

UKVIA

UK Vaping Industry Association



Background Briefing

Supporting information for media and
stakeholder communications

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The UKVIA has meticulously crafted this document for exclusive utilisation by the association and its members, aimed at maintaining uniformity and evidence-based communication on vaping-related subjects. It serves as a valuable resource when engaging with essential stakeholders and the media. Regular updates are scheduled on a quarterly basis to ensure the provision of current information at all times.

Should any member have inquiries about the content or wish to propose amendments or new material, we encourage them to reach out via email at ukvia@jbp.co.uk. Your input is greatly valued, and we remain committed to promoting informed discussions on vaping matters.

Consumer trends

General smoking trends

- As of 2021, 13.3% of adults in the UK smoke; 15.1% of men and 11.5% of women, which equates to around 6.6 million people in the population.
- The majority of current smokers (55.3%) said they wanted to quit cigarettes according to the [Office for National Statistics](#). Almost one in four (21.7%) said they wanted to quit within three months of being interviewed by the ONS.
- In 2021, adult smoking rates by each country in the UK were:
 - » England: 13.0% (approx. 5.4 million people) - down from 13.9% in 2019
 - » Wales: 14.1% (approx. 340,000 people) - down from 15% in 2019
 - » Scotland: 14.8% (approx. 620,000 people) - down from 15.4% in 2019
 - » Northern Ireland: 13.8% (approx. 190,000 people) - down from 15.6% in 2019
- Deaths attributed to smoking in the UK in 2019 (Latest available data)
 - » England: **74,600**
 - » Wales: **5,600**
 - » Scotland: **9,360**
 - » Northern Ireland: **2,300**
- In 2021, 12% of 11-15-year-old pupils ever smoked, down from 16% in 2018 - the lowest level ever recorded by the [Smoking, Drinking and Drug Use among Young People in England, 2021 survey](#) (conducted by IPSOS MORI and available through NHS Digital).
- According to the same survey, there has been a steady decline in smoking prevalence in this age bracket since 1996 (when 49% of pupils had smoked at least once).
- In 2021, the proportion of pupils who were classified as 'regular smokers' dropped to 1%, down from 2% in 2018 (*Smoking, Drinking and Drug Use among Young People in England, 2021 survey*).
- In 2022 ONS reported 13.3% of adults aged 18 years and over in the UK were smokers in 2021; this is a decrease from 14.0% in 2020. This is the lowest proportion of current smokers since 2011, when ONS began recording smoking prevalence from the Annual Population Survey (APS). The decrease in the proportion of current smokers may be partly attributed to the increase in vaping and e-cigarette use. Data from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) have shown regular use of a vaping device has increased in 2021.

General vaping trends

- The proportion of the adult population using e-cigarettes **increased to 8.3% in 2022**, the highest rate ever, amounting to 4.3 million people in Great Britain ([ASH 2022](#)).
- More than half of current vapers (56%) are ex-smokers, while the proportion of vapers who also smoke (known as dual users) has increased to 35%, up from 30.5%, since 2021 ([ASH 2023](#)).
- The proportion of adult smokers in Great Britain who have never tried e-cigarettes is continuing to decline slowly, down to 27% in 2023 from 30.1% in 2021 ([ASH 2023](#)).

- Only 1.3% of never smokers in Great Britain are current vapers, amounting to 8.1% of vapers ([ASH 2022](#)).
- More than half of current vapers who are ex-smokers in 2022 said they had been vaping for over 3 years (56%), compared with 18% in 2017 ([ASH 2022](#)).
- Of the 4.3 million current vapers in Great Britain, around 2.4 million are ex-smokers, 1.5 million are current smokers and 350,000 are never smokers ([ASH 2022](#)).

Speaking on the decline in smoking prevalence, James Tucker – Data and Analysis for Social Care and Health Division with the Office for National Statistics – said:

“This year we have reported 13.3% of adults aged 18 and over in the UK were smokers in 2021; this is a decrease from 14.0% in 2020.

“This is lowest proportion of current smokers since 2011, when we started recording smoking prevalence from the Annual Population Survey (APS)

“The decrease in the proportion of current smokers may be partly attributed to the increase in vaping and e-cigarette use.”

Vaping vs other quit smoking methods

- As in previous years, the main reason given by ex-smokers for vaping is to help them quit (29%), with the next most common reasons being to prevent relapse (19%), because they enjoy the experience (14%) and to save money (11%) ([ASH 2022](#)).
- The main reasons given by current smokers for vaping are to cut down on smoking (17%), to save money (16%), to try and help them quit (14%) and to prevent relapse (13%) ([ASH 2022](#)).
- In 2022, the Cochrane Review found the ‘strongest evidence yet’ that vaping is a better cessation tool than traditional nicotine replacement therapies (NRTs) and that people are more likely to stop smoking for at least six months using nicotine e-cigarettes than alternatives like patches and gums.
- NHS Better Health guidance further supports vaping as an effective stop smoking method, saying you’re roughly twice as likely to quit if you use e-cigarettes compared to other NRTs.
- In 2021, 40% of surveyed local authorities offered vaping products to some or all smokers (up from 11% in 2019) and a further 15% had plans to do so ([Nicotine Vaping in England: 2022 Evidence Update, OHID](#)).

Youth vaping stats/information

- No one under the age of 18, or who does not already smoke combustible cigarettes, should start using an e-cigarette or vape device ([ASH 2023](#)).
- According to an annual youth vaping survey from Action on Smoking and Health UK, the proportion of 11-17-year-olds experimenting with e-cigarettes (trying once or twice) has grown from 7.7% in 2022 to 11.6% in 2023 ([ASH 2023](#)).

- However, the change in current vaping (regular or occasional use) was ‘not significant’, rising from 6.9% to just 7.6% over the same period (*ASH 2023*).
- The ‘Use of e-cigarettes (vapes) among young people in Great Britain’ report confirmed the level of 11-17-year-olds vaping ‘more than once a week’ was just 3.7% in 2023 - a slight increase from 3.1% in 2022 (*ASH 2023*).
- The same survey found e-cigarette use remains ‘largely confined’ to current or former smokers, with 88% of 11-17-year-old ‘never smokers’ either having never vaped or being unaware of e-cigarettes (*ASH 2023*).
- Of 11-17-year-old never smokers in Great Britain, Action on Smoking and Health also found that just 0.8% use e-cigarettes more than once a week – up from 0.5% in 2022 (*ASH 2023*).
- The ASH youth survey revealed that 69% of 11-17-year-olds say disposables are the type of device they most frequently use. This is up from 52% last year and 7.7% the year before (*ASH 2023*).
- It also found that 48% of 11-17-year-olds who currently vape are purchasing their products from shops (*ASH 2023*).
- In response to the ‘higher vaping prevalence reported across all age categories’, the Office for Health Improvements and Disparities last year reiterated its recommendations for improved enforcement to prevent youth access to vaping and cigarettes (*OHID Nicotine Vaping in England Evidence Update 2022*).



