

**Consultation Response: Tobacco and vape packaging appearance and display
consultation**

Response on behalf of ASH Wales Cymru, submitted 30/09/2026

Declaration of interests: ASH Wales Cymru receives funding for its tobacco-control work from charitable and public-sector funders, including Cancer Research UK and the British Heart Foundation. We have no links with the tobacco industry or other commercial organisations.

ASH Wales Cymru is the only organisation solely dedicated to tobacco control in Wales. Established in 1976, we work to raise awareness of the health, social and economic effects of smoking by working closely with communities, young people and partner organisations across Wales to create change for the better.

Contents

Respondent information	2
Tobacco packaging	2
Heated tobacco device appearance	13
Vaping and nicotine product packaging and flavour descriptors	18
Vape device appearance	28
Retail display: tobacco and related products	33
Requested temporary and incidental display in Scotland	41
Retail display: vaping and nicotine products	47
References.....	

Respondent information

In what capacity are you responding to this survey?

- An individual sharing my personal views and experiences
- An individual sharing my professional views
- On behalf of an organisation

Do you have any direct or indirect links to, or receive funding from, the tobacco industry?

- Yes
- No

What is the size of your organisation? (Optional)

- Small (0 to 49 employees)
- Medium (50 to 249 employees)
- Large (250 or more employees)

Where does your organisation operate or provide services? Select all that apply. (Optional)

- England
- Wales
- Scotland
- Northern Ireland
- The whole of the UK
- Outside the UK

Please provide the name of the organisation you are responding on behalf of. (Optional)

- Action on Smoking and Health Wales Cymru

What is the main area or focus of your work?

- Healthcare

Do you work for, or are you providing views on behalf of, any of the following? Select all that apply.

- None of the above.

Tobacco packaging

Proposals for further plain packaging requirements

We propose to introduce plain packaging requirements for:

- all tobacco products (including but not limited to cigars, cigarillos, pipe tobacco, waterpipe tobacco, smokeless and heated tobacco)
- heated tobacco devices
- herbal smoking products
- cigarette papers

These requirements would broadly align with existing requirements for cigarettes and hand-rolling tobacco.

An overview of the existing requirements for cigarettes and hand-rolling tobacco is set out below.

Colour

Pantone 448C (drab dark brown) colour with a matt finish.

Branding

Brand name permitted once each on front, top and bottom of pack. It must:

- be in a centred position
- be in Pantone Cool Gray 2 C
- be in Helvetica font size 14 point or less
- have only the first letter capitalised

The variant name must follow the same requirements other than to be size 10 point or less and positioned immediately below the brand name.

No promotional images or logos, additional colours or markings are allowed.

Shape

Specified packaging shapes. For cigarettes this is cuboid only and for hand-rolling tobacco this is cuboid, cylindrical or pouch.

Packaging materials

Specified packaging materials. For cigarettes this is carton or soft material only.

Minimum size

20 pack for cigarettes, 30 grams for hand-rolling tobacco.

Some products may require specific plain packaging requirements, for example hand-rolling tobacco pouches are permitted to have a re-sealable sticker and cigarette packets have a lining. If we proceed with the policy, we will engage further on the details of the plain packaging measures for specific products.

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to introduce the plain packaging requirements outlined above for all tobacco products? This does not include cigarettes and hand-rolling tobacco which already have strict plain packaging requirements.

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to introduce the plain packaging requirements outlined above for heated tobacco devices?

- Agree

- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to introduce the plain packaging requirements outlined above for herbal smoking products?

- Agree

- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to introduce the plain packaging requirements outlined above for cigarette papers?

- Agree

- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please explain your answers. This could include, for example, sharing your views on which tobacco products plain packaging requirements should or should not be introduced for, or specific elements of our proposals which you agree or disagree with. (Optional, maximum 600 words. Please do not include any personal information in your response.)

ASH Wales agrees with all four proposals. Plain packaging requirements should apply to all tobacco products. Since 2017, cigarettes and hand-rolling tobacco have been subject to standardised packaging requirements, while other tobacco products remain able to use branding, colours, imagery and other promotional features. Extending the requirements would close this regulatory gap and reduce opportunities for brand promotion, product substitution and misleading impressions that some tobacco products are safer.

