Standards. The use of Fixed Penalty Notices also emerged as a suggestion from the consultation events.

In addition to commenting on standard retail outlets, some respondents and some of those attending the consultation events also highlighted concerns about 'pop-up shops' selling fireworks. These concerns tended to be focused around a perception that these shops could possibly be unlicensed or unregulated, selling fireworks too cheaply, selling dangerous, high powered fireworks or selling to under-18s. Some of the young people attending a consultation event were amongst those suggesting that it should be harder to buy fireworks.

Those raising these concerns sometimes suggested that pop-up shops selling fireworks should be banned/refused licences or that very tight regulations should be placed on them and they should be subject to very stringent checks (as above). Tightening up on the number of outlets that can sell fireworks within an area was suggested at some of the consultation events.

There were also suggestions that there need to be restrictions governing the sale of fireworks via the internet. Participants at the consultation events raised concerns about an increasing trend to purchase fireworks online and it was suggested that there should be greater controls over the delivery process, for example by requiring signature on arrival or the introduction of a ban on courier delivery.

Other possible controls on sales

Other suggested changes to the basis on which fireworks are sold to the public in Scotland included:

- An increase in the age limit at which fireworks can be purchased, with particular reference to either 21 or 25 years of age being more appropriate than the current threshold of 18 years old.
- Anyone selling fireworks being required to keep a record of all purchases, for example a record that ID checks have been carried out, traceable serial numbers of the fireworks sold recorded and the purchaser signing a disclaimer to say they understand the regulations governing the purchase and use of fireworks. A QR code traceable back to the purchaser was a suggestion made at a consultation event.

Other comments focused on the accessibility and appeal of fireworks and included that fireworks should be made less affordable, including by introducing minimum pricing, for example through increased tax rates, and by banning any '2-for-1' type offers or other discounting. Other suggestions included higher taxation rates/levies for more powerful, noisier fireworks.

On a similar theme of making fireworks less appealing there were a range of comments about not being able to advertise fireworks, not selling fireworks in colourful packaging or with colourful displays designed to attract children or young people, or keeping fireworks locked away and out of sight in the same way that the sale of cigarettes is now controlled.

Controls on the amount or type of fireworks that can be purchased were also proposed. This was sometimes associated with concerns that people may be stockpiling fireworks, and that this may raise very serious concerns relating to unsafe storage of explosives in domestic properties. In line with the higher prices issue raised above, there were also suggestions that only less powerful or quieter/silent fireworks should be available for sale. Silent fireworks are discussed further at Question 10.

Views of those who did not think there should be more controls on sales

Around 280 respondents who did not think there should be more controls on the sale of fireworks went on to make a further comment.

The most frequently made comment was that existing firework-related controls, or controls over the sale of fireworks specifically, are appropriate or sufficient. For example, a Fireworks professional or representative body respondent commented that the safety, storage and sale of fireworks in the UK is one of the most regulated of any industry.

There were also suggestions that the issue is not with the controls themselves, but with their enforcement, or perceived lack thereof. For example:

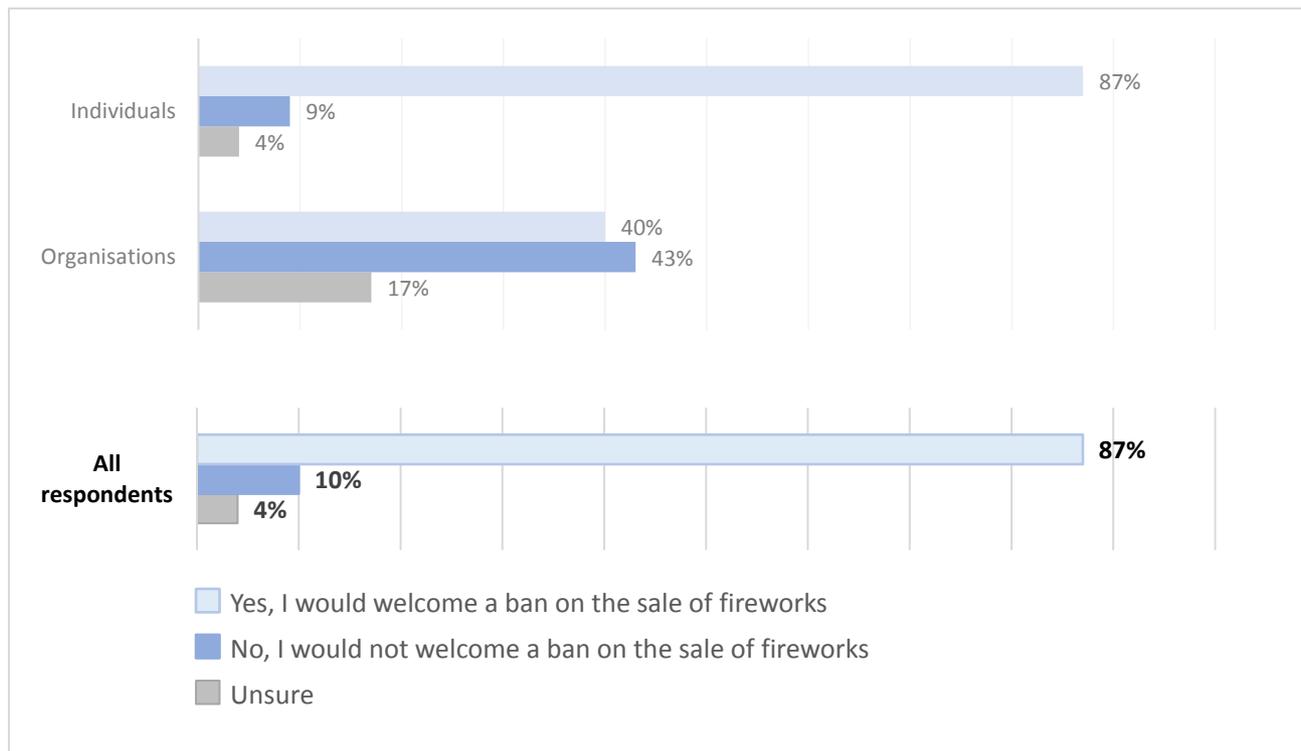
Sufficient legislation exists controlling firework sale. The enforcement of that legislation, or lack of it, is the area that needs to be reviewed.

Individual respondent

A Fireworks retailer or supplier respondent reported that they are subject to checks by the local authority, Police Scotland, SFRS and their insurers. They also noted that they are members of the British Pyrotechnists Association (BPA) and that their trained staff provide a range of safety advice to customers.

Question 5 - What are your views on banning the sale of fireworks to the public in Scotland?

Figure 5: Question 5 – What are your views on banning the sale of fireworks to the public in Scotland? (n = 16,353)



A majority of respondents, 87% of those answering the question, would welcome a ban on the sale of fireworks to the public in Scotland. Of the remaining respondents, 10% would not welcome a ban and 4% were unsure. Individual respondents were much more likely than organisations to think there should be a ban - at 87% and 40% respectively.

Question 5 was the only closed question at which a greater proportion of respondents of one type answered ‘No’; the proportion of organisational respondents that would not welcome a ban being 43% as opposed to the 40% that welcomed a ban. A relatively high 17% of organisations were unsure at Question 5.

Views of those who favoured banning sale to the public

Around 12,230 respondents who would welcome a ban on the sale of fireworks to the public in Scotland went on to make a further comment.

Impact on animals

Very much reflecting the themes covered at Question 3, the most frequently made point was that animals in general, and pets in particular, would be better protected if

the general public were not able to access fireworks for their own use. There were particular references to dogs, cats or horses, but also to other types of pet, including rabbits and birds. Respondents also made specific reference to reducing or removing the impact of fireworks on both livestock and/or wildlife. For example:

Too many animals including wildlife, farm animals, and household pets are traumatised unnecessarily and some even die of shock.

Individual respondent

Misuse or antisocial use of fireworks

Also as at Question 3, respondents often associated animals being distressed or injured by fireworks with their misuse or antisocial use and/or with the locations in which fireworks are set off.

Many of the reports were of fireworks being used in places which respondents considered inappropriate, such as back gardens in built-up residential areas. Concerns were sometimes connected to a perception of risk associated with the proximity of neighbouring properties, over-hanging trees and poor or reckless decisions by those letting off fireworks relating to wind strength or direction.

In other cases, respondents referred to people using fireworks in places or ways that are illegal under current legislation. For example, there were reports of fireworks being let off in:

- Public spaces, including in residential areas. There were references to parks and playgrounds but also to the grounds of schools or other public buildings, car parks or on patches of waste ground.
- The street, including being thrown at cars, buses or pedestrians.
- Closets or stairwells. There were also reports of fireworks being placed in people's rubbish bins or put through their letterboxes.

Some respondents felt that it was often young people who are responsible for using fireworks in the street or targeting people or their property. This was often connected with a view that fireworks can make their way into the hands of under-18s:

Every year without fail in our village there are young ones terrorising people with fireworks and even the police have to drive by because it is so dangerous. It's not just young ones throwing at other young ones, but they are throwing fireworks at parents with children in prams, animals and elderly, even posting through letter boxes and at cars.