Cost of Vaping vs Smoking

- NHS Better Health guidance supports vaping as a cheaper alternative to smoking, suggesting that e-cigarettes can cost about a 'third as much' once you buy a starter kit (this estimate refers to reusable options like tanks and pod systems).
- The Cancer Intelligence Team at Cancer Research UK estimates that smokers in Great Britain will spend around £525 on cigarettes every 3 months. This is significantly more than vapers in Great Britain, who are estimated to spend just £150 every 3 months (*Cancer Research UK 2022*).
- According to research from the Adam Smith Institute, smokers in the North East, North West and Yorkshire and the Humber could boost their disposable income by £1,600 a year if they switched to vaping, compared with around £1,075 if they switched to heated tobacco and around £866 if they switched to nicotine pouches (*[Level Up Health and Boost Incomes Through Vaping - 2 Million Years of Life: How Safer Smoking Alternatives can Level Up Health and Tackle the Cost of Living Crisis, ASI](#)*).
- Chancellor Jeremy Hunt announced a near 15% increase in tobacco duty (12.7% to remain in line with the Retail Price Index and a standard 2% on top) as part of the Spring Budget in March 2023, meaning the price gap between smoking and vaping may well have increased further than these estimates suggest.

COP10

- As in previous years, the upcoming Conference of Parties on the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control is an opportunity for the UK to represent its progressive tobacco harm reduction stance on the international stage.
- The World Health Organization and the FCTC's historic and continued anti-vaping approach raises concerns that the COP10 summit could act as a catalyst for policy recommendations that move against e-cigarettes and could therefore be detrimental to global tobacco control efforts.
 - » These recommendations could include flavour bans or restrictions, restrictions on product communications, bans on health and cessation claims, limits on product formats, increased taxes, large graphic health warnings and plain packaging.
 - » Almost all of these policies would be in contrast to the UK's pragmatic and progressive approach to vaping regulation and could become the criteria on which the efforts of parties to implement FCTC obligations is measured.
 - » There are concerns that do need to be addressed by policymakers and industry members – i.e. youth vaping and illicit trade – but we don't have to suffocate the reduced risk product with chokehold restrictions and bans to achieve this.
- Activism groups like the Coalition of Asia Pacific Tobacco Harm Reduction Advocates (CAPHRA) are already lobbying for the public health potential of vaping to be recognised at the COP10 event.
 - » The group has written to delegates urging them to review the evidence in support of tobacco harm reduction ahead of the critical event and have called on them to change the WHO's closed door policy when it comes COP summits.
 - » Having voices from across the harm reduction spectrum presented at these critical conferences prevents them from becoming echo chambers of single-minded beliefs and instead paints a larger picture of the potential role of vaping in tobacco control.
- Following an inquiry into last year's COP9, the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Vaping made a series of recommendations for the UK delegation to adopt that would align the delegates' strategy for COP with the UK government's tobacco harm reduction strategy. Some of these recommendation's included:
 - » Establishing a COP Working Group on harm-reduction.
 - » Challenging the unduly restrictive and selective policy towards civil society observers and media allowed into COP meetings.

- This year's conference is an opportunity for the UK to share its scientific and harm reduction approach with member states.
- A failure to act at international events like this and endorse the UK's winning tobacco harm reduction stance allows the antagonisation of vaping by the FCTC, the WHO and similarly minded groups and governments to continue unchallenged.
- The UKVIA recently (April 2023) took part in an All-Party Parliamentary Group on Vaping session discussing COP10 and how the government can work with international partners to share the nation's tobacco control successes – with an emphasis on the smokefree power of vaping.



Health conditions

General Health

- The latest Cochrane review did not 'detect any clear evidence of harm from e-cigarettes when used to quit smoking' (Cochrane 2022).

Reaffirming the findings of Cochrane's review Dr Nicola Lindson, University Research Lecturer at the University of Oxford and the Cochrane Tobacco Addiction Group's Managing Editor said:

"E-cigarettes are not risk free and shouldn't be used by people who don't smoke or aren't at risk of smoking. However, evidence shows that nicotine e-cigarettes carry only a small fraction of the risk involved in smoking. In our review, we did not find evidence of substantial harms caused by nicotine containing electronic cigarettes when used to quit smoking."

- Cochrane's 2022 review said that more studies and data is needed to assess the long-term effects of e-cigarettes.
- In September 2022, the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) reaffirmed that vaping was at least 95% less harmful than smoking. This risk assessment was first made by OHID's predecessor Public Health England in 2015 and has remained unchanged since then.
- The OHID report, Nicotine Vaping in England: 2022 Evidence Update Summary, said: "Based on the reviewed evidence, we believe that the '95% less harmful' estimate remains broadly accurate, at least over short term and medium term periods. However, it might now be more appropriate and unifying to summarise our findings using our other firm statement: 'that vaping poses only a small fraction of the risks of smoking'."

Cancer

- Cancer Research UK, the world's largest independent funder of Cancer Research, says there is 'no good evidence' that vaping causes cancer. It also says nicotine, the addictive chemical found in cigarettes and some vape products, does not cause cancer.
- Smoking causes at least 15 different types of cancer. Because vaping is far less harmful than smoking, your health could benefit from switching from smoking to vaping and you will reduce your risk of getting cancer (Cancer Research UK)
- Cigarette smoke contains more than 5,000 chemicals – 70 of which we know cause cancer – and smoking is responsible for 7 in 10 lung cancer cases in the UK.

- The OHID Nicotine Vaping in England: 2022 Evidence Update found that, compared to smoking, using vaping products leads to a substantial reduction in biomarkers of toxicant exposure associated with cigarette smoking. It said: “Evidence suggests significantly lower relative exposure from vaping compared to smoking in biomarkers that are associated with the risk of cancer, respiratory conditions, cardiovascular conditions and other health conditions.

EVALI

- In 2019 there were reports that vaping had caused an outbreak of lung illness in the US. An investigation found the cases were linked to contaminated illegal products. It was not linked to vaping regularly or in the long term. There was no similar outbreak in the UK, and the chemicals of concern are banned in the UK.
- Cancer Research UK states that there is no good evidence that e-cigarettes bought from legal places cause lung disease.
- Alice Davies, Health Information Officer at Cancer Research UK said: “Headlines can be misleading as these cases were due to contaminants in illegal products and not linked to regular vaping. There was no similar outbreak in the UK.” (April 2021 blog on the Cancer Research UK website).
- The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities Nicotine Vaping in England: Evidence Update said there were ‘lessons to be learnt from the mislabelled US EVALI outbreak’ and that communications about the illness should separate vaping illicit substances from nicotine vaping (OHID 2022).

Heart

- The Office for Health Improvements and Disparities said that, while the extent to which vaping presents a risk to cardiovascular health ‘remains uncertain’, the risk is expected to be ‘much less than that of cigarette smoking’ (OHID Nicotine Vaping in England 2022).
 - » The OHID also said the findings of its review suggest that ‘developing and implementing policies and interventions that support smokers completely switching to vaping will reduce exposure to toxicants.
- A study from the University of Dundee, published in November 2019, found vaping ‘may be less harmful to your blood vessels’ than cigarettes (University of Dundee 2019)
 - » According to the report, which was funded by the British Heart Foundation and looked at people who smoked at least 15 cigarettes a day for at least two years, measures of blood vessel health – including blood pressure and artery stiffness – started to improve within one month of switching from tobacco to vaping.
 - » The research only looked at a ‘relatively small’ sample size of 114 people – BHF said it would not advise non-smokers to start vaping.
 - » It also said the study does not prove vaping is completely safe and stressed more research was need on the long-term effects of vaping on your heart and blood vessels.

Passive vaping

- Cancer Research UK maintains that there is ‘no good evidence’ that second-hand vapour from e-cigarettes is harmful. The leading charity also confirms that passive vaping is not the same as passive smoking because ‘e-cigarettes do not contain tobacco’.
 - » Cancer Research UK guidance does say vaping is still ‘relatively new’ and long-term effects of secondhand vaping are unclear but adds that it is ‘unlikely to be harmful’.

