



Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1396
Ein cyf/Our ref LN/00029/24
Jack Sargeant MS
Chair - Petitions committee
Senedd Cymru
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1SN

05 February 2024

Dear Jack,

Thank you for your letter of 18 January 2024 concerning the petition on introducing a license for dedicated vape shops which your Committee is considering. I am replying as this area is within my portfolio.

I am committed to taking all measures necessary to address the devastating health impacts of tobacco in Wales and to do all we can to prevent young people from using vapes. I agree with the petitioner that vapes can be helpful to some wishing to stop smoking and vapes retailers should only be selling legitimate products. However, we know that illegal sales are an increasing and complex problem and therefore we recently provided funding to Trading Standards Wales to help tackle illegal vaping in Wales and safeguard consumers.

In 2022, the UK Government commissioned the independent Khan Review¹ to inform the actions required to tackle smoking; one of the actions recommended was to introduce a tobacco license for retailers, to limit the availability of tobacco. Given the rises in youth vaping and the increasing illegal market for both tobacco and vapes, licensing for tobacco and vape retailers is an area the Welsh Government continues to explore.

Our focus currently is on working with the other UK nations to create a smokefree generation by progressively raising the age of sale for tobacco and to tackle youth vaping. In October, the four nations of the UK launched a consultation asking stakeholders view on these measures. 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. A consultation outcome² document which sets out the actions the four governments will now take forward

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-khan-review-making-smoking-obsolete>

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/creating-a-smokefree-generation-and-tackling-youth-vaping>

on tobacco and vapes was published on 29 January 2024. The UK Government will bring forward a Tobacco and Vapes Bill at the earliest opportunity which will include measures to:

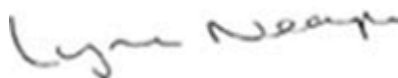
- Change the age of sale for all tobacco products, cigarette papers and herbal smoking products whereby anyone born on or after 1 January 2009 will never legally be sold tobacco products alongside prohibiting proxy sales, and changing warning notices.
- Introduce regulation-making powers to restrict 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 Welsh Government, along with the UK and Scottish governments also intend to introduce legislation to implement a ban on disposable vapes, including both nicotine and non-nicotine containing products due to their significant environmental impacts. In taking forward all these areas, we will be working to ensure the industry and retailers are kept updated and that as far as possible all the measures are adopted consistently across the UK.

Whilst I believe that the Tobacco and Vapes Bill provides us with a once in a generation opportunity to protect future generations from the harms of smoking and to prevent vapes appealing to and being accessed by children and young people, I am committed to going further in Wales if the evidence supports it. My officials will therefore continue to explore the option of a scheme to introduce licenses for tobacco and vape retailers.

I trust this response is helpful and will be happy to provide any further information that will assist you.

Yours sincerely,



Lynne Neagle AS/MS

Y Dirprwy Weinidog Iechyd Meddwl a Llesiant
Deputy Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing