



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

Angela Rayner MP

*Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and
Local Government*

2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

To: Local Authority Leaders in England

Cc: Local Authority Chief Executives in England

Phil Garrigan, Chair, National Fire Chiefs Council

14 August 2026

Dear Leader,

Subject: Wildfire Risk and Prevention Amid Ongoing Heatwave

As you will be aware, the recent prolonged period of hot, dry weather has seen heightened wildfire risk across the country, with the Met Office issuing a Red Daily Hazard Assessment and fire and rescue services responding to a significant number of incidents on a daily basis. Some local areas have faced significant damage and disruption and I recognise the major input from authorities in those areas to support communities and the recovery.

In order to help protect our communities, infrastructure and natural assets, the Prime Minister has been clear that we need all our partners to take steps to enforce the temporary ban on the sale of disposable barbecues and encourage safe practices on their use and that of other potential ignition sources including campfires, cigarettes and fireworks which pose a wildfire risk at this time.

I would therefore encourage you to continue providing clear prevention messaging to the public, aligned to the work of your local fire and rescue services. Further resources can be found on through the [Prepare site](https://prepare.campaign.gov.uk/be-informed-about-hazards/wildfires/)¹ and the [Fire Kills Campaign](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/62877c788fa8f5561960ef37/Fire_Safety_Outdoors_v4_-_Web_accessible.pdf)² which you may wish to use to support your local communications.

In addition, your authorities at Unitary and County level, have powers to enforce the General Product Safety Regulations in relation to the temporary ban we have put in place to stop the sale of disposable barbecues and we would encourage your trading standards teams to engage with local retailers to make them aware of the restrictions.

¹ <https://prepare.campaign.gov.uk/be-informed-about-hazards/wildfires/>

² https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/62877c788fa8f5561960ef37/Fire_Safety_Outdoors_v4_-_Web_accessible.pdf

Your authorities have existing powers to issue Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPOs) (under sections 59 to 75 of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014). Decisions on whether to introduce a PSPO are rightly based on local evidence, knowledge and circumstances, and are a matter for the local authority to determine. Where authorities are satisfied that the statutory test is met, a PSPO may provide an effective means of addressing wildfire risks.

These could be (and have been) used to prohibit particular activities, for example lighting fires of any type, including barbecues, outdoor cooking equipment and items creating a naked flame or otherwise imposing a fire risk in specified areas, to reduce risks to life, habitats, property and emergency service resources. These could be used in a specific, targeted way in particularly high-risk areas, or could be framed more broadly depending on what is considered to be proportionate and reasonable in the circumstances by the local authority in question and where the relevant legal test has been met.

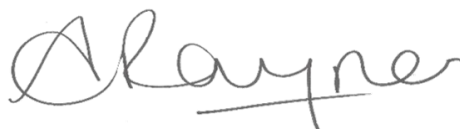
I am aware that there are certain requirements for consultation before a PSPO can be issued, however in these circumstances, where risks are extremely high, we would expect that this could be complied with at pace in a targeted way to enable the urgent use of these powers where local authorities wish to do so.

I know many authorities are already making effective use of these powers and I am grateful for the difference this is making to wildfire risk in those localities. Given the scale and severity of ongoing risk, with no significant rain forecast in many areas, I urge you to review your authority's existing measures, including byelaws, and to use these powers, where appropriate, in your local areas to mitigate the risk of wildfires.

For the longer term, we are also exploring further actions to prevent the damage wildfires can cause.

Thank you for your ongoing support in helping us to prevent wildfires and keep our communities safe. If you need any further support please do not hesitate to contact my officials.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A Rayner', with a stylized flourish at the end.

RT HON ANGELA RAYNER MP

Secretary of State for Housing, Communities & Local Government