Individual respondent

Others did note, however, that people of any age can and do misuse fireworks.

Role of and impact on public services

The role of the emergency and other public services was highlighted by many respondents.

Although some respondents thought that the Police do not prioritise tackling antisocial behaviour associated with fireworks, the considerable majority of those raising this issue saw it as a resourcing issue, including because of a perceived increase in the scale and severity of misuse of fireworks. This was sometimes associated with particular times of year and locations, including around Bonfire night and in parts of Edinburgh or Glasgow. Very much reflecting the concerns of respondents who did not support either a ban or greater controls on sale or use of fireworks, there were suggestions that the current regulations are not enforced or that any changes made in the future will only be of value if they are enforced.

The impact of widespread antisocial behaviour involving fireworks on the emergency and public services more widely was also noted. Respondents spoke of their deep concern about images of fire crews or the police being attacked, including with fireworks being used as 'weapons' against them. More generally, it was noted that fireworks are explosives which are inherently dangerous in their own right, but especially dangerous when used inappropriately or illegally. It was noted that society has clear rules controlling other weapons, including guns or the carrying of knives, but does not appear to apply the same standards to fireworks.

The potential for fireworks to cause injury, whether intentionally or otherwise and whether to the person letting them off or someone else, was highlighted, including by a small number of respondents who identified themselves as working within key public services.

In addition to commenting on the impact the misuse of fireworks has on the police and fire services, the impact on the NHS was often highlighted, including that dealing with firework-related injuries places an avoidable and unnecessary drain on a service that is already under pressure. A third sector non animal-related respondent commented on potential savings to NHS Scotland from not having to treat some horrific physical injuries, along with the psychological impact on those affected, while an Individual respondent described their own experience:

I work as a paediatric nurse in theatres. The life changing injuries we see are horrific. The lengthy and painful treatment these children go through could have been avoided...

Individual respondent

Frequency of use of fireworks

More generally respondents saw part of the problem as being that fireworks are now being let off so frequently and outwith what might be seen as the celebrations traditionally associated with their use. A community council respondent and a Community group respondent were amongst those commenting on the frequent or indiscriminate use of fireworks.

Respondents spoke of neighbours letting off fireworks as part of a range of celebrations, including for christenings, Christmas, birthdays, graduations or in connection with sporting events. Participants at consultation events also felt that the number of privately held displays has increased over recent years and more people are using fireworks to celebrate events such as birthdays and weddings.

The connection with setting off fireworks while under the influence of alcohol was sometimes made by respondents, along with the back-garden settings referred to earlier. Respondents also spoke of the increased number of venues, including those hosting weddings, that now stage frequent but otherwise unpredictable displays.

The frequency and unpredictability with which fireworks are now being let off was sometimes linked to the inability to prepare and protect pets and livestock. With reference to wedding venues, it was noted that these are often in rural locations, or are on the edges of towns or cities, and that their firework displays can cause particular issues for those with livestock or horses in surrounding fields.

Impact on particular types of people

Others, including those attending consultation events, highlighted the impact that hearing fireworks, particularly when unexpected, can have on themselves, family members or potentially vulnerable members of society. There were specific references to:

- People suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), with frequent reference to those who have served in the armed forces. More generally, there were references to veterans.
- Refugees and asylum seekers, and especially those who have lived in war zones.
- Older people, including those with experience of living through the Second World War.
- People with dementia.
- People with mental health problems and suffering from anxiety.
- Children, and especially small children and babies.
- People with sensory issues.
- Autistic people, and especially autistic children.

One respondent explained the impact that fireworks have on their own life:

I am a retired soldier who suffers from PTSD and hyper-vigilance. I also have pets. Late October through to January is awful. People just randomly setting off fireworks all hours of the day and night... I like watching and experiencing firework displays, I just get such a fright when they go off and I've had no warning. My mind like a lot of soldiers interprets a loud bang to a gun shot or an explosion which it is. It's so scary.

Individual respondent

As above, concerns about the impact on some individuals were often about lack of warning that fireworks would be going off, but also about the level of noise some fireworks now make; this was associated with a view that fireworks are getting noisier and becoming more powerful and/or that 'display grade' fireworks are now becoming easily accessible to the general public.

Times of day or night

There were also concerns that fireworks are being let off at inappropriate times of day or night, including during daylight hours or after the 11pm curfew. Again, this was associated with being particularly distressing for vulnerable people and as disturbing the sleep of children in particular. It was noted that daytime fireworks can disturb the sleep of shift workers.

In terms of solutions to the problems identified, some respondents made a general statement in support of banning the sale of fireworks to the general public, including as the best way to protect and promote community safety and wellbeing. This view was often paired with a suggestion, including from a community council respondent and an Animal-related third sector or community group respondent, that only organised and/or licensed firework displays should be permitted. Very much summing up a range of the issues covered earlier, one individual respondent commented:

Quite frankly I don't think they should be sold to the public at all. I think fireworks should only be used at organised firework displays to protect people, animals and property. I firmly believe that this would cut down on the number of fireworks related injuries and fires thereby reducing the demand on medical and fire services, as well as reducing the stress that household pets, small children, people suffering PTSD are subjected to, and reducing potential antisocial behaviour.

Individual respondent

Some of those who referred to organised displays were amongst those who felt that a licensing-based approach – either the licensing of specific events, or of particular people or companies who are trained in the use of fireworks, should underpin any future approach. For example, an Animal-related third sector or community group respondent proposed a licensing system whereby fireworks can be sold to licensed venues only and local authorities would take the location of a venue into account before granting a licence. They also recommended restricting the number of licensed venues per area to limit the impact on dogs.

In addition to being able to introduce safety-focused controls, respondents also noted that having only organised displays would mean that, with the current risk of 'random' use by members of the public removed, people would know that fireworks were to be used and would be able to take measures to protect themselves, vulnerable people in their care, their pets or livestock.

There were also calls for the use of lower decibel or silent fireworks. This issue is discussed further at Question 10. Finally, and in terms of any future approach, respondents highlighted similar issues around enforcement to those covered at the previous question. In particular, respondents suggested that banning the sale of fireworks to the public should dramatically reduce the number of fireworks in circulation and, by default, should make it easier to identify and 'police' any misuse or illegal sales or possession. The issue of enforcement was also a theme highlighted by those who did not agree with banning the sale of fireworks.

Views of those who did not favour banning sale to the public

Around 920 respondents who would not welcome a ban on the sale of fireworks to the public went on to make a further comment.

Most frequently, respondents suggested that many people enjoy being able to use - and by extension buy – fireworks. It was suggested that most people who use fireworks do so responsibly and, on a connected point, that any ban would effectively penalise or punish the law abiding. For example:

A ban would ruin the fun and experience of families who act responsibly. People who act responsibly should not be punished because others can't behave in a manner that abides by the law and takes other people and animals into consideration.

Individual respondent

A fireworks retailer or supplier respondent, a professional or representative body respondent and a Community group respondent were among the organisations suggesting a ban on sales would seem unfair to those who behave responsibly.

For some respondents, a possible ban raised issues of principle, with some comments about a possible ban equating it to an infringement of civil liberties, or being undemocratic or the action of an overbearing, nanny state. Others referred to a ban seeming to be an over-reaction which, in any case, would not tackle to the real issue of general antisocial behaviour:

Banning fireworks is papering over the cracks. The problem isn't fireworks, it's antisocial behaviour... Banning fireworks won't reduce antisocial behaviour.

Individual respondent

Other issues or concerns raised by respondents who did not favour a ban on sale to the public included:

- The type of people who currently misuse fireworks will not be constrained by a ban; in particular a ban would risk the creation of an entirely unregulated black-market in potentially very dangerous, sub-standard fireworks. A small number of organisations, including two local authority respondents, were amongst those concerned that a ban could result in firework sales going beyond the reach of enforcement authorities.
- A ban would be a Central Belt-centric response to a largely urban problem and to recent events in Glasgow in particular. There is no reason why those living in the rest of Scotland, and in rural Scotland, should miss out as a result.
- There may be many people who cannot attend organised events either because, as above, they live in a remote, rural areas or because they are unable to attend an organised event because of mobility or other issues. It is not fair that they should be denied access to the enjoyment of watching fireworks.

A fireworks professional or representative body respondent suggested that having differing legislation on sale and use of fireworks in Scotland and the rest of the UK would simply lead to firework tourism. They went on to comment that evidence from other countries suggests that restricting the sale and use in one country can lead to consumers travelling to an adjacent country to buy fireworks with the unintended consequence that fireworks continue to be used but are now transported in greater quantities in private cars over longer distances.

The small number of respondents who said they were 'unsure' at Question 5 and then went on to comment (around 240 respondents) tended to raise similar issues to those who did not favour there being a ban on sale of fireworks to the general public.

A small number of organisations were amongst those choosing the unsure option and going on to comment. An Animal-related third sector or community group respondent noted that they would like to see the sale of fireworks banned to members of the public in Scotland but that the sale of fireworks is a reserved matter. They had a concern that, if fireworks were banned completely, there would be a risk that trade would be pushed underground and suggested that a licensing scheme that includes restricted times as to when and where fireworks can be used, together with the appropriate enforcement in place would help minimise the impact of fireworks on local communities.