Packaging is a key remaining avenue for communicating brand identity. Differences between product regulations can create opportunities for substitution. Following the menthol cigarette ban, cigarette-like menthol cigarillos were marketed under the less restrictive rules applying to cigars. In 2024, 33% of 11-18-year-olds in Great Britain who had tried smoking reported having used cigarillos, rising to 43% among regular smokers.[1] Cigarillos should therefore be subject to the same packaging restrictions.

The regulations should set appropriate minimum pack sizes or weights for cigarillos and other smoked tobacco products. Evidence suggests smaller cigarillo packs, particularly where they provide a lower upfront purchase price, can increase affordability and appeal among younger and less established users. Size requirements should be considered alongside price to avoid encouraging low-cost tobacco use.

There is robust evidence that standardised packaging works. Its introduction for cigarettes and hand-rolling tobacco in the UK was associated with reduced smoking prevalence, increased consideration of quitting among smokers and reduced pack attractiveness to young people.[2] Extending it to all tobacco products is supported by 63% of adults in Britain,

with 7% opposed. Support for extending it specifically to cigars is 60%, compared with 9% opposed.[3]

Plain packaging should cover heated tobacco products as well as their tobacco consumables. In Wales, awareness of heated tobacco products increased from 9% in 2019 to 24% in 2025 and from 12% to 32% among 18-24-year-olds.[5] Although use remains limited, this supports preventative regulation before distinctive branding becomes established.

Herbal smoking products should also be included because combustion produces harmful smoke even where tobacco is absent. Cigarette-paper packaging should be standardised to prevent it becoming an alternative promotional surface. Welsh retail evidence shows papers in brightly coloured packs featuring cartoon-style imagery and confectionery-related descriptions including Bubble Gum, Banana, Red Lolly Pop and Popcorn.

A 2026 survey of adults in Wales found that 80% supported banning sweet names, cartoons and bright colours on vape packaging, while 72% supported restrictions on how vape flavours are described.[6] Although these questions concerned vapes, they demonstrate strong public concern about these marketing techniques.

ASH Wales also recommends including cigarette filters within the requirements. Their packaging can feature colours, flavour descriptors and promotion, while flavoured filters can provide a route around restrictions applying to cigarettes. Excluding them would leave an avoidable regulatory gap.[7][8][9]

Text health warnings on the packaging of heated tobacco devices and cigarette papers

We propose to introduce text health warnings on the packaging of heated tobacco devices and cigarette papers. All tobacco products and herbal smoking products already have these warnings. The wording of warnings will reflect the harms of using each product.

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to introduce text health warnings on the packaging of heated tobacco devices?

- **Agree**
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to introduce text health warnings on the packaging of cigarette papers?

- **Agree**
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please explain your answers. (Optional, maximum 600 words. Please do not include any personal information in your response.)

ASH Wales agrees with both proposals. Text health warnings should be required on heated tobacco product (HTP) packaging and cigarette-paper packaging. This would close gaps that allow products designed for, or associated with, tobacco use to be sold without equivalent information about the risks.

Well-designed warnings can increase awareness of tobacco-related harm and encourage people who smoke to quit. Reviews have found strengthening cigarette-pack warnings increases attention, knowledge of smoking harms, thoughts about quitting and quit attempts.[10][11]

The guidelines supporting Article 11 of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control recommend considering warnings on tobacco-related materials, including packages of cigarette tubes, filters and papers.[12] Evidence also suggests that burning cigarette papers contributes additional toxicants to tobacco smoke, reinforcing the case for clear health information on their packaging. Requirements should cover booklets, boxes, cigarette tubes and other papers marketed for making cigarettes.

Warnings should clearly connect cigarette papers with the harms of combustible smoking, without suggesting that unused paper alone causes disease. The wording should be evidence-based and tested for comprehension and impact.

Cigarette-paper warnings may also provide an opportunity to reach people who use tobacco with cannabis. In Wales, 63% of adults who had smoked cannabis in the previous 12 months reported smoking it with tobacco in a joint, spliff or blunt.[16] GB research has also identified cannabis smoking among people who describe themselves as non-smokers.[17] One warning within a rotating set could therefore highlight the risks of combining tobacco and cannabis, including exposure to harmful tobacco smoke and nicotine addiction.

