# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE**  | **Creating a Smoke-free Generation and Tackling Youth Vaping Consultation** |
| **DATE**  | **29 January 2024** |
| **BY** | **Lynne Neagle MS, Deputy Minister for Mental Health and Well-being** |

The outcome of the four nation consultation *Creating a smokefree generation and tackling youth vaping* will be published today by the UK Government.

Smoking causes a quarter of cancer deaths in the UK; is responsible for 80,000 preventable deaths each year and is a leading cause of ill health, disability and inequality.

Vapes can be useful to some smokers in supporting smoking cessation, but data shows the number of children using vapes has tripled in the past three years. Due to their nicotine content and the unknown long-term harms associated with their use, vaping carries a risk of harm and addiction for children and young people.

The consultation sought views on a number of proposals:

* Creating a smokefree generation, by raising the age of sale of tobacco products by one year, every year
* Tackling youth vaping, including restricting vape flavours, regulating point of sale displays and regulating vape packaging and product presentation
* Restricting the supply and sale of disposable vapes due to environmental concerns
* Strengthening enforcement.

In the [King’s Speech](https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/the-kings-speech-2023) on 7 November, His Majesty King Charles III set out plans for the UK Government to introduce the Tobacco and Vapes Bill in this parliamentary session.

The consultation closed on 6 December and received 27,921 responses, 1,018 from Wales and I am grateful to all those from Wales who contributed. The government response published today sets out the consultation outcomes and the measures the four governments will now take forward.

The UK Government will bring forward a Tobacco and Vapes Bill at the earliest opportunity which will include measures to:

* Change the age of sale for all tobacco products, cigarette papers and herbal smoking products whereby anyone born on or after 1 January 2009 will never legally be sold (and also in Scotland never legally purchase) tobacco products alongside prohibiting proxy sales, and changing warning notices
* Introduce regulation-making powers to restrict flavours, point of sale and packaging for vaping products (nicotine and non-nicotine) as well as other consumer nicotine products
* Introduce new fixed penalty notices (FPNs) for England and Wales for breaches of age of sale legislation for tobacco and vapes (nicotine and non-nicotine) and other consumer nicotine products.

The consultation also sought views about restricting the supply and sale of disposable vaping products. Following the responses received, and in light of the significant environmental concerns about the use of these products, the Welsh Government, along with the UK and Scottish governments, will bring forward legislation at the earliest opportunity to introduce a ban on disposable vapes, including which contain nicotine and those which do not. It is the intention that any legislation taken forward will allow for an implementation period of at least six months, which takes into consideration concerns that industry will require time to adapt. Northern Ireland acknowledges the issues raised during the consultation and will consider potential legislation in future.

The UK Government and devolved governments will work together on these measures to ensure that, as far as possible, they are adopted consistently across the UK. I believe we will achieve the greatest benefits from creating a smoke-free generation and reducing youth vaping by progressing these areas together.