Use of fireworks

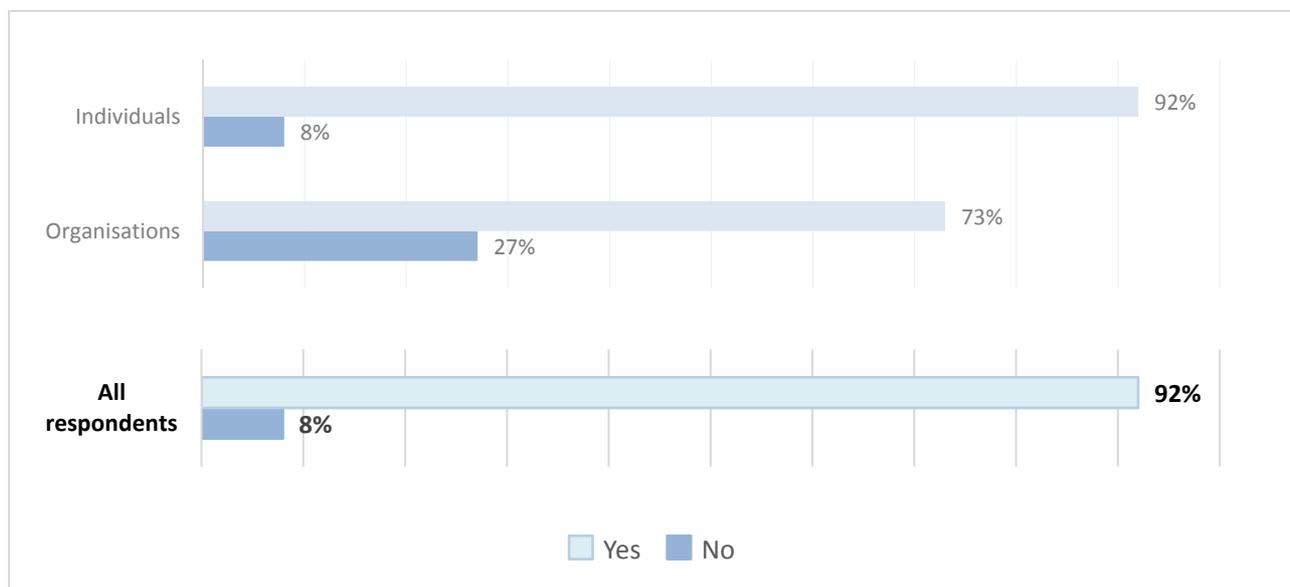
Legislation covering the use of fireworks in Scotland is devolved to the Scottish Parliament. This means that the Scottish Parliament can change or pass laws in relation to those issues as they apply to Scotland.

Restrictions are placed on when fireworks can be used. During most of the year fireworks can only be used between 7am and 11pm. On 5th November fireworks can be used until midnight, and on the nights of Chinese New Year, Diwali and New Year's Eve fireworks can be used until 1am. It is for each local authority to decide if it wishes to license public firework displays under its Public Entertainment Licensing regime.

It is a criminal offence for anyone to throw, cast or fire any fireworks in or into any road or public place and this is enforced by Police Scotland.

Question 6 - Do you think there should be more controls on how fireworks can be used in Scotland?

Figure 6: Question 6 – Do you think there should be more controls on how fireworks can be used in Scotland? (n = 16,290)



A very substantial majority, 92% of those answering the question, thought there should be more controls over how fireworks can be used in Scotland. Individual respondents were more likely than organisations to think there should be more controls – at 92% and 73% respectively.

Views of those who favoured more controls on use

Around 12,980 respondents who favoured more controls on how fireworks can be used in Scotland went on to make a further comment. A professional or representative body respondent suggested that current controls could benefit from an evidence-based review, but that being clear where and why there are problems is vital. They identified noise levels, air quality, greater controls over more limited periods when fireworks can be let off, the classification of fireworks, licensed sellers and the enforcement of existing provisions as areas that any review might consider.

Otherwise, and as noted at Question 4, the themes raised at Question 6 were very similar to those covered under the previous questions, and the focus of the analysis here is on issues raised about use of fireworks.

Organised or licensed displays

Most frequently, respondents commented on organised displays, with the vast majority making clear that they favoured the use of fireworks only at organised or licensed displays. Comments about licensing (as discussed at Question 4), included connecting organised displays with being licensed or only being carried out by licensed or registered companies or individuals. There were also references to needing to apply for a specific licence for each or any event. For example:

I think there should be controls on use of fireworks so that they can only be used by people who hold a licence. Licences could be applied for by people who are organising an event.

Individual respondent

This need for an event-specific licence was sometimes connected with controlling the circumstances and number of occasions on which event venues, and particularly venues that host weddings, can release fireworks. In line with some of the issues discussed below about the timing of firework release, an Animal-related third sector or community group respondent noted their concern that hotels, venues or wedding parties are free to hold firework displays any day of the year up until 11pm. They also noted that local authority dispensations during the 11pm to 7am period will not be granted if there is a risk of 'death of animals or injury or distress to animals'. However, they felt it is unrealistic to expect local authorities to differentiate between the risk of injury and distress to animals just prior to or after 11pm, and queried how any risk is measured.

Otherwise, the advantages identified as stemming from a licensing system and/or allowing only organised events included that there could be a requirement for a named, responsible person for each display or that there could be robust safety checks or risk assessment requirements.

Restrictions on dates or times when fireworks can be used

The frequency with which fireworks are being used, and a sense that their use is increasingly unpredictable and random was a theme covered at Question 5. In response, respondents sometimes suggested controls on the dates or number of days on which fireworks can be used, often making general statements, but sometimes referring explicitly to controls relating to use by the general public or to controls for organised or licensed displays.

In addition to general comments that the occasions or number of days should be restricted, there were specific suggestions that the use of fireworks should be restricted to: one or two nights a year; 5th November, sometimes including the weekend(s) closest to 5th November; and New Year's Eve. There were also occasional references to dates with a religious or cultural significance for different sections of Scotland's population:

I would like to see each local authority area agree to specific dates each year where fireworks may be used, restricted to no more than five: New Year/ Chinese New Year/ Diwali/ 5 November. If any of the latter fall on a week night, a further date of the closest weekend night would be allowed.

Individual respondent

There were also a small number of references to the festival of Eid.

In addition, there were calls for stricter controls on the times at which fireworks can be released. Suggestions tended to coalesce around a period of 2 or 3 hours in the evening during which fireworks might be used.

Penalties for misuse

A consistent, if lower level theme across questions was in relation to the penalties for anyone who misuses fireworks. As noted at Question 4, it was suggested that anyone mis-selling fireworks should have their licence to sell revoked or be prosecuted. There were also suggestions that anyone licensed to use fireworks or hold organised displays, including licensed venues, should have licences revoked or be prosecuted, if regulations are broken.

In terms of the general public, and also reflecting the comments of those who did not support a ban or further controls on sales, there were suggestions that fines, increased fines or prosecution should follow on from misuse.

Views of those who did not think there should more controls on use

Around 540 respondents who did not think there should be more controls over the use of fireworks in Scotland went on to make a comment. As at Question 4, the most frequently made comment was that existing firework-related controls are appropriate or sufficient. For example, a local authority respondent commented that fireworks are safe if used in accordance with instructions, and Police Scotland have powers to deal with anti-social behaviour in relation to the misuse of fireworks.

Again, there were concerns that any tightening of the controls over use would impact on the wrong people, and in any case may not have an impact on misuse. For example:

Current controls are sufficient. Further controls would disproportionately disadvantage responsible law-abiding individuals and would likely have little effect on antisocial/illicit use - people who break the law using fireworks in a dangerous or antisocial way at present are hardly likely to be deterred by new laws.

Individual respondent

Otherwise, there were queries as to whether the misuse of fireworks is really getting any worse or whether a small but vocal minority is driving what would be an unpopular agenda across the population of Scotland as a whole.

Part Three: Prevention and Community Involvement

Part Three of the consultation covered prevention and community involvement and asked three questions.

The consultation paper highlights that across Scotland, local partnerships which often include the local authority, Police Scotland, SFRS, Trading Standards and other community safety partners work together to ensure people and communities can enjoy fireworks safely. This happens particularly for large organised events and in preparation for Bonfire night when fireworks are most likely to be used in communities.

Depending on local circumstances, a range of approaches are often in place to prevent fireworks being misused and to target those who might be likely to misuse fireworks in and around Bonfire night. This includes:

- Sharing intelligence among local partners about areas of high risk to prevent anti-social behaviour and increase public safety.
- Prevention and education activities to promote fire safety to the general public and school pupils; information packs to local groups planning to hold firework displays; inspections of premises who store and sell fireworks; and removing material that could be used for bonfires.

Question 7 – What do you think could be done by national and local partners to further prevent the misuse of fireworks?

Around 14,150 respondents made a comment at Question 7. The themes raised tended to very much reflect those at previous questions, with many of those commenting calling for a ban on sales or suggesting that the general public should not be able to access fireworks.