Popcorn lung

- Popcorn lung – otherwise known as bronchiolitis obliterans – is a severe lung disease that results from a build up of scar tissue.
- It’s believed that the condition is caused by exposure to diacetyl; a banned substance that is not found in legal UK vaping products.
- Cancer Research UK reports ‘there have been no confirmed cases of popcorn lung reported in people who use e-cigarettes’ and that vapes don’t cause the disease.

Nicotine/nicotine addiction

- Action on Smoking and Health reports that the majority of e-cigarette users have already been exposed to nicotine either as current or former smokers.
- According to findings from ASH, only 1.3% of never smoker adults in Great Britain are current vapers and less than 1% of 11-17-year-old never smokers use e-cigarettes more than once a week (ASH 2022).
- In contrast to concerns about the ‘dangers’ of nicotine, the NHS says: “While nicotine is the addictive substance in cigarettes, it’s relatively harmless. Almost all of the harm from smoking comes from the thousands of other chemicals in tobacco smoke, many of which are toxic.

“Nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) has been widely used for many years to help people stop smoking and is a safe treatment.”

- In 2021, Yorkshire Cancer Society said: “Vaping products do contain nicotine, which is inhaled through a vapour. While it is nicotine that causes tobacco cigarettes to be so addictive, on its own it is relatively harmless.

“Nicotine is not a carcinogen; there is no evidence that sustained use of nicotine alone increases the risk of cancer.”

Marketing & Branding

The UKVIA has created a set of Packaging, Labelling and Flavour Names guidelines to set clear standards for e-liquid, flavour names and flavour descriptors on sale in the UK market. The document focuses on limiting references to youth culture, removing imagery and descriptors which may be misleading, linked to illegal or dangerous substances, or have unsubstantiated health claims. They are as follows:

- **All vaping e-liquid container packaging and labelling placed for sale on the UK market must:**
 - » Not use brand or product names that seek to replicate, imitate, or associate themselves with well-known non-vaping brands or other products, that are particularly popular with persons under the age of 18.
 - » Not display imagery on the product or packaging that closely mimics attributes which are appealing to persons under the age of 18, or related to youth culture, including cartoons and cartoon characters.
- **All vaping e-liquid flavours, flavour names and descriptors placed for sale on the UK market must:**
 - » Not use flavour names or descriptors that are misleading, linked to illegal or dangerous substances, sexually inappropriate or have unsubstantiated health claims.
 - » Not use flavour names or descriptors that are particularly appealing to persons under the age of 18 and are associated with youth culture, including popular language or expressions, or names which are reminiscent of confectionary disproportionately appealing persons under the age of 18.
 - » Adhere to the current applicable ASA guidelines on health claims.

Misinformation

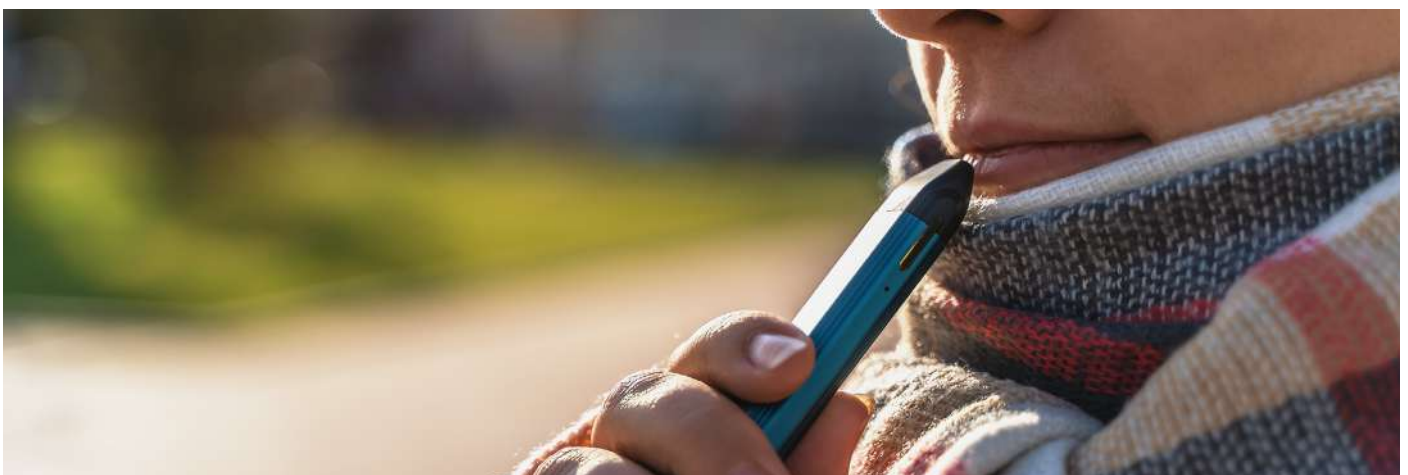
- Misinformation is the reason a significant proportion of the general population and smokers believe vaping to be more harmful than smoking and that a relatively small proportion understand vaping to be substantially less harmful than combustible cigarettes.
- Nearly 40% of adult smokers in Great Britain wrongly believe that vaping is more or equally as harmful as smoking.
- Only a third of adult smokers in Great Britain (34%) recognise vaping as a less harmful alternative to smoking (ASH 2023).
- The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities recently outlined the need for ‘carefully designed interventions’ that would address misperceptions about the harms of smoking and vaping.
 - » In its [Nicotine Vaping in England: 2022 Evidence Update](#), the OHID said providing ‘accurate information’ about the relative harms of vaping and risks of using nicotine could help correct these widespread misunderstandings, particularly among adults.

Alice Davies, Health Information Manager at Cancer Research UK previously summed up misleading information:

“Some studies have shown harmful effects of e-cigarette vapour. However, these are usually conducted on animals or cells in the lab, rather than in people. And the concentrations of e-cigarette vapour used are often much higher than people would be exposed to in real life. Whilst these studies are useful to explore the potential effects of e-cigarettes, they shouldn’t be used to estimate real-world impact in humans.”

- The UKVIA believes substantive action is needed to encourage more adult smokers to switch to vaping where they would otherwise continue to smoke.
- The current regulations mean that the e-cigarette category, and e-cigarette brands individually, are significantly constrained in their ability to help correct misperceptions.
- There are restrictions to the channels that are available for communicating with smokers, as well as the content of the communication.
- The UKVIA believes that the government must become even more active in driving large scale public health campaigns to tackle this critical category perception challenge.
- The UKVIA supports the introduction of agreed health claims and switching messages, similar to those that have been suggested by the governments of New Zealand and Canada:
 1. If you are a smoker, switching completely to vaping is a much less harmful option.
 2. Switching completely from smoking to e-cigarettes will reduce harms to your health.
 3. Completely replacing your cigarette with an e-cigarette will reduce harms to your health.

- Government should give due consideration to the placement of on-pack messaging. London South Bank University have found that existing nicotine health warnings displayed on e-cigarette packaging are deterring smokers from switching from smoking to vaping.
- Government should introduce approved messaging on handouts/leaflets for retailers to supply to consumers, and posters that can be used in stores and online.
- The Government may wish to give further consideration to the role inserts inside packs of combustible tobacco products could play in encouraging smokers to switch from conventional cigarettes or highlighting the harm reduction benefits of vaping.
 - » Further research is needed to understand the efficacy of pack inserts.
- The efficacy of how health claims and switching messages are communicated should be compared to determine the most effective in communicating with adult smokers.
- In a keynote address at the UKVIA Forum 2022, MP Adam Afriyie said one of the best ways to reach smokers was through messages on cigarette boxes, suggesting we put pro-vaping facts on the packaging that smokers engage with every day.
- The Royal College of Physicians in its report '[Smoking and health 2021: A coming of age for tobacco control](#)' called for government-funded media campaigns to 'encourage switching from smoked tobacco to e-cigarettes and provide balanced information on other harm reduction options such as heated tobacco'.
- In 2021, the [National Institute for Health and Care Excellence](#) released comprehensive draft guidelines to 'tackle the health burden of smoking'. This package of recommendations included information on messaging around e-cigarettes.
 - » The NICE guidelines called for 'clear, consistent and up-to-date information about nicotine-containing e-cigarettes to adults who are interested in using them to stop smoking'.
 - » They detailed how we should advise adults on how to use nicotine-containing e-cigarettes, which would include explaining that they are not medically licensed, we don't know the long-term harms, that the use of e-cigarettes is 'likely to be substantially less harmful than smoking and that any smoking is harmful'.



Policy/regulation

Brexit

- Outside of the EU, the UK Government is able to respond to industry developments with greater ease and less bureaucracy.
- The UK can seize the opportunity presented by leaving the EU to further cement the concept of tobacco harm reduction and ensure that its national tobacco control plans are based on the significant and growing body of UK science and research which shows that vaping is the most effective alternative for smokers looking to quit.
- Much like the UK and New Zealand have already done, the EU needs to embrace vaping as a reduced risk alternative instead of treating it in the same way as combustible tobacco.
- An early leak of the EU's Beating Cancer Plan indicated that European leaders were largely stood against e-cigarettes, despite their proven track record in helping people steer clear of smoking.
 - » The document looked to introduce flavour bans on novel tobacco products and enforce mandatory plain/standardised packaging, both of which are policies that would only hinder smokers during their transition to less harmful alternatives.
- Advocates like the World Vapers' Alliance have fought against such regressive policies in the EU, reiterating the importance of e-cigarettes as a quitting tool for adult smokers and battling away misinformation that can influence anti-vaping regulations.
- The UKVIA urges EU policymakers to reconsider their antagonistic approach to vaping and look at the international body of evidence that supports the reduced risk product as a tool for public health good.
- We also implore the UK government to continue on its current path as a leading light for harm reduction and use its post-Brexit freedom to endorse vaping as the most effective stop smoking tool ever devised.
- Additionally, the UKVIA hopes the UK government will lead the world when it comes to responsible vape regulation, stamping out illicit sellers and counterfeit products with hard-line fines and penalties while nurturing the growing compliant industry.

Enforcement

- The UKVIA has recommended the introduction of a regional/national test purchasing scheme to monitor those selling vapes; a measure that has now been adopted by the UK government as confirmed in an April 2023 announcement made by Public Health Minister Neil O'Brien.
- The UKVIA has also called for increased on-the-spot fines of up to £10,000 for those caught selling to minors (up from £2,500).
 - » The money gained from these fines should be used as an additional channel of funding for Trading Standards, supporting the agency in its efforts to tackle illicit sales and enforce vape regulations across the country.

- To ensure greater accountability amongst vape sellers, the UKVIA is also calling for the establishment of an ‘Approved Retailer Registration/Licensing Scheme’.
 - » Retailers on the scheme would pay an annual fee to register which would vouch for the authenticity of the products being sold.
 - » To be accepted as part of the registration scheme, retailers would first have to meet a strict set of standards and code of practice.
- In 2023, UKVIA member and leading vape regulatory company Arcus Compliance commissioned a research report into the level of enforcement for the UK vape sector.
 - » Data gathered through FOI requests issued to regional city and London borough councils revealed there is a ‘staggering’ lack of action being taken against rogue vape traders.
 - » The findings show that, across 11 major cities – which have a shared population of more than 5.5 million people – just 19 successful prosecutions were made against retailers for underage/ illicit sales between 2021 and early 2023.
 - » The highest amount of fines given out across these same cities – based on the information provided by individual councils and trading standards teams – over the same period was £2,188 – less than the maximum penalty for one offender at £2,500.
 - » Arcus Compliance Managing Director Robert Sidebottom said the ‘concerning lack of proactive enforcement’ demonstrates the ‘system is in serious distress’. He said Trading Standards officers are ‘thinly spread’ and called for more intervention.
 - » The full report will be made available later this year and will cover the level of enforcement for youth vaping, illicit products, environmental obligations and marketing/advertising.

General regulation

As an Association, we fully support evidence-based regulation that is **proportionate and properly sets vaping products apart from tobacco.**

Levelling up agenda

- With an agenda to ‘level up’, the UK Government must present smokers with appropriate access to less harmful alternatives and accurate information about the products available to them.
- Inequalities attributable to smoking:
 - » In 2021, when looking at smoking prevalence by economic activity in the UK, those who were defined as unemployed had a higher proportion of current smokers (25.7%), compared with those who were in paid employment (13.3%) (Office for National Statistics).
 - » Around one in four people with no qualifications were current smokers compared with 1 in 15 people whose highest level of education is a degree or equivalent (Office for National Statistics).

In the seventh annual report from Public Health England (Now the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities), Professor of Tobacco Addiction at King’s College London Ann McNeill said:

‘What is concerning is that smokers, particularly those from disadvantaged groups, incorrectly and increasingly believe that vaping is as harmful as smoking. This is not true and means fewer smokers try vaping.’

Medical licensing

- Vaping products are in the main not medically licensed. There is a separate regulatory regime for any vaping product that is medically licenced and would have had to have been through the relevant clinical trials process.
- The UKVIA understands the potential benefit for some smokers in having medically licensed vaping products available on prescription.
- However, it is key to remember the following:
 - » Smokers are not all the same; many smokers do not wish to be seen as patients.
 - » A large part of the success of vaping, particularly versus NRT, has been its presentation as an innovative consumer product.
 - » Smokers like vaping because it does not feel like medicine.
- There are also significant problems with the current process for medical licensing:
 - » The process takes a very large amount of time and a very large investment to obtain a medical licence.
 - » The vaping sector is very fast moving and this sort of process does not encourage innovation.
 - » The UKVIA has met with the MHRA to discuss what steps can be taken to streamline the process of medical licensing but there are very little changes that can be made to the process.

Swap to Stop 2023

- The UK government recently (April 2023) announced a 'Swap to Stop' scheme that would see a million adult smokers across England offered a free vape kit. The scheme was announced by Public Health Minister Neil O'Brien alongside a package of new measures to crackdown on underage sales and illicit trade.
 - » The UKVIA celebrated at the news of this government-led initiative and believe it represents a watershed moment for the vaping category.
 - » The Swap to Stop scheme demonstrates that the government recognises vaping as pivotal in making smoking obsolete and means Britain can get back on track with its smokefree 2030 ambition.

The UKVIA's official statement on the government's Swap to Stop scheme reads:

"We are delighted to learn of this initiative. It clearly represents a watershed moment for the vaping category as the government's recognition of vaping's pivotal role in making smoking obsolete, is turned into nationwide action. It also means that Britain can get back on track with its smokefree ambition by 2030.

