

**Briefing Paper****Stage 3 – Consumer Scotland Bill****6 May 2020****Introduction**

Electrical Safety First is a leading consumer safety charity dedicated to reducing fires, accidents and deaths caused by electricity – which causes almost three quarters of all accidental fires in Scottish homes each year.<sup>1</sup>

This briefing covers amendment 3 in the name of Jackie Baillie MSP, which we understand has government support. **Electrical Safety First fully supports this amendment as it will strengthen Scottish consumers' protection on product recalls and asks Members to vote in favour of it at Stage 3 on Wednesday, 6 May, and pass the Consumer Scotland Bill.**

**Product Recall function**

- This amendment would require Consumer Scotland to establish and operate a central database of major recalled goods and inform and advice consumers adversely affected by them.
- We have long campaigned for Consumer Scotland to have a duty to disseminate information and advice regarding major product recalls – and, significantly, a central recall database.
- Product recalls are an increasing concern demanding serious action, with most achieving just a 10-20% success rate. Fault-lines in the UK's current product recall system have been highlighted by Whirlpool's recall of over a million tumble dryers and washing machines.
- Only last week, Whirlpool announced a further 21 models had been added to the recall notice for Hotpoint and Indesit washing machines, which was originally issued in December 2019. This is the second time further defective models have been discovered after publication of the original list.
- We also know that, last year alone, white goods caused a house fire almost every day in Scotland.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Electrical Safety First methodology of fire data following an FOI to the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service in March 2019.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.firescotland.gov.uk/news-campaigns/news.aspx?page=1&tags=prevention&year=2020&month=0>



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- Manufacturers and retailers experience major problems tracing consumers with a recalled item if it has not been registered. Our research has found that only a third of Scottish consumers register their electrical appliances.<sup>3</sup>
- Having a central body – a single, trusted source – coordinating recall information and advice is key to reaching consumers with a consistent and effective message.
- A recent survey of consumers in Scotland found:<sup>4</sup>
  - 68% do not currently know how to find out if a household electrical product has been subject to a recall notice by a manufacturer.
  - 67% would find it useful to have information about major product recalls communicated to the public by one single source.
- Consumer protection powers are reserved, but the Scottish Parliament has an opportunity to make a positive difference by ensuring that Consumer Scotland has a duty to disseminate information and advice about major product recalls.
- **We hope all Members will support amendment 3 in the name of Jackie Baillie MSP which is what consumers want, and need** - a central, trusted source of information on major product recalls in Scotland, which will ultimately help to reduce the harm that is all too often caused by defective and faulty goods.

**For further information about this briefing**, please contact Wayne Mackay, Deputy Public Affairs Manager at Electrical Safety First at: [wayne.mackay@electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk](mailto:wayne.mackay@electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk) or on 07973709358.

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<sup>3</sup> YouGov survey of 2102 people, representative of the UK population, carried out in January 2020

<sup>4</sup> YouGov survey of 1017 adults in Scotland, fieldwork was undertaken between 11-13<sup>th</sup> February 2020. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all Scotland adults (aged 18+).

