

UKVIA Response to the Dutch Government's Consultation on Plain Packaging for E-Cigarettes

The UK Vaping Industry Association (UKVIA) strongly believes adult smokers around the world should have appropriate access to less harmful alternatives to smoking such as vape products. We fully support evidence-based regulation highlighting the public health potential of vaping products and the life changing impact they have had on adult smokers quitting cigarettes. Indeed, Queen Mary's University found in 2019 that e-cigarettes are almost twice as effective as nicotine replacement treatments at helping smokers to quit.¹

The UKVIA is a UK based association but has been made aware that the Dutch Government has opened a consultation on applying plain packaging rules to vape products in the Netherlands and introducing e-liquid flavour restrictions. While only applicable to Dutch vapers, UKVIA would like to outline its view that it is not appropriate to put cigarettes and e-cigarettes in the same packaging. We believe this could be misleading to consumers and send a signal that there is no benefit from switching away from conventional cigarettes.

The same can be said for banning flavours which is likely to make vaping less attractive to smokers who might otherwise make the switch. In the UK, Public Health England (PHE) found in 2020² that banning flavoured liquids would deter vapers from using vaping products to help them quit or reduce their smoking and that it could push them towards illicit products.

Overall, the proposals for standardised packaging to include e-cigarettes and heavy restrictions on e-cigarette flavours will likely be counter-productive for public health and may encourage smokers to continue smoking conventional cigarettes. This is at a time where misperceptions about vaping are on the rise – in 2020 PHE³ identified that perception of harm from vaping among smokers was increasingly out of line with the evidence; and that these misperceptions are particularly common among smokers who do not vape.

The UK vaping industry is highly responsible, which is why the UKVIA has agreed guidelines on packaging, labelling and marketing to ensure best practise. Our guidance aims to strike the balance between innovative and appealing products which support adult smokers in the transition to a less harmful alternative, while not appealing to anyone who does not already smoke or vape or anyone who is under 18. These guidelines state that members must not use flavour names or descriptors that are particularly appealing to youths, or are associated with youth culture, including popular language or expressions, or names which are reminiscent of confectionary disproportionately appealing to children.

In the UK, PHE recently outlined that 'evidence does not support the concern that e-cigarettes are a route into smoking among young people'⁴ and Cancer Research UK have said, 'There is growing evidence that e-cigarettes are an effective quitting tool'.⁵ A poll the same year also found that nearly two thirds of vapers (68%) said they never thought they would quit smoking until vaping came along.⁶



UK Vaping Industry Association

We therefore call upon the Dutch Government to recognise the role that vaping can play in providing adult smokers with a less harmful alternative to cigarette smoking. We urge the Dutch Government to ensure that the public health potential of vaping is fully realised, and that adult smokers and vapers have accurate information about and access to the harm reduction products they need.

¹ Queen Mary's University, 2019 [Link](#)

² Public Health England, 2020 [Link](#)

³ Public Health England, 2020 [Link](#)

⁴ Public Health England, 2020 [Link](#)

⁵ Cancer Research UK, 2018 [Link](#)

⁶ OnePoll, 2019 [Link](#)