“The evidence has been there for many years that vaping is at least 95% less harmful than smoking and consecutive studies have shown that vaping is the most effective way in quitting conventional cigarettes. Whilst over 200 people a day die from smoking in the UK, there has not been one confirmed death globally from vaping nicotine liquids.

“It’s also very positive to see that the government has recognised the need for vaping options for smokers. This is key as their frequency of smoking will be very different so a one size fits all approach to quitting through vaping would not work. There is also a significant need to educate smokers about vaping – recent research that we commissioned showed that there is a lack of advice and this is critical to help smokers give up their habits.

“This government initiative to encourage adult smokers to quit through vaping is a very big step in the right direction but to ensure that vapes are only used by adults, it needs to work in tandem with measures that address the youth vaping situation which have been proposed by the government and our association.”

Online version available [here](#)

Packaging

- Packaging of e-liquids and e-cigarette devices (prefilled or otherwise) should contain a message encouraging smokers to switch or highlighting the harm reduction benefits of vaping. Such claims would be agreed by the relevant public health bodies.
- Packaging of devices that do not include nicotine containing e-liquids, should carry a revised warning stating that: *‘This product can be used for nicotine containing e-liquids. Nicotine is a highly addictive substance.’*
- The UKVIA supports the introduction of product and packaging image requirements as part of the submission process for market approval through the MHRA. As it stands, there are no such checks, meaning child appealing branding can slip through the system undetected.

Smokefree Britain

- According to [Cancer Research UK](#), England’s smokefree 2030 target will be missed by 7 years unless the rate of quitting increases.
- It has also been estimated that smokefree Scotland will not be achieved until after 2050 and Wales and Northern Ireland are predicted to reach smokefree status in 2037 and the late 2040s respectively.

Tax

- Vaping products do not contain tobacco and therefore should not be subject to a tax and excise regime that is similar to tobacco.
- The public health community in the UK has been very clear that vaping is a significant public health opportunity that could help millions of smokers reduce or stop smoking. It is crucial that regulatory and taxation policies continue to differentiate between tobacco products and vaping products, including by ensuring the price of vaping products is able to remain attractively lower than cigarettes to encourage smokers to switch.

- For comparison, NRT products actually receive a tax reduction through reduced VAT. An additional cost added to vaping products by excise duty would add a further disadvantage to vaping products versus NRT.
- If excise duty was applied to vaping products, the VAT reduction applied to NRT products would need to be removed, otherwise a product with clear similarities would benefit from a much more favourable tax status overall. The UKVIA has responded to EU Consultations on whether vaping products should be subject to excise duty.

The UK Parliament's House of Commons Science and Technology Committee released a report following their inquiry into e-cigarettes in August 2018. Among the Committee's many recommendations was an explicit recommendation (point 82) that:

“The level of taxation on smoking-related products should directly correspond to the health risks that they present, to encourage less harmful consumption. Applying that logic, e-cigarettes should remain the least-taxed and conventional cigarettes the most, with heat-not-burn products falling between the two.”

The Khan Review

- [The Khan review](#) is a long-awaited independent report on making smoking obsolete and features comprehensive strategies and recommendations on tackling the public health threat that is combustible tobacco.
- The document – produced by Dr Javed Khan – was hailed as a significant forward step for the vape sector and identifies e-cigarettes as key to ensuring England hits its smokefree 2030 ambitions.

The four critical policy pillars put forward in the review included:

- » An annual investment of £125 million in interventions to ensure England hits its smokefree goal – ideally funded by a tobacco industry levy.
- » An increase in the minimum age to buy tobacco by one year, every year.
- » The promotion of vaping as a substitute for smoking with accurate information on the benefits of switching, while preventing youth uptake.
- » Ensuring the NHS prioritises prevention, takes further action to stop people smoking and provides support and treatment across its services.

As an association, the UKVIA provided evidence for the review including a comprehensive set of proposals setting out how vaping can:

- » Be the number one tool to help people quit smoking for good.
- » Be one of the central planks for the levelling up agenda.
- » Get the ambitious smokefree 2030 aspirations back on track.

Responding to the review, UKVIA Director General John Dunne said:

“We couldn’t agree more with this report’s stark message for the government, which is that, without immediate action, it will miss its smoke free targets by seven years.

“The NHS tells us that around 78,000 people in the UK die every year from smoking, with many more living with debilitating smoking-related illnesses, so the time for inaction is over.

“Mr Khan unambiguously states that one of the critical ways the government can get its ambitions for a smokefree society back on track is through greater promotion of vaping and the UKVIA, which represents vaping organisations including retailers, manufacturers and distributors, will do everything we can to support this.”

Government crackdown on underage sales and illicit trade 2023

- In a renewed effort to stamp out vape sales to under 18s and target rogue traders flouting the law, the government recently announced a package of new hardline measures.
- Unveiled in April 2023 by Public Health Minister Neil O’Brien, the [policies](#) include the introduction of a national test purchasing effort and the formation of an enforcement taskforce set to tackle illegal trade.
- Alongside the announcement, O’Brien also called for evidence on opportunities to further prevent underage sales and access.
- In response to the crackdown, the UKVIA said: *“The law is absolutely clear – it is illegal to sell vapes to under 18s...therefore, we welcome the targeted action announced by the government on youth vaping, which clearly homes in on cutting the source of supply to minors from rogue sellers.”*

Policy proposals previously presented by the UKVIA to combat youth access and rogue traders included:

- » Fines of up to £10,000 per instance for retailers, including owners and directors, caught selling to minors.
- » A national registration scheme for retailers – with only those that meet strict qualifying criteria able to sell vape products.
- » The introduction of the first ever national test purchasing scheme to constantly monitor retailers for sales to minors on an ongoing basis.
- » Funding from the fines and retailer registration scheme to be used to finance heightened enforcement by Trading Standards.

The UKVIA's official response to the government crackdown on underage sales and illicit trade reads:

“This is the approach we have been calling for government to adopt for some time and which was reflected in detailed proposals that we presented at the end of last month in Parliament.

“We're especially pleased that the government has taken on board our idea of a test purchasing scheme across the country which will help to keep a much-needed close eye on the sales activities of retailers.

“We also applaud the move to create an illicit vapes enforcement squad to enhance the capability and outcomes of Trading Standards in dealing with the rising level of illicit products that are on the market as well as underage sales.

“There is no doubt that action directed at those illegally selling vape products to children is the way forward. Vitally, it means that any youth vaping prevention measures cannot be to the detriment of adult smokers looking to quit through vaping and vapers who want to avoid a return to smoking. This is precisely the effect a ban on flavoured vapes would have, given the fact that adult smokers and vapers rely on them to quit their habits and avoid relapsing.”

“As the largest trade association for the vaping sector in the UK, we will also contribute to the Government's Call for Evidence, which is expected, re-emphasising the proposals we have to date put forward.”

The full online statement is available [here](#)



Tobacco and Related Products Regulations (TRPR) and Tobacco Products Directive (TPD)

TRPR

- The government recently reviewed the Tobacco and Related Products Regulations (TRPR); the primary regulations which govern e-cigarette and vape products in the UK, derived from the implementation of the EU's Tobacco Products Directive (TPD).
- Our recommendations for this review of the TRPR, as contained in our Blueprint for Better Regulation, included:
 1. Improve public health by tackling the misinformation that surrounds vaping and deters smokers from making the switch.
 2. Seize the opportunities to forge an independent regulatory path presented by leaving the European Union.
 3. Continue to be an advocate for vaping.
- Our Blueprint for Better Regulation document can be accessed via this link, or via the UKVIA website.

