

Janet Finch-Saunders MS,
29 Madoc Street,
Llandudno,
LL30 2TL



10 September 2021

Dear Ms Finch-Saunders,

Thank you for taking the time to write and for raising a number of important issues in relation to our ongoing sale of instant barbecues. We understand your concern and appreciate the reasons behind the suggestion to remove instant barbecues from sale in our stores.

We have withdrawn instant barbecues from sale in stores situated in or within a one-mile radius of all UK National Parks. Millions of instant barbecues are sold every year and are safely used and enjoyed by the vast majority of people. However, many National Parks and some landowners have introduced a ban on their usage. We took this decision to help consumers, who will often purchase the instant barbecues on the way to visit National Parks, to support the local bans.

However, for a full ban on their sale to be effective, an industry-wide approach across the whole of the UK would be necessary. Otherwise, our members and customers would simply travel to an alternative Co-op store, or indeed to another retailer, in order to purchase them. Instant barbecues are bought and used safely and responsibly by hundreds of thousands of customers every year as they provide a popular, convenient and affordable method for customers to enjoy barbecue food. We provide clear and prominent instructions on the packaging of our instant barbecues to ensure customers know how to use them in a safe and responsible manner, which is of course extremely important.

This summer we recently launched our 'Put Me Out' campaign with the National Fire Chiefs Council. The Council are not calling for a ban of instant barbecues, as it could encourage use of unpredictable makeshift barbecues, and they want the public to be able to enjoy barbecues responsibly. The front of pack includes a prominent 'Put me out' instruction alongside a specific message to 'Use water to extinguish responsibly'. Safety instructions are repeated multiple times on the pack and we also state very clearly that the barbecues should only be used in authorised outdoor environments and not in areas that have a public space protection order against them. We've developed clear in-store messaging, including on our till screens, shelf edges, and on our Co-op radio to call out this important message.

I hope that the above information gives you reassurance that we take very seriously our commitment to responsible retailing, and about the steps we've taken to give our customers the correct information and guidance.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'P. Gerrard'.

Paul Gerrard
Campaigns & Public Affairs Director