HTPs should carry warnings because they are designed for consuming tobacco. The WHO concludes that HTPs expose users to nicotine and toxic emissions. Reduced exposure to some chemicals does not make them harmless or establish reduced health risk.[13] Warnings should make clear using the device with tobacco consumables is not risk-free and should not imply that heated tobacco is medically approved or a proven cessation aid. Device warnings should complement those on consumables and outer packaging.

Warnings should be prominent and regularly refreshed. Article 11 provides for several warnings to appear concurrently or for warning sets to be periodically replaced.[12] Evidence indicates that familiar warnings can lose impact, while introducing new warnings and designs can restore attention.[15] Regulations should prescribe position, size, contrast and typeface and ensure branding cannot obscure or contradict the warning.

The needs of people in Wales should be explicitly considered in the development and testing of new warnings and cessation information. DHSC should work with the Welsh Government and Welsh-language partners to determine how Welsh can be incorporated without reducing the prominence, clarity or effectiveness of the health message.

Cessation information on products supplied in Wales should provide a clear and direct route to Help Me Quit, including its expanding bilingual digital offer. People in Wales should not have to navigate through multiple webpages or England-specific services before reaching the NHS stop smoking support available to them. Any web links, QR codes or other digital routes included on packaging should therefore provide equally direct access to the appropriate service in Wales in Welsh or English. This should be tested as part of implementation to ensure that people can move easily from seeing a cessation message to accessing support.

At a minimum, cessation information for people in Wales should direct them to Help Me Quit and make clear bilingual support is available.

The effectiveness of new warnings should be evaluated from implementation, including their comprehension, recall and behavioural impact. Regulations should retain sufficient flexibility to update warning wording, design or scope where evidence shows that warnings are losing impact or are not working as intended.

Picture health warnings on the packaging of more products and devices

All smoked tobacco products currently require picture health warnings, excluding individually wrapped cigars and cigarillos, and packs of large cigars that weigh more than 3 grams each. These products only require text warnings on their packaging.

Smokeless tobacco products, heated tobacco devices and herbal smoking products currently do not have picture health warnings.

We propose to introduce picture warnings on the packaging of:

- all tobacco products (including all cigars and cigarillos, smokeless tobacco and heated tobacco)
- heated tobacco devices
- herbal smoking products

We do not propose including picture warnings for cigarette papers due to the typically smaller size of the packaging.

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to introduce picture health warnings on the packaging of all tobacco products? This builds on requirements that are already in place for most tobacco products.

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to introduce picture health warnings on the packaging of heated tobacco devices?

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to introduce picture health warnings on the packaging of herbal smoking products?

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Do you agree or disagree that picture health warnings should not be required on the packaging of cigarette papers? We do not propose including picture health warnings on cigarette papers due to the small size of the packaging.

- Agree

- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please explain your answers. This could include, for example, sharing your views on which tobacco products health warning requirements should or should not be introduced for. (Optional, maximum 600 words. Please do not include any personal information in your response.)

ASH Wales strongly supports extending picture health warnings to all tobacco products, heated tobacco devices and herbal smoking products. Combined picture-and-text warnings attract greater attention than text-only warnings and can increase knowledge of tobacco harms and quit-related responses.[10][11] Extending these requirements would also remove inconsistencies whereby some tobacco products can currently be sold with less prominent warnings than cigarettes and hand-rolling tobacco.

This is particularly important for cigars, cigarillos and smokeless tobacco. Exempting particular tobacco products from pictorial warnings creates an unjustified difference in how their harms are communicated and risks some products appearing less concerning because they fall into a different regulatory category. Warnings should be appropriate to the specific product and based on evidence of its harms, rather than simply applying cigarette imagery to every product.

Pictorial warnings also communicate health risks without relying entirely on written information, which is important in addressing inequalities. The 2024-25 National Survey for Wales found that 23% of social-housing tenants smoked compared with 7% of owner-occupiers.[18] Public Health Wales estimates smoking was attributable to an annual average of 3,845 deaths and 17,195 hospital admissions among people aged 35 and over in 2020-22. The smoking-attributable mortality rate in the most deprived fifth of communities was 337 per 100,000, compared with 111 per 100,000 in the least deprived fifth.[14] Warnings should therefore be tested with communities experiencing the greatest tobacco-related harm, including people with lower literacy.