TPD

- The UKVIA fully supports proportionate, evidence-based regulation of vaping products based on their public health potential and that clearly sets them apart from tobacco products.
- This is essential for consumers to continue to trust the product and support more smokers to make the switch to vaping.
- The UKVIA believes vaping products should not be bound up in or modelled on tobacco regulation. Instead, vaping product regulation must be based on robust product quality and safety standards, together with responsible marketing practices ensuring total youth protection.
- Whilst there are some positive aspects to the TPD, it is not fit for purpose when it comes to regulating vaping.
- The packaging restrictions imposed on vaping products by TPD are more stringent than those for many hazardous products. It is time these restrictions were amended to reflect the evidence.
- The nicotine strength limits are particularly problematic for smokers looking to make that decision to switch to a less harmful alternative; by imposing an arbitrary limit of 20ml/mg, TPD makes it very difficult for a heavy smoker to get the nicotine intake they need to satisfy their cravings. This risks these smokers reverting to cigarettes rather than continuing to vape.
- The requirements of TPD and other EU legislation mean that vaping packaging is covered in tobacco-like warnings and, in some cases, a large hazardous symbol. It is also the case that empty devices are required to state they contain nicotine, which is both incorrect and

confusing to consumers who often think they are purchasing devices containing e-liquids or pods when they are not. The UKVIA supports the requirement for consumer warnings to be included on products that contain nicotine to inform consumers of both risks and benefits.

- The limit on bottle sizes is both illogical and counterproductive. There is absolutely no evidence-based reason for the size limit and this restriction is simply more expensive and inconvenient for consumers, making it less likely that a smoker might switch to vaping. It is also contrary to other efforts to improve environmental protection; the vaping industry is forced by regulations to create literally thousands of extra plastic bottles every year.



WHO's position on vaping

- The international approach to tobacco control is governed by the World Health Organization (WHO)'s Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), the first international health treaty which came into force in 2005 and is legally binding in over 180 countries. The UK has been an active contributor to the implementation of the FCTC, including providing £15 million of financial support between 2016 and 2021.
- Based on prior reports of the WHO and FCTC Secretariat, it's likely that the global health authority and its tobacco control arm will continue to endorse policy that go against the proven public health potential of vaping. Some of these regulations could include bans or restrictions on flavours; comprehensive restrictions on product communications; bans on health and cessation related claims; limits on products format; increased taxes; large graphic health warnings; and plain packaging.
- Advocates have asked why the UK continues to fund the WHO in the millions, when the health body is fundamentally at odds with the nation's tobacco harm reduction stance, with some even calling for the UK government to halt donations to the WHO until it considers a more balanced approach to vaping.
- The WHO's anti-vaping rhetoric is nonsensical and dangerous. The UKVIA strongly condemns the WHO's sustained attack on vaping – an attack that flies in the face of scientific evidence, common sense, and harm reduction.
- When asked whether the WHO had the facts on vaping wrong as part of Sky's 'FYI: Investigates – Kids Who Vape' documentary, UKVIA Director General John Dunne said: "I think they have. When I look at some of the things coming out of the World Health Organization and look at the science that's available, it doesn't make sense."
- To combat the anti-vaping ideology of the WHO, the UK must play an active, vocal role regarding its approach to vaping not only at COP10, but in all WHO/FCTC international forums and meetings. Failure to do so will lead to negative outcomes for the treatment of vaping being adopted by the FCTC. This will undermine the UK's policy approach to vaping and, crucially, confuse its public health messaging as communicated by the NHS and other public health providers who are trying to help smokers to quit.
- See Events/COP10.

Vaping products and substances

Disposables

- The latest data from Action on Smoking and Health shows disposables are quickly becoming one of the most popular types of device amongst vapers – especially those aged between 18-24.
- The single-use option creates an accessible way for smokers to make the switch to e-cigarettes and requires very little specialist knowledge from users, unlike other more complicated devices i.e., mods.
- Unfortunately, ASH data also shows disposables are the most popular device type amongst underage vapers as well, with 69% of 11-17-year-olds opting for the single use option – up from 52% last year and 7.7% the year before (ASH 2023).
- Disposables are also at the centre of concerns about vaping’s impact on the environment, often being cited as ‘colourful devices’ that are frequently tossed to the curb.
- In a recent statement against disposables, Irish Minister of State Ossian Smyth said the single use option contains valuable materials that are used for a short time before being thrown away, adding that he thought they made the world a ‘worse place’.
 - » Smyth said that ‘the country doesn’t have a problem with reusable vape options’ when airing his criticism of disposables.
- While the UKVIA acknowledges concerns over single use vape devices, we don’t share in Smyth’s claim that they make the world a ‘worse place’ as they are helping hundreds of thousands of adult smokers move away from deadly cigarettes.
 - » We do urge every vape manufacturer, retailer and distributor to remain vigilant when it comes to youth access as no one under the age of 18 should use e-cigarettes.
 - » Given their distinct popularity with young vapers, the UKVIA encourages those who produce and sell disposables to be especially vigilant when it comes to underage access and ensure disposables aren’t getting into the hands of minors.
- The UKVIA supports the move to a greener vape industry and vehemently back efforts to make all areas of the industry – including the disposable sector – more eco-friendly through recycling schemes and improved waste management.

E-liquid bottles

- To reduce plastic waste, the UKVIA believes the current limit on bottle size should be replaced in favour of a limit on total nicotine quantity per bottle, set at 200mg.
- E-liquid bottles must be child resistant and tamper evident (all bottles should be subject to ISO:8317 child protection).

Flavourings

- All e-liquid flavourings should only contain approved, legal ingredients. Under no circumstances should they contain banned substances like diacetyl. It's also critical that the industry doesn't use flavour names that are disproportionately attractive to young people or could be seen as intentionally youth appealing.
- Fruit flavours are the most popular amongst vapers at 41%, followed by menthol at 19%. Tobacco flavour has fallen to third most popular at 15%. Very few report using products with no flavours (ASH 2022).
- A UKVIA-commissioned survey found 83% of vapers say flavours help them pack in their smoking habit.

The importance of flavours has also been emphasised by Australia's first 'vaping doctor' and author of harm reduction handbook Stop Smoking Start Vaping Colin Mendelsohn. Mendelsohn said:

"Flavours are an important part of the appeal of vaping for adult smokers and make the product attractive as an alternative to smoking, just as flavours are also used to enhance the appeal of nicotine gum."

Nicotine strengths

- Nicotine-containing e-liquids should have a concentration of no more than 20mg/ml under UK regulations.
- Products should make it clear whether they contain nicotine through appropriate labelling and government enforced language.
- The UKVIA believes that offering vape products with varying levels of nicotine ranging from 0mg/ml to 20mg/ml adds to the effectiveness of e-cigarettes as a quitting tool as it allows users to reduce their nicotine intake overtime at a pace that suits them.

Packaging

- All vaping e-liquid containers placed for sale on the UK market must comply with all relevant applicable laws and regulations. This includes health warnings; nicotine strength indicators; ingredients; instructions; and other manufacturer, importer, and compliance markings.
- See Marketing and Branding section for the UKVIA's guidelines on Packaging, Labelling and Flavour Names for vape products on sale in the UK market.

