

PE2144/A: Ban the sale and use of artificial sweeteners in food and drinks

Minister for Public Health and Women's Health written submission, 11 April 2025

Thank you for your email of 14 March 2025 on behalf of the Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee regarding Petition PE2144 which states the following:

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to ban the sale and use of artificial sweeteners, such as sucralose, in food and drink products in Scotland.

I note the concerns raised by the Petitioner and I would like to offer my thanks to [SPICe for their briefing on this subject](#). I offer the following response.

The Scottish Government remain committed to using the latest scientific consensus of established evidence to inform our view on non-sugar sweeteners (NSS).

On 2 April 2025, [the UK Government published a statement on NSS by the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition \(SACN\)](#).

The Scottish Government welcomes the SACN statement on NSS and we recognise the rigorous methodology used. We note the conclusions it reaches, in particular around the lack of data on the volume of NSS being used in food products and advice for younger consumers. We will work closely with our colleagues at Food Standards Scotland who are reviewing the recommendations from the SACN statement and assessing what these could mean for Scotland. In addition, we will liaise with the UK Government and other devolved administrations to discuss the statement as its conclusions and recommendations are applicable across the four nations.

SACN states that all NSS used in the UK have undergone a rigorous safety assessment by the European Food Safety Authority or UK Food Standards Agency (FSA). [The FSA Approved additives and E numbers page lists 22 sweeteners approved for use in Great Britain](#), 11 of which provide no calories or are low in calories. This includes common NSS such as: aspartame, saccharin, sucralose and steviol glycosides ('stevia').

However, we do recognise that some individuals have concerns regarding the use of NSS and the potential link to certain medical conditions. The Scottish Government continues to endorse a healthy balanced diet as represented by [the Eatwell Guide](#). The Eatwell Guide does not include a significant quantity of foods containing NSS; so following the guide will reduce the amount of NSS in our diets.

Given the view expressed by SACN that NSS are safe for human consumption and the aforementioned safety checks carried out by the Food Standards Agency and Food Standards Scotland, there is insufficient evidence at this time for the Scottish Government to consider taking steps to ban its sale as requested by the petitioner.

We will continue to monitor the evidence base relating to NSS and will consider any new evidence as it becomes available.

I hope the Committee finds this information helpful.

Yours sincerely

Jenni Minto MSP