

Petitioner submission of 14 September 2023

PE2033/C: Introduce a full ban on disposable vapes

I write this submission as there have been a few substantive updates regarding the ban of disposable vapes in Scotland.

In Scotland, there are growing concerns about the environmental impact that disposable vapes have. Vaping is becoming an increasing and concerning trend among young people, because of the sweet flavours and bright design. In the most recent Programme for Government, the First Minister announced the Scottish Government's intention to consult on measures to curb the sale of disposable single-use vapes, including an outright ban.

According to a recent Zero Waste Scotland report (commissioned by the Scottish Government), the number of young people vaping, has surpassed the number of young people smoking real cigarettes. This same report also outlines that up to 2.7 million disposable vapes are littered on Scotland's streets last year - this is approximately 308 vapes being dumped on our beautiful streets, beaches, parks and gardens every hour.

It is clear that there is consensus for this issue. There are many medical experts and members of the general public who believe we need a ban urgently. The growing statistics should be a wakeup call to us all, but legislation will not change this alone, as young people are likely to buy from illicit sources and put their health at even more risk. We also have to take into account the outcry that may occur from the tobacco industry, and other bodies across the UK.

Despite popular belief, vaping is not a healthier alternative. Although there are non-nicotine vapes available, the ones with nicotine still have the potential to become addictive. So not only are we dealing with the fallout of vaping in young people, the Government also must provide advice, information and support to those young people who are struggling with a vape addiction. I would seek the Government's response in how they plan to ensure that a ban will not cause further problems for young people.

The committee may also be aware of the fantastic work being done by Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament (SYP), who have just recently

published [an interesting report](#), based on views gathered through a consultation to which 686 young people from all of Scotland's 32 local council areas responded. The report makes a number of damning points and has some really powerful quotes, which lay bare the knowledge young people have about these harmful devices. The evidence within the report clearly shows that:

- Young people would much rather a complete ban on disposable vapes
- Young people are aware of the harmful impacts disposable vapes have on our environment
- Young people are not aware of the importance of correctly recycling disposable vapes due to the lithium batteries they contain
- There is a lack of information on how disposable vapes should be recycled
- The recycling information should be shown on social media or within retailers

The quotes which back up the points raised in the report, state that the places that vapes can be recycled (local recycling centres) are not accessible to young people because you can't just walk in. Young people also said that the option to vape should still exist, but we need to take away the disposable ones which are most harmful. Other quotes back up one of my own points about vaping being cool or trendy - people are losing friends because they do not want to vape and are seen as uncool or cowardly. The report also highlights the need to avoid treating young people as perpetrators! We should **not** be able to walk into a shop, if under 18, and come out with a handful of vapes, but adults must also be aware that they shouldn't be buying vapes for kids. One damning quote which I want to directly mention says "*restrictions on marketing and manufacture probably wouldn't work because they already exist but are not enforced*".

The Government must get current legislation to a point where it is fully enforced, ensuring that irresponsible retailers and any person who sells or buys a disposable vape for those under 18 know that they will experience the full effect of the law. Ultimately, they are endangering lives, and although I have yet to hear of a death caused by disposable vapes, I'm sure this will happen. Young people should not be addicted to anything at this age and vaping is no exception.

We all have a responsibility to play our part as members of public, but will Parliament and Government play theirs?

I believe this submission brings compelling evidence, backed up with personal views, indicating that the clear path should be an outright ban on disposable vapes.

My submission raises important concerns around the environmental impact that disposable vapes have, and the trend evolving within our youth population. The submission urges the Government to take urgent action, which it cannot ignore in the face of medical and wider public concerns. The number of vapes littered in 2022 should instantly have alarm bells ringing.

Vaping has become a pervasive issue in Scottish life. There are many challenges which a ban on disposable vapes will uncover, which is why I believe legislation will not be enough to tackle this issue. The Government and Parliament must work with young people when consulting on a possible ban. There is no doubt in my mind that any legislation the Parliament introduces to ban disposable vapes will receive backlash from the tobacco industry and UK Government. However, with careful planning and consideration this can be avoided.

SYP's report further underpins the reason for banning disposable vapes. It also reveals the lack of awareness among young people about the environmental impact of these devices and the recycling challenges posed by lithium batteries. This points to the need for better public education, perhaps through social media and retailers, on how to recycle these products responsibly.

In conclusion, the submission compellingly argues for a ban on disposable vapes in Scotland, highlighting the urgent need to protect the environment and the health of young people. It calls for a multi-pronged approach that combines legislation, education, and enforcement to tackle this complex issue effectively. We all have a role to play, but it is incumbent upon the Parliament and Government to fulfill their responsibilities and take decisive action to address this pressing concern. The submission serves as a critical call to action, urging policymakers to prioritize the well-being of Scotland's youth and the preservation of its natural beauty.