Shortfills

- Shortfills are non-nicotine-containing flavoured e-liquids that are combined with nicotine containing flavoured (or not) e-liquids. Zero-nicotine liquids are not covered under TPD, and therefore do not have the same level of regulatory requirement.
- Shortfills are an unfortunate example of the problems created by TPD – without the arbitrary restrictions in the TPD on nicotine strength and bottle sizes, consumers would not have turned to shortfills.
- These e-liquids are being manufactured and sold (in 60 and 100ml bottles) with the sole intention and purpose that they then be mixed with high strength, non-flavoured nicotine ‘shots’ (sold in 10ml bottles) and subsequently be used for vaping (this is colloquially known as ‘shake and vape’).
- Because these ‘shortfills’ contain no nicotine, they are subject to none of the requirements of notification, provision of ingredient information and testing data and bottle size limits (10ml max) under the Tobacco and Related Product Regulations 2016 (‘TRPR’).
- We are very concerned that there are now e-liquids on the market which contain untested levels of ingredients and/or contain ingredients which are prohibited under the TRPR.
- Several of our members have conducted tests on some of these products from manufacturers who are not members of the UKVIA. Their laboratories have recently tested a range of shortfills and found 2, 3-Pentanedione/Acetylpropionyl (ingredients that are banned under TRPR, due to potential consumer risks) in a number of samples above the limit of detection.
- This creates a clear risk for consumer safety and public health.
- The MHRA has no powers to incorporate non-nicotine-containing liquids into the notification process, and we know the Committee has already heard from the Department of Health that it has no plans to expand their powers in this regard.
- There may be existing consumer protection and safety legislation that applies to shortfills:
 - » For example, there are hazardous materials and chemical regulations that prevent certain chemicals being used in certain areas. We understand these regulations are enforced by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.
 - » However, no one is currently grabbing hold of this area as a priority. We have raised the issue with Government on many occasions but have not made any progress on the topic.
 - » Someone within Government needs to recognise the risk of this problem and either enforce existing regulations or regulate further to prevent danger to consumers.

Vaping in public/workplace

- Vaping is exempt from smoke-free legislation including bans on smoking within workplaces and public places. Public policies and workplace policies are therefore left for individual workplaces to determine.
- Previously, Public Health England (now the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities) has advised that employers should treat vaping and smoking differently.
- Vaping is still routinely banned or restricted in public places and workplaces – including stations, sporting arenas, near public buildings, pubs and hospitals. This is usually under the heading of a “no-smoking policy”.
- Very few employers have workplace smoking policies that distinguish between vaping and smoking, despite PHE’s recommendation.
- Vaping bans typically mean that vapers are relegated to designated smoking areas, which presents several problems:
 - » It exposes vapers trying to stop smoking to the habit they are trying to break.
 - » The perception of vaping is damaged – people think it is as bad as smoking.
 - » It removes the incentive to vape – to help smokers quit, policy should make vaping easier and smoking harder.
- We accept that there needs to be a balance that doesn’t ignore the rights of non-smokers or non-vapers, but we need to:
 - » educate employers on the benefits of vaping for their staff;
 - » provide guidance of the type of workplace policy they need;
 - » make sure employers understand that vaping should be treated differently to smoking.
- The APPG for Vaping has previously made recommendations, which the UKVIA supports, that include:
 - » Employers should have a separate, specific workplace vaping policy that balances the needs of current vapers or smokers looking to switch to vaping with those of non-vapers.
 - » Public places should have specific vaping policies that are separate to smoking regulations and should permit vaping in an inside area and usually all outside locations (subject to any safety issues).
 - » The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID which was formerly Public Health England) (PHE) should expand its vaping awareness programme to correct some of the public misconceptions around vaping and so-called ‘passive vaping’. There is no evidence that there is any harm caused to bystanders from passive vaping.
 - » Vapers must vape in a responsible way that respects non-vapers.
 - » Parliament itself should be vape friendly to set an example to public places and workplaces across the UK - there are just two vaping areas in Parliament, but most MPs and staff who vape are not even aware where these are and are forced to walk a long way to reach them or go to a smoking area.

Youth Vaping

- Action on Smoking and Health revealed the proportion of 11-17-year-olds vaping ‘more than once a week’ is just 3.7% in 2023 - a slight increase from 3.1% in 2022 (ASH 2023).
- The health charity also reported that the change in current vaping (regular or occasional use) was ‘not significant’, rising from 6.9% to 7.6% between 2022 and 2023 (ASH 2023).
- According to ASH’s annual ‘Use of e-cigarettes (vapes) among young people in Great Britain’ survey, e-cigarette use remains ‘largely confined’ to current or former smokers, with 88% of 11-17-year-old ‘never smokers’ either having never vaped or being unaware of e-cigarettes (ASH 2023).
- Of 11-17-year-old never smokers in Great Britain, Action on Smoking and Health also found that just 0.8% use e-cigarettes more than once a week – up from 0.5% in 2022 (ASH 2023).
- The UKVIA is a partnership of the leading and most respected vaping brands, and only allows those who want to maintain high industry standards to be members. That’s why we enforce a code of conduct which, amongst other things, confirms that:
 - » Members will apply a ‘Challenge 25’ policy in retail environments.
 - » Ensure retail staff are fully age aware trained.
 - » Apply robust safety processes for online sales.
 - » Products should not be designed to appeal specifically to anyone under 18 years old.
 - » Vaping products must only be marketed towards adult smokers or vapers.
- To further prevent underage vape access and discourage rogue retailers from selling to minors, the UKVIA has also presented a number of hardline policy recommendations to the government. These include:
 - » On-the-spot fines of £10,000 for those caught selling to young people (up from £2,500).
 - » A retail registration scheme that would ensure retailers meet strict standards before they are permitted to sell vapes.
 - » A national test purchasing effort to ensure those selling vapes under the registration scheme aren’t supplying minors (this was recently announced by Public Health Minister Neil O’Brien as part of new measures to crackdown on underage sales and access in the UK).

- » Speaking on the importance of balanced youth prevention policies, UKVIA Director General John Dunne said: “There is no doubt that action directed at those illegally selling vape products to children is the way forward. Vitally, any youth prevention measures cannot be to the detriment of adult smokers looking to quit through vaping and vapers who want to avoid a return to smoking.”
- The government should also increase the maximum e-liquid volume of devices from 2ml to 10ml (while keeping nicotine concentration the same). This would allow retailers to charge more per product while keeping devices competitively priced against traditional cigarettes and would make vaping less affordable for minors.
 - » Such a move would also cut waste by 80 percent immediately as consumers would throw away products less frequently.
- The UKVIA welcomes the latest actions from the government to target cowboy traders who are flouting age-limits and selling to youth – including the formation of an illicit vape enforcement squad and the previously mentioned national test purchasing effort – however, there is still more to be done.
- See Government crackdown on underage sales and illicit trade 2023.



Smoking/vaping in pregnancy

- The [Smoking in Pregnancy Challenge Group](#) warns that smoking or exposure to secondhand smoke during pregnancy can ‘restrict oxygen to the baby, make the baby’s heart work faster and expose the baby to harmful toxins.’
- The group, which is a partnership between the Royal College of Midwives, the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists and the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health, as well as ‘the voluntary sector and academia, says smoke exposure in pregnancy is responsible for increased rates of stillbirth, miscarriage and birth defects.
 - » According to the group, maternal smoking can increase the chances of stillbirth by almost 50% and the chances of sudden infant death by three times.
- The [NHS](#) says protecting your baby from tobacco smoke is ‘one of the best things you can do to give your child a healthy start in life’, adding that it can be ‘difficult to stop smoking’ but its ‘never too late to quit’.
 - » The health body clarifies that if using e-cigarettes helps you stop smoking, it is ‘much safer for you and your baby’ than to continue to smoke.
 - » NHS guidance highlights that e-cigarettes do not produce tar or carbon monoxide, which are the 2 main toxins in cigarette smoke.
- Evidence from the [National Institute for Health and Care Research](#) showed e-cigarettes may be ‘more effective than nicotine pouches for pregnant women trying to quit’. The NIHR study ‘did not find any new safety concerns with vaping’.