Some respondents supported licensing or a permit approach of some kind, or noted their support for organised displays or called for there only to be organised displays. Respondents occasionally framed their comments with reference to national or local partners, for example that national government could introduce a ban or that local authorities could run a licensing scheme.

On the issue of licensing, further comments included that local authorities, working with their community safety partners, should have the final say on whether any particular shop should be licensed to sell fireworks or whether any particular fireworks display can go ahead. There were also occasional suggestions that any display should be registered with or approved by either Police Scotland or SFRS.

One area in which some respondents saw a particular role for the partners listed in the consultation paper (as above) was in relation to enforcement of current regulations or of any future regulations. Where references were specific, they

tended to refer to Police Scotland being given greater powers to tackle antisocial behaviour or the misuse of fireworks, or to suggest that the Police could be more visible and proactive within communities.

A Professional or representative body respondent commented that, once local intelligence has established the areas in which trouble occurs, concentrated efforts, similar to those used to reduce knife crime, should be used to reduce fireworks crime.

As at other questions, there were references to the Police having a particular presence in communities in the run up to and around 5th November and to them needing the necessary resources to carry out their role effectively. There were occasional references to the local authority, or Trading Standards in particular, having a role in ensuring any selling of fireworks is in line with the regulations.

On a similar theme, some respondents referred to the need to make sure that existing penalties for misuse of fireworks are imposed, including for businesses that mis-sell, and for organisations or members of the public who misuse fireworks. There were references to confiscation of fireworks, parents being held responsible for the actions of their children and increases in the severity of the penalties available. For example:

Heavy financial penalties and lifetime banning of a licence to sell fireworks where shops are caught selling to minors... Criminal charges for anyone using fireworks as a weapon or as a threat against emergency services and also for anyone causing physical injury to anyone else whilst misusing fireworks.

Individual respondent

There were also suggestions that any organisation or individual licensed to purchase and use fireworks for displays should have that licence taken away if they contravene any of the regulations, for example in relation to the times at which fireworks can be let off.

Other comments often focused on further restrictions that partners could put in place, for example around where fireworks can be let off, noise levels for fireworks and requirements for notifying the community of plans to use fireworks. These issues are discussed further at Question 10.

There were a small number of specific references to the ideas referenced in the consultation paper (as set out above), including that sharing intelligence, and monitoring if there are particular problems in some communities, will be valuable. Some of the organisations that could be seen as key stakeholders commented on this theme. For example, an Emergency Service respondent and a local authority respondent saw continued close working and information sharing with key partners as critical.

There was also support for an education-based approach and that local partners could have a key role to play here. Education and awareness raising is discussed further at Question 9.

Community involvement

The consultation paper notes that enabling people to be involved in influencing decisions that affect their local community is important, and this equally applies to the issue of fireworks. Communities that are enabled to work together effectively, and in partnership with local partners, have the potential to identify more effective and sustainable solutions.

Question 8 – What ways do you think communities could be involved in supporting the safe use of fireworks?

Around 10,850 respondents made a comment at Question 8. Some stated a view that fireworks should be banned or should not be sold to the public, or said they did not know/were not sure how communities could be involved in supporting the safe use of fireworks.

Supporting organised displays

Among the remaining respondents the most frequently made point was that communities could support organised displays or that community groups could arrange displays. It was often suggested that such displays should be safe or well organised. The benefits of well organised and run community events were also raised by some participants at the consultation events.

Respondents who advocated organised displays sometimes also suggested benefits in discouraging private use of fireworks or in bringing communities together. For example:

If there were community displays around the times of year fireworks are mainly used, I think this would limit the number of people buying them for their own displays and also help bring the community together. Maybe encouraging community displays would be a good way forward.

Individual respondent

Other frequently raised points on the organisation of community displays were that these should be:

- Licensed, authorised or regulated.
- Run by professionals.
- Well publicised to encourage attendance and also to alert neighbours, people who might be distressed by fireworks, pet owners and farmers that an event is going to take place.

Respondents also suggested that organised events should be inclusive, and should be affordable or free of charge. The distance required to travel to events, traffic congestion, lack of parking, cost of entry, the large numbers of people attending and poor access for the disabled were all cited as reasons people may currently be put off attending organised firework displays. Ideas for making events more attractive included providing food, more activities, or free transport.

While several examples of successful events were given, it was also argued that holding such events has failed to limit wider use or misuse of fireworks, or even that events have been cancelled because of antisocial behaviour.

Other reasons given for previous events being cancelled included costs to the local authority, the cost of public liability insurance and the complexity of the licence application process. It was argued that obtaining a licence for a community event should be made easier, that organisers should be supported in applying for a licence, and that appropriate safety courses or training could be provided:

As a member of a community group who has tried to organise a display I have come up against the huge stumbling blocks put in place to ensure safety... More help at local level needs to be arranged so that communities who are willing to take on the responsibility of organising displays ... can do so.

Individual respondent

Provision of guidance to local community organisations who are looking to organise and run their own displays was also suggested at consultation events.

With respect to who might organise communal firework displays suggestions included the local authority, community groups, community councils, community centres, schools, sports clubs, churches, and organisations such as Round Table or Rotary. There were also suggestions that attempts should be made to involve young people in the organisation of events.

Varying levels of consultation and community involvement in deciding if and where firework events are held were proposed, including suggestions that licences should be subject to community council approval, that communities should have input to licensing panels, or that an event might be vetoed by the community if enough residents objected.

Although many of those commenting at Question 8 advocated organised displays, there was some evidence of different expectations of the possible scale and frequency of such events. While respondents often suggested large displays or displays organised by the local authority covering a large area, others argued for a greater number of smaller, more local events. This is illustrated by respondents who said:

1 display per local authority.

Individual respondent

Encourage more local events of smaller size for communities instead of one large display that can be too big to attend depending on age of children etc.

Individual respondent

Community oversight

Some respondents made a point related to potential involvement of communities in overseeing or policing the sale or use of fireworks, although sometimes referring to how this might operate after a ban on sale of fireworks to the public had been imposed rather than to policing under present legislation.

It was argued that communities should report misuse of fireworks, antisocial behaviour relating to fireworks, unlicensed firework sales, or sales to children and that there should be an easy way of doing this. An app, a dedicated phone line/email address or a monitored social media account were all suggested – as was the facility to make an anonymous report since, it was argued, people may currently be reluctant to report misuse for fear of retribution. Involvement of Neighbourhood Watch was also proposed – both in monitoring activity in an area and as a route for reporting misuse.

There were also references to the roles of community officers and community wardens, as well as calls for parents to exercise greater control over, or take more responsibility for the behaviour of their own children.

Other actions for communities

Respondents also cited the importance of education and raising awareness of the dangers associated with fireworks, sometimes suggesting that members of the local community could be involved in such activities. These issues are discussed further at Question 9.

As also discussed at Questions 6 and 10, there were calls for restrictions on the dates, times and places at which use of fireworks is permissible, including for organised displays.

More generally, a local authority respondent argued that enabling local communities to be involved in influencing local decisions on the safe use of fireworks is important while a community safety organisation respondent suggested that Community Safety Partnerships could act locally on the back of this consultation to involve communities in further discussion about what matters to them.

Involvement of community councils

Various roles for community councils were suggested – primarily in organising firework displays and involvement in licensing decisions. Other ideas included roles for community councils in: education; organising local consultations; liaising with the Police in areas where there is inappropriate use of fireworks; and in monitoring misuse.

However, enthusiasm for greater community council involvement was not universal. For example, a community council respondent noted:

As a Community Council we would absolutely NOT wish to be involved in preventing fireworks being used inappropriately... We would absolutely NOT support any move that placed responsibility on volunteers in the community to keep the public safe over and above the current requirements.

Community council respondent

Not a job for communities

Arguments that communities cannot or should not be involved in supporting safe use of fireworks were also made, often by respondents who saw the issue as a matter for government and for law enforcement. It was sometimes suggested that the issue is likely to be divisive – for example:

I would have concerns that this issue could be delegated to local communities causing arguments and friction between those who suffer from various aspects of fireworks and those who feel their fun was being taken away or diluted.

Individual respondent

It was also argued that:

- In some areas there is little, if any, sense of community.
- People who are engaged with their communities are not those likely to be involved in antisocial behaviour involving fireworks.
- Those who do participate in antisocial behaviour may not feel part of the community and are not likely to be influenced by it.
- Communities may be afraid to engage with those responsible for antisocial behaviour for fear of being targeted.

Respondents who argued against a role for communities also included some who suggested that there is no need for such involvement.

Communication and awareness raising

The consultation paper notes that national safety campaigns are run every year to encourage the safe use of fireworks. The SFRS, for example, run an annual campaign which aims to reduce rubbish and refuse fires, fires in derelict buildings, and fires set off deliberately because of anti-social behaviour. This is often supported by local partnerships who arrange amnesty days to collect bulk items that could be used for bonfires.

