



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP
*Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and
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Dear Chris,

Thank you for your letter and accompanying Regulation 28 Report of 9 November. I'm deeply sorry to hear of Joey Walker's death and my sympathies are with his family. I am of course reminded of a similar tragic incident last year where a child died having become entangled in a blind cord. I would like to reiterate that I take the health and safety of all people, and children in particular, very seriously.

I wanted to set out the relevant legal provisions which are already in place. Firstly, the General Product Safety Regulations 2005 place a legal obligation on producers to ensure that their products, including blinds and blind cords, are safe before they can be placed on the market.

In addition, in February 2014 a harmonised European Safety Standard was introduced which requires that new blinds must be 'safe by design' or be supplied with appropriate child safety devices installed. The standards apply to blinds purchased or installed after February 2014 - manufacturers and retailers of blinds who do not comply with the standard may be prosecuted.

In the case of the two recent tragic accidents, both children's families were private tenants. However, the risks that these cases have highlighted will affect children in all tenures. This is why, following the incident last year, I asked my officials to work with the Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS), which is part of the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS). OPSS holds responsibility for regulation of the safety of consumer products like window blinds. The Government, through OPSS, continue to fund the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) to raise awareness of safety risks, including the importance of noting warnings and following safety instructions where they are included.

RoSPA are leading a campaign, supported by the Government, to highlight the potential dangers of looped blind cords, particularly among families with small children.

My officials have worked with their colleagues at OPSS to further publicise this campaign, through our newsletters to landlords and local authorities and our suite of guides for private rented sector landlords and tenants that cover safety in rented properties. I will ask that they continue this work with their colleagues in OPSS, in particular identifying more ways this information can be disseminated to all housing tenures.

Thank you again for your letter and I hope my response provides reassurance about how seriously I, and the Government, consider this matter.

Yours ever,
Robert Jenrick

RT HON ROBERT JENRICK MP