The same principles should apply to heated tobacco products. These products expose users to nicotine and toxic emissions and are not harmless.[13] Picture warnings should apply to both consumables and device packaging so that the device packaging cannot retain a clean, modern or aspirational appearance while the associated tobacco carries prominent health warnings.

ASH Wales agrees that picture warnings may be impractical on cigarette-paper packaging where the available surface is too small to carry an effective image. However, this exemption should apply only where pack size genuinely prevents an effective pictorial warning. Prominent text warnings and standardised packaging should still apply so that cigarette-paper packaging cannot become an alternative promotional surface.

Warnings should also be rotated and regularly refreshed. Article 11 guidelines under the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control recommend multiple warnings and periodic revision, while research indicates that introducing new pictorial warnings can restore attention as familiar warnings lose impact.[15] Regulations should therefore provide for rotating warning sets, regular review and timely replacement.

The needs of people in Wales should be built into implementation. Where warnings contain text, Welsh-language requirements should be developed and tested with Welsh speakers

without reducing the prominence, clarity or legibility of the health message. Cessation information, including any web links or QR codes, should provide people in Wales with an equally direct route to Help Me Quit and its bilingual digital offer, without requiring them to navigate through multiple or England-specific webpages before reaching the appropriate service.

Pack inserts in packaging for all tobacco and herbal smoking products and heated tobacco devices

Quit themed pack inserts will soon be introduced for cigarettes and hand-rolling tobacco following previous consultation. We propose to also include quit themed pack inserts in the packaging of:

- all tobacco products (including products such as such as cigars, cigarillos, pipe tobacco, waterpipe tobacco and smokeless and heated tobacco)
- heated tobacco devices
- herbal smoking products

We do not propose including pack inserts in cigarette papers due to the small size of the packaging.

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to introduce pack inserts for all tobacco products? This does not include cigarettes and hand-rolling tobacco which we are addressing separately to this consultation.

- **Agree**
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to introduce pack inserts for heated tobacco devices?

- **Agree**
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to introduce pack inserts for herbal smoking products?

- **Agree**
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Do you agree or disagree that pack inserts should not be required in the packaging of cigarette papers? We do not propose including pack inserts for cigarette papers due to the small size of the packaging.

- Agree

- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please explain your answers. This could include, for example, sharing comments on specific tobacco products for which you do or do not think pack inserts should apply. (Optional, maximum 600 words. Please do not include any personal information in your response.)

ASH Wales supports quit-themed inserts in all tobacco and herbal smoking-product packs and in heated tobacco device packaging. Packs repeatedly reach people at the point of use, including those who have not approached a health professional or smoking-cessation service. Inserts can therefore provide a repeated opportunity to encourage and support quitting.

Evidence from Canada and the UK supports this approach. Studies have found that engagement with supportive inserts is associated with greater confidence to quit, increased quit attempts and sustained quit attempts.[20] Inserts should complement, rather than replace, prominent external health warnings: external warnings communicate the risks of tobacco use, while inserts can focus positively on the benefits of quitting and how to access support.

Tone is important. Messages should be practical, supportive and non-judgemental, explaining the immediate and longer-term benefits of stopping, that tobacco dependence is treatable, and that using evidence-based support can improve the chances of quitting successfully.

The Welsh context should shape their content. Smoking costs Wales an estimated £1.56 billion each year, with around £650 million associated with treating and supporting smokers experiencing long-term illness and disability. Nearly one-third of smoking-related costs are concentrated in the most deprived fifth of communities.[21] Separate analysis found that accounting for tobacco expenditure increased Wales's relative after-housing-cost poverty rate by 3 percentage points; among Welsh households reporting tobacco expenditure, the increase was 21.7 percentage points.[22] Inserts should therefore include messages about the money saved by quitting alongside health benefits, while avoiding language that blames or stigmatises people living on low incomes.

People in Wales should have an equally direct route from cessation information on tobacco packaging to the support available to them. Every insert supplied in Wales should be available in Welsh and English and signpost directly to Help Me Quit. The Help Me Quit Service Review identified the website as the most frequent source of self-referral and found that some people from lower socioeconomic groups were unaware of the service, the free support available or how to access it.[23]

Since that review, Wales's digital cessation offer has expanded. The free bilingual Help Me Quit app, launched nationally in March 2026, provides 24/7 behavioural support and connects users with specialist Help Me Quit services.[24] Inserts should provide clear, direct access to the full Welsh cessation offer, including telephone, text, website and app routes. Any web links or QR codes should take people directly to the appropriate Welsh service, without requiring them to navigate multiple or England-specific webpages first.