In 2018, SFRS developed and hosted a dedicated national webpage listing organised fireworks events across the country which were open to the public so that they could attend these and enjoy a firework display in safety.⁵

⁵ <https://www.firescotland.gov.uk/your-safety/fireworks-safety.aspx>

Question 9 – What do you think could be done to raise awareness of the risks of fireworks misuse among the public?

Around 9,870 respondents made a comment at Question 9, the lowest number of comments at any question.

There were calls for some form of awareness raising, publicity campaign(s) or advertising, often noting there should be a focus on the risks of firework misuse:

More adverts and information showing the actual consequences of misuse. Shock people into seeing the risks and think about the outcome.

Individual respondent

Focus of awareness raising activity

More specifically, respondents and consultation event participants suggested that there should be a focus on the impact on, and risks to, animals, including pets, wildlife and livestock. Other suggested themes for any awareness raising work or publicity campaigns were:

- Real life stories showing the consequences of, and the injuries that can result from, the misuse of fireworks. Specifically, it was suggested that those affected directly by fireworks could be involved as part of a more hard-hitting approach which might involve visiting schools or other local venues to share stories (see below).
- The impact the use of fireworks can have on some people, and on vulnerable people in particular. As at Question 5, there were references to people with PTSD, people with dementia, people with mental health needs and young children.
- The impact on the emergency services, the NHS, and other public services. It was suggested that highlighting the resource/cost implications for key services could be effective in changing behaviours. The use of statistics and other information on the number and type of injuries sustained was proposed.
- The safe use of fireworks, and the current legislation, regulations and good practice covering the sale and use of fireworks. In particular, it was suggested that the possible penalties for the misuse of fireworks should be highlighted, and that real-life examples of cases and sentences could be used. A Young peoples' group or service respondent suggested that information in plain English for parents and young people on both the law relating to fireworks and on penalties, might help deter involvement in illegal activities.
- The benefits of attending organised displays and publicity around where and when they will be taking place.

A third sector non animal-related respondent proposed a week-long event with a number of charities working together to increase awareness of the need for venues to alert residents to the fact they are holding displays. They suggested that Noise Action Week, which runs in mid-May each year could, with additional support,

provide an excellent vehicle for informing people about unacceptable levels of noise from fireworks.

Some respondents commented from the position of seeing the ban they were calling for having been introduced and suggested that the scope of, and reasons and rationale for, any ban should be publicised.

Approaches to advertising or publicity campaigns

In terms of approaches to be used, some respondents wanted to see hard-hitting advertising, including with the use of graphic imagery of harm caused to people and animals, for example:

Adverts showing the harm that can be done to people and animals when fireworks are misused. This could include images of injuries to people and animals, images of the distress it causes animals, and people suffering from conditions such as Anxiety and PTSD.

Individual respondent

With respect to the medium to be used, respondents referred most frequently to running campaigns on television and there were occasional references to the impact of historical advertising campaigns on firework misuse or drink driving. There were also references to social media, including the use of targeted advertising and awareness raising through local social media groups. Other suggestions were:

- Posters, flyers or billboards, including at/near organised events and venues.
- Newspapers or magazines campaigns.
- Radio campaigns, including local or national radio.
- Direct mailing or the widespread distribution of information leaflets.
- Web-based promotion, including the use of email newsletters.
- Advertising on public transport, including on buses or trains or at bus stops or stations.

With regard to the timing of publicity campaigns or advertising, it was suggested there should be a focus around specific dates and festivals where fireworks are most likely to be used, but also that a year-round approach may have greater impact in discouraging misuse of fireworks.

An associated point was that there needs to be a change in societal attitudes towards the misuse of fireworks, much as we have seen in relation to drinking and driving.

Community-based focus, including work in schools

Some respondents thought there should be a focus on raising awareness through the education system, including through schools and colleges. The importance of education in schools also emerged as a key theme from the consultation events.

Further comments included that any approach could cover pre-school, primary and secondary schools and the further and higher education sectors. SFRS and Police Scotland were both seen as having an important role to play in sharing information and stories around firework risks. A local authority respondent suggested targeted education in schools around anti-social behaviour using existing community policing connections in partnership with the SFRS.

Respondents also wished to see a role for communities in shaping a locally-appropriate and well-targeted awareness raising approach, including the specific risks or concerns to be addressed, and the local organisations or local networks to be involved in developing and delivering awareness raising work.

Lack of impact

Finally, some felt that awareness raising is unlikely to have an impact on the misuse of fireworks, including comments that advertising or publicity campaigns would not be a good use of funds.

It was felt that there are already good levels of awareness around the risks associated with fireworks, and that inappropriate use of fireworks is due to individuals choosing to disregard these risks. There was some scepticism that further awareness raising could have a significant impact on this type of behaviour, a position that was sometimes associated with a call for a ban on sales to the public:

I don't think that prevention will work - lots of education is already in place in schools and on firework labelling. Those who will be misusing fireworks will continue to do so, especially those doing so anti-socially or to harm. The only true solution here is a ban.

Individual respondent

Part Four: Animal welfare

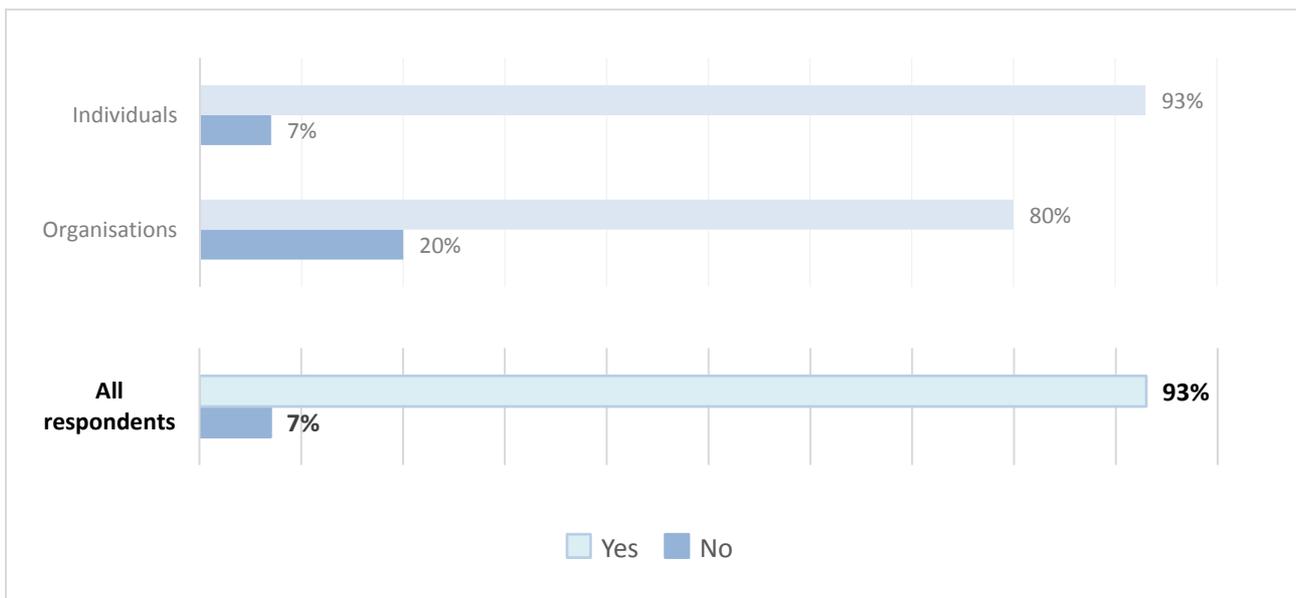
The final part of the consultation addressed animal welfare directly. The consultation paper notes that legislation governing animal welfare is devolved to the Scottish Parliament. The Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006 protects and promotes the welfare of animals and created a number of criminal offences to help protect animals from mistreatment.

These offences cover a range of animal welfare issues, some of which carry a maximum penalty of up to 12 months imprisonment and/or a fine of up to £20,000. These penalties can be applied to the offence of causing ‘unnecessary suffering’ to an animal. This offence may be committed by anyone who knowingly causes unnecessary suffering to an animal, by either doing or not doing something, whether they are the keeper/owner of the animal or not.

Question 10 – Do you think that there should be more controls to make sure that animals are not caused unnecessary suffering because of the use of fireworks?

A very substantial majority, 93% of those answering the question, thought there should be more controls to make sure animals are not caused unnecessary suffering because of the use of fireworks. Individual respondents were more likely than organisations to think there should be more controls - 93% and 80% respectively.

Figure 7: Question 10 – Do you think that there should be more controls to make sure animals are not caused unnecessary suffering because of the use of fireworks? (n = 16,234)



Views of those who thought there should be more controls

Around 13,030 respondents who thought that there should be more controls to make sure animals are not caused unnecessary suffering because of the use of fireworks went on to make a further comment. Participants at the consultation

events also voiced concerns about the impact of fireworks on pets, livestock and wild animals, including in relation to both the impact of the noise from fireworks and the potential for animals to be injured.

An animal-related third sector or community group respondent⁶ cited their Animal Wellbeing (PAW) Report 2018 showing that a significant proportion of Scottish pets (35% of dogs, 26% of cats and 18% of rabbits) are afraid of fireworks and that over half (51%) of veterinary professionals say they have seen an increase in pets with phobias such as fireworks in the last two years.

