



Understanding The Tobacco & Vapes Act 2026

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The Tobacco and Vapes Act 2026: What It Means for Wales

The Tobacco and Vapes Act 2026 creates a smoke-free generation, strengthens protections against nicotine addiction among under-18s and gives Wales new powers over retail licensing and vape-free settings, while preserving access to vaping products for adults who want to quit smoking.

What's Changing?

The Act takes effect in stages. Some changes start on 29 October 2026, the new tobacco age-of-sale rules start on 1 January 2027, and other changes in Wales will need further decisions before they begin.

Smoke-Free Generation

From 1 January 2027, anyone born on or after 1 January 2009 cannot legally be sold tobacco products, herbal smoking products or cigarette papers. The date stays fixed, so the minimum age for buying tobacco rises over time.



New Rules for Vapes & Nicotine Products

From 29 October 2026, vapes, including non-nicotine vapes, and nicotine products such as nicotine pouches cannot legally be sold to anyone under 18. Adults cannot buy them for someone under 18. Free samples, giveaways and certain large promotional discounts are banned too.

Tackling Illegal Sales

From 29 October 2026, Trading Standards in Wales can issue £200 fines for a range of vape and nicotine offences, including illegal sales to under-18s and adults buying products for them. More serious cases can still lead to prosecution.

Vending Machines

From 29 October 2026, vending machines for tobacco products, herbal smoking products, cigarette papers, vapes and nicotine products are banned. A limited exemption applies to vape vending machines in certain adult mental health inpatient settings in Wales.

Advertising and Sponsorship

A wider UK ban on advertising and sponsorship of vaping and nicotine products is planned from 1 June 2027. That date is planned and is not yet in force.

Packaging, Appearance and Displays

Detailed rules are still being decided. A UK consultation covers plain packaging, branding, vape appearance, flavour names and descriptions, and shop displays. It closes on 2 October 2026.



Vape-Free and Heated Tobacco-Free Places

Welsh Ministers can introduce new restrictions on vaping and heated tobacco in places and vehicles that are already smoke-free. These rules do not start automatically. Wales would need new regulations and consultation first.



Retail Licensing in Wales

Wales can introduce a licence system for shops that sell tobacco, vapes and nicotine products. It is not in place yet and no start date has been set. Welsh Ministers must consult on the details before any scheme begins.

What Happens Next?

Some changes have fixed start dates. Others still need UK or Welsh regulations. ASH Wales will keep partners updated as new rules and dates are confirmed.

Why Is This Important For Wales?

The Act will change who can legally buy tobacco, strengthen action on illegal and underage sales and give Wales new options on retail licensing and vape-free and heated tobacco-free settings. Some Wales-specific measures still need further decisions before they take effect.

What Can You Do Now?

Share the Key Dates

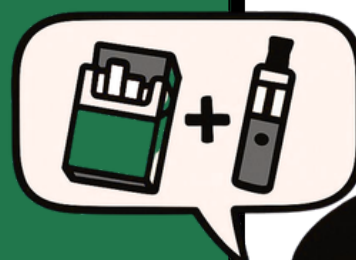
Share the October 2026 and January 2027 changes with your teams, communities and the people you support. The consultation on packaging, vape appearance, flavour descriptions and shop displays closes on 2 October 2026.

Report Illegal or Underage Sales

Report suspected illegal tobacco or vape sales, including sales to under-18s, anonymously through No Ifs. No Butts. Visit noifs-nobutts.co.uk.

Stay Informed

Follow ASH Wales [@ashwalescymru](https://twitter.com/ashwalescymru) or visit ash.wales for updates as new Welsh regulations and start dates are confirmed.



**Together, we can help build a
safer, healthier, smoke-free Wales**