

# Tobacco and Vapes Bill

## Second reading

16 April 2024



### Background

- On 28 January 2024, the UK Government [announced](#) it would be banning the sale of disposable vapes to tackle the rise of youth vaping and end the environmental damage they cause. The Environment APPG played a key role in parliamentary campaigning to secure this ban.
- The Tobacco and Vapes Bill restricts the flavour of reusable vapes that can be sold, introducing plain packaging for reusable vapes and bringing in further age restrictions on the sale of tobacco.
- Alongside this, the Government has consulted on a [statutory instrument](#) which enacts the ban on disposable vapes, the Environmental Protection (Single-use Vapes) (England) Regulations. The Scottish and Welsh governments intend to introduce similar legislation. The ban is currently planned [to come into force](#) in April 2025.
- Banning the use of disposable vapes does not prevent people from using reusable vapes as a smoking cessation tool.
- A full prohibition on the sale of disposable vapes is also supported by the [Local Government Association](#) and [leading environmental and health groups](#). Similar policies have gone ahead in the EU, New Zealand, Australia, France and Ireland.

### What is the problem with disposable vapes?

- 7.7 million single-use vapes are now bought every week, double the number purchased in 2022, [according to](#) Material Focus research.
- Growing numbers of [young people](#) are using disposable vapes, which are cheap and often marketed towards children with bright colours and appealing flavours. 2023 research found one in nine children have experimented with vaping, a 50% increase on 2022, with 69% of these children using a disposable vape.
- Health professionals warn that disposable vapes could create a generation of young people addicted to nicotine. In June 2023, the Royal College of Paediatrics and Children's Health (RCPCH) called for the government [to issue an outright ban on disposable e-cigarettes](#), warning that "youth vaping is fast becoming an epidemic".

### How much waste is being caused by disposable vapes?

- The market for disposable vapes is growing at an astonishing rate. Research by Material Focus shows [a staggering increase](#) in the number of single use vapes thrown away, equivalent to about eight vapes thrown away per second. 73% of vapers said they throw away disposable vapes.
- Recycling of these materials is unlikely to provide a scalable solution. Initial recycling schemes have indicated [takeback of less than one per cent](#) and it is unrealistic to expect youths who illicitly smoke these devices to go to correctly dispose of them. The complex material composition of vapes will always mean they are logistically difficult, labour intensive and expensive to recycle.

- This means that the precious metals they contain will continue to go to waste. This includes lithium and copper, which are critical materials for our green transition. According to Material Focus, enough lithium was thrown away in disposable vapes in 2023 to [make 5,000 electric vehicles](#).
- Lithium-ion batteries, used in vapes and other electronics, cause fires if broken, a phenomenon which is becoming more frequent according to waste processors. Research with local authorities found that over [700 fires in bin lorries and recycling centres](#) were caused by batteries, reinforcing Eunomia's 2021 finding that lithium-ion batteries are responsible for [around half of all waste fires](#) occurring in the UK each year. This costs the industry around £158 million annually.

### Are disposable vapes damaging wildlife?

- A significant proportion of the 5 million vapes thrown away every week are littered, putting the natural environment at risk from plastics and toxic substances like nicotine, which can leach into the surrounding area.
- The Marine Conservation Society have [highlighted](#) the increasing number of disposable vapes found during their beach cleans. Along with other plastic waste, vapes break down into microplastics that are driving plastic pollution across the world.
- Pets have also been injured by littered vapes, with the [RSPCA warning](#) that dogs in particular are vulnerable to being poisoned if they ingest vapes or their liquids.

### What do voters think?

- In a July [YouGov poll](#) commissioned by the Marine Conservation Society, 77% of people agree that disposable vapes should be banned.
- A survey by the Chartered Trading Standards Institute (CTSI) found [60% of local Trading Standards services](#) are concerned about high street shops selling illicit vapes or vaping products to children.

### Suggested interventions

- Will the Government consider bringing the ban forwards from April 2025 to stem the exponential growth in disposable vape use?
- How will the Government minimise the impact of disposable vapes on the environment and child health before the ban comes into force, including limiting the growth of disposable vape use?
- Will local government receive additional resources to ensure their trading standards officers are able to enforce the ban on disposable vapes?