Many respondents suggested that fireworks should be banned, not sold to the general public or made a statement in support of organised displays and/or licensing. There were also references to some of the other possible restrictions covered at earlier questions, for example only allowing the use of fireworks on certain days and further limits on the time of day at which they can be used.

Otherwise, respondents most frequently commented on, or called for, the use of only silent or quieter fireworks, sometimes noting that they favoured banning fireworks, but would prefer silent fireworks if that is not possible. Others noted that they favoured the use of only silent fireworks for organised displays.

There were also references to practice in other countries and it was suggested that it is the loud noise associated with many fireworks, and modern fireworks in particular, that is at the root of many animals' distress. For example:

It is now possible to make silent fireworks. As it is the noise that causes most distress, noisy fireworks should be banned. This would protect both domestic and wild animals.

Individual respondent

An animal-related third sector or community group respondent reported that studies have shown that loud and high-pitched fireworks can have a negative impact on the health and welfare of companion animals. They set out the implications for dogs, cats and horses. Another animal-related third sector or community group respondent thought that the public should be made aware of the impact that fireworks have on horses as the reaction to loud noises and a bright burst of light can have dire consequences for both horse and owner.

The first of these respondents went on to recommend that local authorities should take the location of public displays into consideration when granting licences. A

⁶A number of other Animal-related third sector respondents, and Professional or representative body respondents also made extensive comments. These have been analysed and the high-level messages are included within this report. For those interested in further detail full consultation responses are available online at https://consult.gov.scot/safer-communities/fireworks/consultation/published_select_respondent. where permission was given for responses to be published.

further Animal-related third sector or community group respondent also suggested that criteria for any licence should recognise potential impacts on animal welfare.

Identification of appropriate locations for fireworks to be used was also raised by other respondents; again, some respondents made it clear that they were referring to their use at organised displays, others appeared to be referencing their use by the public.

Respondents tended to focus on one of two themes, the first being that fireworks should not be used within urban or residential areas. The connection was sometimes made to the number of pets that would be living in these areas, but there was also reference (as at Question 5) to people, and the types of people, who find fireworks distressing or who are disturbed by them.

The second theme was that fireworks should not be used in areas where animals could be affected. This again ranged from areas where pets are living, through to areas where there are livestock or wild animals. For example:

I believe fireworks should also be restricted (in the time they are allowed to be let off and in the noise levels that can be reached) in areas where either vulnerable animals are kept (livestock, nature reserves, rescue centres etc.) or where it is known that there will be large numbers of animals (residential areas where it could be assumed there will be many cats and dogs).

Individual respondent

There were also specific references to fireworks not being used within set distances from animal shelters, stables, kennels, zoos, wildlife parks or other locations where animals are gathered.

Whenever fireworks are being used, and with particular reference to the benefits of organised displays or only allowing organised displays, respondents suggested that those planning to use fireworks should have responsibility for notifying the local community of their plans. For example:

People within the vicinity of organised displays should be given notice of when they will be happening so that they can ensure the welfare of their animals.

Individual respondent

Participants at the consultation events also thought it to be important that owners are given the necessary information to take preventative action.

More detailed suggestions, made either at Question 10 or elsewhere, included that advanced notice of plans to use fireworks should be mailed out to every household within animal earshot of a display, that a number of weeks' notice should be given, and that households or organisations caring for animals should have an opportunity to object to any planned display.

In terms of the types of specific measures someone could take to protect animals, there were references to being able to move livestock or horses, accessing sedatives for dogs or cats and ensuring that pets are indoors and someone is with them; this latter point in particular was linked to the concerns raised about the random and unpredictable use of fireworks at earlier questions.

There were also a small number of references to taking animals, and especially dogs, to remote locations when displays are planned or to those who profit from fireworks covering some of the costs owners incur (for example in terms of vets fees or subsidising over-the-counter animal calming solutions).

Finally, there was a range of legislation-focused comments, including that any instances of firework-related cruelty must be prosecuted, and that people should be subject to severe penalties if animals are hurt, and especially if deliberately hurt. There were also suggestions that anyone convicted of using a firework to hurt an animal should be banned from keeping animals for life. For example:

Too many animals are distressed or even killed by the misuse of fireworks whether it's through fear or in some horrific cases, having fireworks attached to them and being set off. A longer prison sentence or at least unpaid work/community service and a lifetime ban on owning pets and a criminal record should be considered as well.

Individual respondent

Views of those who did not think there should be more controls

Around 610 respondents who did not think there should be more controls to make sure animals are not caused unnecessary suffering because of the use of fireworks went on to make a further comment. Some of the issues raised reflected those identified by respondents who had answered 'Yes' at Question 10, including that more controls would be unnecessary in the event of a ban on sale to the public or that only organised firework displays should be allowed.

Most frequently, respondents suggested that it is the responsibility of pet owners to look after their animals, sometimes noting that they themselves are pet owners. For example:

As someone who has had dogs for many years, I understand it is my responsibility to ensure my pet is safe and comforted when fireworks are used just as I am responsible for my pet's wellbeing around traffic and any other manner of possible issue.

Individual respondent

The need to take responsibility for animals in their care was sometimes connected to the need to ensure their animals are properly trained, including by exposure to loud noises. On a connected point, it was noted that there are many other loud noises which animals, including pets, have to deal with and that singling out fireworks will not protect them from being potentially startled by, or needing to get used to, very loud noises. Respondents referenced thunder, guns, traffic noise and sirens or alarms.

Some of those commenting made a general statement that the current arrangements are appropriate or sufficient, including that they offer enough protections for animals. It was suggested that the current legislation and regulations should be enforced rather than those who use fireworks responsibly being penalised:

Again the controls and laws that already exist to manage this. If there are transgressors they should be managed under current legislation. Please just enforce what we currently have and DO NOT add to legislation and stifle our lives.

Individual respondent

There was also a view that fireworks are only used, and by extension animals are only exposed to fireworks, on one or two nights of the year. Some noted that animals have coped with fireworks for many years and, for example, that:

...this is a recent fad, dogs are scared of fireworks well actually it's the owners putting fear into them, we never had this fuss when I was a kid and we had way more fireworks then.

Individual respondent

Summary of key themes

As noted through the analysis presented above, a number of key themes were raised by respondents, with those themes often recurring across their comments at a number of questions and at Question 3-6 and 10 in particular.

Views of those favouring more controls on the sale or use of fireworks or for a ban on sales to the public

Key themes to emerge from the further comments of those favouring more controls or ban were:

- General comments in support of a ban on the sale of fireworks to the public or on the general public having access to, and being able to use, fireworks.
- Frequent references to the harm fireworks can do, particularly in relation to pets, wildlife and livestock. There were particular references to dogs, cats and horses. Animal-related incidents and concerns often centred around the noise made by fireworks and the need to put in place special measures to keep animals, and especially pets in the home, safe and well. However, it was noted that anti-stress medication cannot be taken for prolonged periods and that most animals will not be afforded this type of protection.
- Associated concerns about the period over which fireworks may be released and that they are increasingly being used at any time of year, but in particular between October and January. The connection was sometimes made with the period over which fireworks are now on sale.
- Reports that fireworks are being used in places which respondents considered inappropriate, such as back gardens in built-up residential areas or near fields containing livestock.
- Concerns about fireworks being set off in locations where it is not legal to do so, such as in the street or other public places.
- Reports of indiscriminate or dangerous use of fireworks in public spaces were often connected with a perception that young people and children have no difficulties in accessing fireworks - either because they are being sold to them in shops/pop-up shops or because adults are buying and passing them on.
- The type of incidents respondents referred to included witnessing or hearing about fireworks being used as 'weapons' against the emergency services, seeing fireworks being thrown at cars or buses and reading about fireworks being used to injure/torture animals.
- A number of respondents referred to either themselves, family members or friends having been injured by fireworks, albeit some of these reports were historic. The resource implications for the NHS of caring for those with firework-related injuries were also noted.
- Respondents also commented that some types of people or people with particular experiences may find fireworks especially distressing or frightening. Examples given included people with PTSD, autistic people, people with

mental health problems, people with dementia, people with learning disabilities, some older people and those with a sensory impairment.

- In terms of solutions other than a ban, respondents referred to allowing organised displays only, having a licensing or permit system for selling or purchasing, raising the age at which people can buy fireworks, reducing noise levels or only allowing silent fireworks and to increased penalties for misuse.
- On the latter theme of misuse, respondents often spoke of the need to enforce both current and any future legislation or regulation. This was sometimes associated with a view that the Police need to have a more visible presence within communities being affected by fireworks.

Views of those who did not favour more controls or a ban on sale to the public

Key themes to emerge from the further comments of those who did not favour more controls or a ban were:

- Concerns that a ban or further controls would represent a curtailment of freedom of choice and would be a 'nanny state' style solution to a relatively minor issue. There was also a view that it is neither fair nor reasonable to penalise the responsible majority for the actions of the irresponsible few.
- Pet owners need to take responsibility for the care and training of their animals, including ensuring that they become used to loud noises.
- There was also a view that the Scottish Government is listening to, or risks being swayed by, a small but vocal minority, included amongst them irresponsible pet owners who have not properly trained their animals.

