

DR. CAROLINE LUCAS
Green Party

for the South East of England

Professor Al Aynsley-Green,
The Children's Commissioner
C/o DfES - Caxton House
Tothill Street
London SW1H 9NA

January 25th 2006

Dear Prof Aynsley-Green

I am writing to express my disappointment at learning about the 'teddy phone' and to enquire what action you are taking as Children's Commissioner to restrict exposure of young people to a potentially harmful product. As I am sure you know the 'teddy phone' is a mobile phone shaped like a teddy bear and aimed at children as young as four. As the safety of mobile phones are not scientifically guaranteed, I feel that such products should not be allowed to be marketed to vulnerable children.

Sir William Stewart, the chairman of the Health Protection Agency, and the Government's leading adviser on radiation, advised parents early last year to discourage use of mobile phones by children under eight as a precaution against potential health risks. In addition to his comments, I have some research, which I commissioned myself through the European Parliament's research unit. The work of Dr Gerard Hyland from Warwick University indicates that there are real health risks and we ought, therefore, to adopt the precautionary principle.

The research concluded that children are particularly at risk from mobile phones and their masts, for three reasons:

1. the absorption of microwaves of the frequency used in mobile telephony is greatest in an object about the size of a child's head.
2. the brain wave activity in a child is less robust to aggression by the 217 pulses of microwaves, punctuated 8.34 times per second, than is that of a mature adult. For the latter frequency (8.34Hz) lies in the range of the important alpha brain activity which in a child is not yet fully stabilised.
3. the immune system, whose efficiency is degraded by radiation of the kind used in mobile telephony, is again less robust in a child.

I urge you to act against the marketing of this product to children of a young age, particularly in the light of a growing consensus that the safety of mobile phones simply cannot be guaranteed. I believe that we must act cautiously until their safety is proven or otherwise and this is especially urgent in the case of young people. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,



Caroline Lucas - Green Party MEP for South East England.