

UK Vaping Industry Association submission of 6 February 2024

PE2033/H: Introduce a full ban on disposable vapes

Disposable vapes have played an instrumental role in helping reduce the smoking rate in Scotland and have helped millions of adults quit and stay off cigarettes. The UKVIA is therefore highly concerned that such a ban would risk lives. While action to prevent youth access to vaping is critical, a restriction on adult access to vapes would represent a boost for smoking, not for public health. If any government were to see banning disposables as helping to protect young people, they would be completely misguided.

The answer to youth vaping doesn't lie in counterproductive bans and restrictions, but rather in effective and proactive enforcement of the law which states that it is illegal for vapes to be sold to minors. It's why the UKVIA has been part of a major industry-wide consultation over the last couple of months that has led to the development of a vape retailer and distributor licensing scheme to make it harder for rogue traders to get away with underage and illicit sales. This is being presented to Westminster Parliamentarians in February and will be provided to Members of the Scottish Parliament.

A ban on disposable vapes would hand the regulated vaping market to criminals. It is estimated that in Australia, where vapes are now only available on difficult to obtain prescriptions, as many as 92% of vapers are buying their products through illegal channels and as many as 100 million illicit products are smuggled into the country every year. The leading public health charity Action on Smoking and Health UK has previously warned that children already 'find it easy' to access illegal vapes as those selling them have 'no qualms' selling to minors.

We would welcome the opportunity to work with the Scottish Government following the UK wide consultation on a 'creating a smokefree generation and tackling youth vaping'. Ensuring that vapes are kept out of the hands of children and are not improperly disposed of, while still making them readily available to smokers wishing to quit.