Annex 1 - Organisations responding to the consultation

Respondent	Group type
217 th Gilbertfield Company Boys' Brigade	Community group
21CC Group Ltd	Firework events company
Aberdeen Riding Club	Animal-related third sector or community group
Aberdeenshire Council	Local authority
Active Ardoch	Community group
AF Pyro	Fireworks retailer or supplier
Alloa Spiritualist Church	Other
Animal Concern Advice Line	Animal-related third sector or community group
ASDA Stores Ltd	Fireworks retailer or supplier
Bannockburn Community Council	Community council
Battersea Dogs & Cats Home	Animal-related third sector or community group
Blackburn Community Council	Community council
Blue Cross	Animal-related third sector or community group
Braw Dogs. Dog groomer and dog owner	Animal-related private sector
British Firework Association	Fireworks professional or representative body
British Horse Society Scotland	Animal-related third sector or community group
Broom, Kirkhill and Mearnskirik Community Council, East Renfrewshire	Community council
BVA Scottish Branch, AGV, AVS, BCVA, BEVA, BSAVA, BVZS, SPVS, SVS, and VPHA	Professional or representative body
C.L.A.W (Community Life And Wildlife)	Animal-related third sector or community group
Carnoustie Canine Capers	Animal-related third sector or community group

Respondent	Group type
Cats Protection Giffnock Branch	Animal-related third sector or community group
COSLA	Local authority
DJAM events	Other
Dogs Trust	Animal-related third sector or community group
Dunbar Community Council	Community council
East Ayrshire Council	Local authority
Edinburgh Dog and Cat Home	Animal-related third sector or community group
Edinburgh Fireworks Store	Fireworks retailer or supplier
Environmental Protection Scotland (EPS)	Third sector – non animal-related
Erskine Community Council	Community council
Falkirk Community Trust	Community council
Falkirk Council	Local authority
Ferguslie Community Council	Community council
Firework Abatement Campaign	Other
Foundation Skills Class, West Lothian College	Young peoples' group or service
Galen Urquhart Rural Community Association	Community council
Geopaw Premium - Professional Dog Services	Animal-related private sector
Glasgow City Council	Local authority
Guide Dogs Scotland	Animal-related third sector or community group
Humbie PTA	Community group
Iona Community Council	Community council
Johnstone Cat Rescue	Animal-related third sector or community group
Jordans Fireworks	Fireworks retailer or supplier
Juniper Green & Baberton Mains Community Council	Community council

Respondent	Group type
Kirkcudbright Summer Festivities	Community group
Lerwick Community Council	Community council
Lochmaben fireworks display	Community-based firework display
Maddiston Community Council	Community council
Manta Design Ltd	Other
Merchiston Gardens Pleasure Ground Association	Community group
Midlothian Council	Local authority
Moniaive Gala Committee	Community group
Mossburn Community Farm	Animal-related third sector or community group
NFU Scotland	Professional or representative body
North Ayrshire Council	Local authority
North Ayrshire petsitters	Animal-related private sector
North Lanarkshire Council	Local authority
OneKind	Animal-related third sector or community group
Online Fireworks	Fireworks retailer or supplier
Paisley North Community Council	Community council
Pals of the Privies	Community group
PDSA	Animal-related third sector or community group
Perth and Kinross Council	Local authority
Plains Community Futures	Community group
Police Scotland	Emergency Service
PSYV (Police Scotland Youth Volunteers)	Young peoples' group or service
Riccarton Community Council	Community council
Rosewell & District Community Council	Community council
RoSPA	Community safety organisation
Royal Burgh of Whithorn fireworks group	Community-based firework display
Royal Rascals Dog Services	Animal-related private sector

Respondent	Group type
Russell Road Residents' Association	Community group
SalesOut	Other
Scotland For Animals	Animal-related third sector or community group
Scottish Burned Children's Club	Third sector - non animal-related
Scottish Community Safety Network	Community safety organisation
Scottish Grocers' Federation	Fireworks professional or representative body
Scottish SPCA	Animal-related third sector or community group
Shetland Islands Council	Local authority
South Ayrshire Council Community Safety	Local authority
South Lanarkshire Council	Local authority
Stirling and Clackmannanshire Joint Trading Standards Service	Local authority
Students from Trinity Academy	Young peoples' group or service
Terminal One youth centre	Young peoples' group or service
Terregles Community Council	Community council
The British Pyrotechnics Association	Fireworks professional or representative body
The Chartered Trading Standards Institute	Professional or representative body
The City of Edinburgh Council	Local authority
The Glade Care Home	Other
The Kennel Club and Scottish Kennel Club	Animal-related third sector or community group
The Law Society of Scotland	Professional or representative body
Tillicoultry, Coalsnaughton & Devonside Community Council	Community council
Townhill Community Council	Community council
Udny Community Trust	Community council
Voda-Bone Pet Supplies Ltd	Animal-related private sector

Respondent	Group type
West Lothian Council	Local authority
World Horse Welfare on behalf of the British Horse Council	Animal-related third sector or community group
Youth Community Support Agency (YCSA)	Young peoples' group or service

Annex 2 - Results at closed questions by respondent type

Table 2: Question 1 - What is the main way you typically enjoy and experience fireworks?							
	Attend a small private event hosted by you or someone else	Attend a locally organised event with less than 500 people attending	Attend a large public organised event with more than 500 people attending	Do not attend firework events	Other	Not Answered	Grand Total
Organisations:							
Animal-related third sector or community group			3	8	3	5	19
Animal-related private sector			1	3	1		5
Community council	1	5	6	4	2	1	19
Community group		3	2	2	2		9
Community safety organisation				1	1		2
Community-based firework display		2					2
Emergency Service					1		1
Firework events company					1		1
Fireworks professional or representative body						3	3
Fireworks retailer or supplier	1				3	1	5
Local authority		2	4	1	4	4	15
Professional or representative body			1			3	4
Third sector - non animal-related				2			2
Young peoples' group or service	3	1			1		5
Other	1		2	1		2	6

Table 2 continues on next page.

Table 2 (continued): Question 1 - What is the main way you typically enjoy and experience fireworks?							
	Attend a small private event hosted by you or someone else	Attend a locally organised event with less than 500 people attending	Attend a large public organised event with more than 500 people attending	Do not attend firework events	Other	Not Answered	Grand Total
Total organisations	6	13	19	22	19	19	98
% of organisations answering	8%	16%	24%	28%	24%		
Individuals	870	2,638	3,979	8,236	472	127	16,322
% of individuals answering	5%	16%	25%	51%	3%		
All respondents	876	2,651	3,998	8,258	491	146	16,420
% of all respondents	5%	16%	24%	50%	3%	1%	
% of all those answering	5%	16%	25%	51%	3%		

Table 3: Question 2 - Would you say that fireworks form an important part of celebration events for you?				
	Yes	No	Not Answered	Grand Total
Organisations:				
Animal-related third sector or community group	2	12	5	19
Animal-related private sector		5		5
Community council	8	10	1	19
Community group	6	3		9
Community safety organisation		2		2
Community-based firework display	1	1		2
Emergency Service			1	1
Firework events company	1			1
Fireworks professional or representative body			3	3
Fireworks retailer or supplier	4		1	5
Local authority	6	4	5	15
Professional or representative body	1		3	4
Third sector - non animal-related		2		2
Young peoples' group or service		4	1	5
Other	3	1	2	6
Total organisations	32	44	22	98
% of organisations answering	42%	58%		
Individuals	2,580	13,667	75	16,322
% of individuals answering	16%	84%		
All respondents	2,612	13,711	97	16,420
% of all respondents	16%	84%	1%	
% of all those answering	16%	84%		

Table 4: Question 3 - Have you been affected by fireworks being used in an irresponsible or unsafe way?				
	Yes	No	Not Answered	Grand Total
Organisations:				
Animal-related third sector or community group	15	1	3	19
Animal-related private sector	4	1		5
Community council	13	4	2	19
Community group	4	5		9
Community safety organisation	2			2
Community-based firework display	1	1		2
Emergency Service	1			1
Firework events company	1			1
Fireworks professional or representative body			3	3
Fireworks retailer or supplier		4	1	5
Local authority	6	5	4	15
Professional or representative body	1	1	2	4
Third sector - non animal-related	1	1		2
Young peoples' group or service	3	2		5
Other	1	3	2	6
Total organisations	53	28	17	98
% of organisations answering	65%	35%		
Individuals	11,297	4,942	83	16,322
% of individuals answering	70%	30%		
All respondents	11,350	4,970	100	16,420
% of all respondents	69%	30%	1%	
% of all those answering	70%	30%		

