

Petitioner submission of 5 July 2023

PE2033/B: Introduce a full ban on disposable vapes

First of all, I thank the Scottish Government for its response to the petition and welcome the details of it. However, I would like to make a few comments in response.

I am acutely aware of the legislation surrounding tobacco and vaping products. However, the fact is that, according to the [Scottish Government's Health & Wellbeing Census 2021-22](#), 10% of S4 pupils have regularly used vapes. The [Growing Up in Scotland Study](#) showed that 21.5% of 14 year olds have tried a vape at least once. So, whilst it is regulated in law that vapes should not be sold to anyone under the age of 18, both sources show that unfortunately this law is not creating the desired impact. It is right to say that vapes are a means of smoking cessation and not a lifestyle accessory. However, too many adults see it as a lifestyle accessory. I would seek a response from the Scottish Government on how it plans to strengthen the restrictions related to the sale and purchase of vaping products.

There are three main methods through which young people can access/purchase these devices and they are:

- Ask an Adult (Parent/Carer/Older Friend/Random Stranger) to go into a shop and purchase one for them
- Purchase one online where ID isn't properly checked
- Use a Fake ID to purchase

The Scottish Government must do more to raise awareness of the criminality of lying about your age. It must also look at the types of ID that can be accepted. Awareness must be raised on the types of fake ID that are being used. There is also the matter that vapes are cheap in price - meaning that they are budget accessible for young people. I would like to seek a response on how the government plans to tackle this issue.

Regarding paragraph 2 of the Scottish Government response, there should be much more research done into the health impact of these devices. There are many organisations in Scotland which could take this

research on, but most importantly, the Government should engage with young people who vape to find about what symptoms they have. One common symptom which friends have noticed is what we may define as a “smokers cough”. There have also been reports of certain brands having a much higher nicotine percentage levels than the 2% they are permitted to have. I believe any nicotine vaping device should be prescription only and would welcome the Government’s review of this.

Protecting non-smokers is important but we must do more to find out how dangerous these devices really are. We widely see on the news that they are a fire hazard and at a risk of explosion. This is not actually represented on labels and retailers do not ask about medical conditions that could be worsened by using a vape. Promotion of vapes should be focused on the dangers that vaping can pose. We also know that these devices still have nicotine in them - making addiction more likely. In terms of advertising, disposable vapes fall right into the attraction of our youth. Their bright colours and sweet tasting flavours make vaping a pleasurable experience.

Finally, on the environmental impact. I welcome the work the Minister has done in conjunction with Zero Waste Scotland (ZWS). As the [report from ZWS](#) highlights, if we take no action, the number of young people using disposable vapes or any kind of vape for this matter will rise and continue rising until action is taken. The report features a shortlist of policy options. The ones I feel should be implemented are:

- Policy Option 1 which sets design criteria for e-cigarettes
- Policy Option 3 which bans the sale of single-use e-cigarettes
- Policy Option 8 which bans the sale of flavoured vapes
- Policy Option 9 which tightens existing laws for underage sales.

The truth is that these devices are not disposed of properly. Many are placed in residual bins which cause a real fire risk to waste management. It would be great to hear of the regulations the Government are planning to enforce. We must not wait for a full ban. We can take action now to raise awareness of the dangers. There must also be a review of current legislation.

Finally, I would strongly recommend referring this petition to the Health & Sport Committee who will have more time to explore and respond to the petition.

