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Thank you for your letter of 17 February about the regulation of shisha bars. Please accept my apologies for the long delay in responding to your letter. Home Office officials were given the impression that the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government had taken ownership of this letter back in February, but were mistaken. Steps have been taken to ensure our process of handling the transfer of incoming and outgoing Ministerial correspondence is tightened up and improved.

I understand that the popularity of shisha premises in England is increasing and it is important that they are appropriately regulated. All premises licensed for the sale and supply of alcohol, including shisha bars, are required to operate in a manner that prevents crime and disorder and public nuisance, preserves public safety and protects children from harm.

The World Health Organisation has also made clear the use of waterpipes to smoke tobacco poses a serious potential health hazard. Therefore, alongside the Licensing Act 2003, the Health Act 2006, Tobacco and Related Products Regulations 2016 and Local Government Acts play an important role in the regulation of shisha bars and in protecting public health.

However, I have noted your concerns about the lack of a single regulatory body and your ongoing discussions with the Environmental Health Officer at Birmingham City Council. As you have set out, amendments to local government legislation would provide flexibility to consider a wider range of options for local controls than would be possible through the Licensing Act 2003 in isolation.

I support your approach and I hope that your discussions with the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government are successful.

Kit Malthouse MP

*I am very sorry
for the mix up and
subsequent delay.*