Table 5: Question 4 - Do you think there should be more controls over the sale of fireworks?				
	Yes	No	Not Answered	Grand Total
Organisations:				
Animal-related third sector or community group	17		2	19
Animal-related private sector	5			5
Community council	15	3	1	19
Community group	7	2		9
Community safety organisation	1	1		2
Community-based firework display	2			2
Emergency Service	1			1
Firework events company	1			1
Fireworks professional or representative body		2	1	3
Fireworks retailer or supplier		5		5
Local authority	10	4	1	15
Professional or representative body	2	1	1	4
Third sector - non animal-related	1	1		2
Young peoples' group or service	5			5
Other	4	1	1	6
Total organisations	71	20	7	98
% of organisations answering	78%	22%		
Individuals	15,359	899	64	16,322
% of individuals answering	94%	6%		
All respondents	15,430	919	71	16,420
% of all respondents	94%	6%	0%	
% of all those answering	94%	6%		

Table 6: Question 5 - What are your views on banning the sale of fireworks to the public in Scotland?					
	Yes, I would welcome a ban on the sale of fireworks.	No, I would not welcome a ban on the sale of fireworks.	Unsure	Not Answered	Grand Total
Organisations:					
Animal-related third sector or community group	11	3	4	1	19
Animal-related private sector	5				5
Community council	11	7		1	19
Community group	4	4		1	9
Community safety organisation		2			2
Community-based firework display		1	1		2
Emergency Service			1		1
Firework events company		1			1
Fireworks professional or representative body		2		1	3
Fireworks retailer or supplier		5			5
Local authority	2	6	6	1	15
Professional or representative body		2		2	4
Third sector - non animal-related	1	1			2
Young peoples' group or service		2	3		5
Other	2	2		2	6
Total organisations	36	38	15	9	98
% of organisations answering	40%	43%	17%		
Individuals	14,126	1,535	603	58	16,322
% of individuals answering	87%	9%	4%		
All respondents	14,162	1,573	618	67	16,420
% of all respondents	86%	10%	4%	0%	
% of all those answering	87%	10%	4%		

Table 7: Question 6 - Do you think there should be more controls on how fireworks can be used in Scotland?				
	Yes	No	Not Answered	Grand Total
Organisations:				
Animal-related third sector or community group	17		2	19
Animal-related private sector	5			5
Community council	13	5	1	19
Community group	7	2		9
Community safety organisation	1		1	2
Community-based firework display	1	1		2
Emergency Service	1			1
Firework events company		1		1
Fireworks professional or representative body		1	2	3
Fireworks retailer or supplier		5		5
Local authority	8	6	1	15
Professional or representative body	3	1		4
Third sector - non animal-related	2			2
Young peoples' group or service	4	1		5
Other	4	1	1	6
Total organisations	66	24	8	98
% of organisations answering	73%	27%		
Individuals	14,944	1,256	122	16,322
% of individuals answering	92%	8%		
All respondents	15,010	1,280	130	16,420
% of all respondents	92%	8%	1%	
% of all those answering	92%	8%		

Table 8: Question 10 - Do you think that there should be more controls to make sure animals are not caused unnecessary suffering because of the use of fireworks?

	Yes	No	Not Answered	Grand Total
Organisations:				
Animal-related third sector or community group	18		1	19
Animal-related private sector	5			5
Community council	12	5	2	19
Community group	6	3		9
Community safety organisation	1		1	2
Community-based firework display	2			2
Emergency Service	1			1
Firework events company		1		1
Fireworks professional or representative body			3	3
Fireworks retailer or supplier		4	1	5
Local authority	11	2	2	15
Professional or representative body	1	1	2	4
Third sector - non animal-related	2			2
Young peoples' group or service	5			5
Other	3	1	2	6
Total organisations	67	17	14	98
% of organisations answering	80%	20%		
Individuals	15,020	1,130	172	16,322
% of individuals answering	93%	7%		
All respondents	15,087	1,147	186	16,420
% of all respondents	92%	7%	1%	
% of all those answering	93%	7%		

Annex 3 - Summary of social media polls (internal analysis carried out by SG Building Safer Communities Team)

During the consultation, four polls were carried out - two on Facebook on Sunday 3 February and Monday 15 April, and two on Twitter on the same dates, asking the following questions:

Poll 1: “Do you think we should have tighter control over the public sale of fireworks?” (Facebook 3 February).

Poll 2: “Do you think we should have tighter control over the public sale of fireworks?” (Twitter 3 February 2019).

Poll 3: “Do you think there should be more controls on the use of fireworks to make sure animals are not caused unnecessary suffering?” (Facebook 15 April).

Poll 4: “Have you ever been affected by fireworks being used in an irresponsible or unsafe way?” (Twitter 15 April).

The first two polls carried out on Facebook and Twitter on 3 February, which coincided with the launch of the consultation, received the highest number of responses: 15,300 and 12,745 respectively. The Facebook poll carried out on 15 April received 5,500 responses and the Twitter poll carried out on the same date received 358 votes. A full summary is provided below:

Poll	Response and Engagement
1) Facebook 3 rd February	15,300 total votes 183 comments 1100 shares 211 reactions
2) Twitter 3 rd February	12,745 total votes 158 comments 670 retweets 367 likes
3) Facebook 15 th April	5,500 total votes 159 comments 369 shares 170 reactions
4) Twitter 15 th April	358 total votes 15 comments 31 retweets 8 likes

Across all polls a clear majority of those who responded agreed that there should be tighter control over the sale and use of fireworks:

Poll	Results
Poll One (Facebook): Do you think we should have tighter control over the public sale of fireworks?	88% YES 12% NO (15,300 total votes)
Poll Two (Twitter): Do you think we should have tighter control over the public sale of fireworks?	86% YES 14% NO (12,745 total votes)
Poll Three (Facebook): Do you think there should be more controls on the use of fireworks to make sure animals are not caused unnecessary suffering?	87% YES 13% NO (5,500 total votes)
Poll Four (Twitter): Have you ever been affected by fireworks being used in an irresponsible or unsafe way?	57% YES 43% NO (358 total votes)

In addition to responses to the polls, people were able to leave comments which provided further details of the reasons behind their response. The open-ended comments under each poll were coded for the purposes of identifying key themes. Five main themes emerged:

1. Support for tighter controls over fireworks;
2. Reasons for supporting tighter controls over fireworks;
3. Specific suggestions for tighter controls over fireworks;
4. Against tighter controls over fireworks; and
5. Reasons against tighter controls over fireworks.

The vast majority of comments left under each of the polls generally indicated support for greater control over how fireworks can be sold and used. These comments ranged from general statements of support for tighter controls and laws on fireworks, for example “...88% of the nearly 16,000 polled want tighter controls of fireworks!!” and “It’s much more controlled in France and Germany”, to calls for a complete ban on fireworks for example, “Total ban from my perspective. Even organised displays can cause distress and pollution.”

Many people provided specific reasons why they felt there should be greater controls, which typically centred around the impact that fireworks can have on animals and on people including children, older people, those with post-traumatic stress disorder and anxiety. For example, one commented that there is a *“need for some pet owners (and humans) to invest in anxiety medication thanks to the unnecessary banging.”* Another respondent commented that fireworks *“trigger my PTSD”* and another stated *“I have a disabled son who doesn’t cope with the noise”*.

A smaller number of people also left comments in relation to fireworks being used irresponsibly, particularly around the misuse of fireworks by young people. Other issues that were raised included: the noise disturbance of fireworks; that fireworks are dangerous and have the potential to cause injury; and negative impact of fireworks on the environment.

The largest number of comments, however, related to specific suggestions of what greater controls over the sale and use of fireworks should include. The most common suggestion was that fireworks should only be used at licenced displays, for example comment included that the *“public shouldn’t be able to purchase”* and that firework use *“should be supervised (at) public events only”*, *“Fireworks should only be for professionally organised displays”*, and *“...[fireworks] are much safer for everyone when at a public display”*. Other suggestions that were raised included: moving to silent fireworks; banning the sale of fireworks to the general public; and introducing a licencing system for the private sale/use of fireworks. A smaller number of people also suggested limiting the use of fireworks to special occasions, introducing greater punishment for the misuse of fireworks, and restricting the period when fireworks can be sold.

In line with the headline results to the polls, a smaller number of people left comments indicating that they were against tighter controls over fireworks being introduced. Many of these comments were general statements of being in favour of fireworks, such as; *“We don’t have any problems with fireworks in our area. Fireworks are great.”* and *“I do think some fireworks can be good, for morale, and regulations can keep it safe...”*.

And, as before, some people left comments which outlined the reasons they felt there should not be greater controls over the sale and use of fireworks. These tended to centre on a belief that other more pressing issues should be taking priority, and that greater controls would be disproportionate and would over-regulate how and when fireworks can be used. For example. *“...sort out the NHS and the education system”* and *“I don’t think they should ban sales to (the) public, it’s not the fireworks, it’s the idiots that are buying them that (are) the problem.”*



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

© Crown copyright 2019

OGL

This publication is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0 except where otherwise stated. To view this licence, visit nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3 or write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

This publication is available at www.gov.scot

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at

The Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

ISBN: 978-1-83960-227-6 (web only)

Published by The Scottish Government, October 2019

Produced for The Scottish Government by APS Group Scotland, 21 Tennant Street, Edinburgh EH6 5NA
PPDAS637642 (10/19)

W W W . g o v . s c o t