Peter Hajek, Director of the Health and Lifestyle Research Unit at the Wolfson Institute of Preventive Medicine and study author said:

“The evidence-based advice to smokers already includes, among other options, a recommendation to switch from smoking to e-cigarettes – such a recommendation can now be extended to smokers who are pregnant as well.”

- Government measures to tackle smoking and illicit vape sales ([announced April 2023](#)) included a scheme that would see pregnant smokers offered vouchers up to the total value of £400 for quitting cigarettes.

Vape prescription trials

- Groundbreaking 2022 research found that prescribing vape starter kits on the NHS could be an effective way to help smokers quit.
- The study saw researchers from the University of East Anglia join forces with local GPs to set up a 'pilot vape shop voucher scheme' in Great Yarmouth, Norfolk.
- As part of the initiative, smokers who have previously tried and failed to quit were offered £25 vouchers for a vape starter kit, alongside advice on strengths and flavours and guidance from Smokefree Norfolk, but were required to pay the costs of their continued e-cigarette use.
- More than 40% of the 340 people who redeemed their vouchers stopped smoking within four weeks.

Professor of Addiction Sciences at the University of East Anglia's Norwich Medical School and research leader Caitlin Notley said:

"E-cigarettes or vapes are now the most popular way of stopping smoking – our research has previously shown that they may be particularly helpful in helping people to not only quit, but to stay quit for good.

"This innovative approach saw the NHS local stop smoking service, vape retailers and researchers working together, recognising that other forms of smoking cessation support do not work for everyone.

"Overall, the project was well received by smokers as it offered an affordable route into vaping. GPs supported the scheme and appreciated being able to offer an alternative to entrenched smokers."

- The UK government has now announced (April 2023) a '[Swap to Stop](#)' scheme, that will see one in five smokers in England offered the chance to make the switch to vaping (See Swap to Stop).

Product bans

Flavour bans

- A [UKVIA-commissioned survey](#) found 1 in 3 vapers feared a flavour ban would lead them back to combustible cigarettes, equating to almost 1.5 million people based on vaping population data from the Office for National Statistics.
 - » The research also found 83% of vapers claim flavoured vapes help them pack in their smoking habits and 76% of vapers only started to quit smoking.
 - » This evidence demonstrates that a move to eliminate flavours would sever a critical lifeline for people up and down the country, driving a significant proportion of vapers back to deadly cigarettes and undoing the smokefree successes of vaping in the UK so far.
- The survey revealed that the most popular flavours amongst adult vapers are fruity options like blueberry, watermelon and – the nation’s favourite – strawberry. These are typically among the flavours to be named when there are calls for bans.

The UKVIA’s official statement on this newly commissioned research and flavour bans reads:

“The research shows there is a reliance on vapes to help smokers quit – and flavours have a role to play. While we are supportive of attempts to eradicate youth smoking, having a ban on flavours could have a negative impact on those who are attempting to quit. Often with these types of policies trying to stamp out one problem can cause another, and it shows many adult vapers are concerned about what they are hearing from the Government.

“The survey has shown many fear such a change could lead them back to smoking, meaning nearly 1.5 million current vapers across the UK could return to conventional cigarettes, based on the number of adult vape users (4.3m) reported by the Office of National Statistics last year”.

“It is important to offer those who are trying to quit smoking the appropriate advice, including flavours, to support them during the process. We know that going cold turkey is not an option for many, and it shows a considerable amount are having success with flavoured vapes to help reduce, and ultimately cut out, their reliance on cigarettes.”

The full online release is available [here](#)

- According to data from the [2020 ITC Smoking and Vaping Survey in Canada, England and the United States](#), in the event of a flavour ban, 28.3% of vapers would ‘find a way to get their banned flavours’.

- As part of its [Harm Reduction and Vaping Fact Sheet](#), the World Vapers' Alliance recommended that adults should have 'guaranteed access to vaping products' and that flavour bans should be prevented, warning that bans would 'hurt public health by pushing millions of vapers back to smoking or the black market'.

Disposable bans

- The Scottish Government has commissioned a review into the environmental impact of single use vapes that could lead to retail limitations or a ban on disposable devices (2023).
- It has been said that the decision will be made on environmental impacts alone and would not take into account the health impact of e-cigarettes.
- Some industry actors were asked to submit responses as part of the review, but unsolicited submissions were not to be accepted.
- While the UKVIA understands there are environmental issues around single-use devices that need to be addressed, there are not enough to justify an outright ban on disposables.
- These devices create an easy, accessible way for smokers to make the switch and removing them outright would do nothing to help the hundreds of people who die every day by smoking.
- Instead, politicians need to support efforts to make vaping more eco-friendly and back recycling schemes that reduce the amount of vape waste going to landfill.



Greenprint for Sustainable Vaping

- The UKVIA acknowledges that more needs to be done to address vaping's impact, particularly single use vapes, on the environment.
- One way the government could improve the environmental impact of vaping is by increasing the e-liquid volume of devices from 2ml to 10ml. This would cut waste by 80% immediately as consumers would need to dispose of or recycle products less frequently.
- All vaping businesses need to comply with electrical, battery and packaging regulations as appropriate otherwise they are committing a criminal offence.
- To answer growing concerns over vaping's impact on the planet, the UKVIA organised it's 'Greenprint for Sustainable Vaping' - the UK's first ever environmental summit for vaping.
- The aim of the Greenprint is to mobilise environmental action to support a sustainable vaping sector and includes recommendations on creating a national recycling and waste treatment capability fit for the industry, driving new innovations that make products easier to recycle and supporting greater retail and consumer participation in the recycling of vape products.
- The virtual event brought together experts from the political, regulatory, environmental, recycling, consumer and vape arenas and details the importance of environmental responsibility from the industry.

Following the eco-summit, UKVIA Director General John Dunne said:

"The clear message is that there is more education needed both from consumer and industry perspectives.

"It's important for regulators, the industry and those dealing with the recycling and environmental aspects of this issue, to all come together and seek a common solution because this problem is not going to go away without action."

The full three-hour Greenprint summit and presentations from the Environmental Agency and the Office of Product Safety Standards are accessible via the UKVIA website.

Economic Impact Assessment of the Vaping Industry

- The first ever study into the economic impact of vaping in the UK – commissioned by the UKVIA – was released in 2022.
- The comprehensive research document was completed by the Centre for Economics and Business Research (Cebr) and revealed vaping was a flourishing multi-billion-pound industry.
- The report found that vaping directly contributed £401m to the UK economy, and this rose to £939m when the impact on the wider economy was taken into account.
- The sector supports almost 18,000 full time jobs in retail, manufacturing and supply chain and the estimated cost saving to the NHS from smokers switching to vaping was more than £300 million in 2019 alone.
- The document went on to estimate that the potential healthcare saving would have been £698 million in 2020 if 50% of all smokers switched to vaping.
- The full UKVIA-commissioned economic impact report was unveiled at the UKVIA Forum 2022 and is available to read [here](#).