A core UK set of inserts could be supplemented by Welsh messages developed with the Welsh Government, Public Health Wales and people who smoke. Messages should be rotated and refreshed and could cover the benefits of quitting, money saved and the

evidence-based support available through Help Me Quit, including behavioural support and stop-smoking treatments.

Impact should be evaluated from implementation, including recall, confidence and motivation to quit, engagement with Help Me Quit and quit attempts. Inserts must not contain tobacco-industry branding, comparative-risk claims or manufacturer-controlled links.

ASH Wales agrees that separate inserts need not be required inside cigarette-paper packaging where its size makes this impractical. However, appropriate external health warnings and concise cessation signposting should still apply.

Time allowed to implement new packaging requirements

If and when new requirements are introduced, manufacturers will need time to update their packaging to comply. Retailers may also need time to sell old stock that does not comply with new law.

There should be a long enough notice period before new requirements come into force. This period would start from when the details of the new requirements are made clear. We have not yet decided what is the best way to share those details, but it could be, for example, in a government response to this consultation or when regulations are presented to the relevant national Parliament.

We propose that a minimum notice period of 12 months would be enough. This would mean all products covered by our tobacco packaging proposals would need to comply with any new requirements by the end of a 12-month implementation period. However, a longer or shorter notice period may be needed, and we welcome views on this.

Do you agree or disagree with our proposed implementation period of no less than 12 months (from when the detail of any new requirements is clear)?

- ☒ Agree
- ☒ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Don't know

Please explain your answer. This could include, for example, sharing comments on whether the proposed implementation period should be shorter or longer, or on implications that the proposed implementation period could have for manufacturers, retailers or other groups. Please reference any evidence that you have considered to support your response. (Optional, maximum 600 words. Please do not include any personal information in your response.)

ASH Wales believes that 12 months should be the maximum implementation period for the proposed new packaging requirements. The compliance date should therefore be no more than 12 months from the point at which the final technical requirements have been published in full.

This should provide manufacturers and retailers with sufficient time to redesign packaging, adjust production and supply chains and manage existing stock. We would not support a prolonged additional sell-through period after the compliance date.

The timetable should begin only when complete specifications are available, including requirements for individual products, devices and accessories and any provisions concerning Welsh-language information. Welsh and English implementation guidance should be published simultaneously and sufficiently early for retailers, enforcement bodies, health services and other stakeholders to prepare.

Implementation should be treated as more than a manufacturing transition. The 12-month period should also ensure that retailers understand what is changing and when, that consistent information reaches communities and professionals, and that enforcement, communications, monitoring and evaluation arrangements are operational before commencement. The Welsh Government should set out a coordinated implementation plan with clear responsibilities, milestones and routes for emerging issues to be identified and resolved.

Trading Standards teams in Wales will need clear product illustrations, practical guidance, training and a consistent route through which technical questions can be resolved. Guidance and training should be developed with Trading Standards Wales and available well before commencement.

Adequate and sustained funding will be essential. The Welsh Government has committed more than £650,000 over three years to support Trading Standards Wales with implementation of the Tobacco and Vapes Act, including five apprentice posts.[25] This investment is welcome, but the Act and subsequent regulations create significant additional responsibilities. Funding should therefore be assessed against the full implementation and enforcement workload across Wales.

England has received substantially greater dedicated investment in tobacco and vape enforcement, including £10 million annually for local authority enforcement activity until 2028-29.[25] While funding arrangements and responsibilities are not directly comparable, this underlines the importance of ensuring that Trading Standards services in Wales have sufficient sustained resources to prepare for and consistently enforce the new requirements. Resource planning should also cover retailer and public communications, training, monitoring and evaluation, and systems for sharing intelligence.

There should be one clear compliance date. Businesses will already have had 12 months to manage existing stock, and an additional extended sell-through period could unnecessarily delay implementation and create confusion for retailers, enforcement officers and consumers.

Monitoring and evaluation arrangements should be established before implementation, with baseline measures, data owners and reporting arrangements agreed in advance. Wales should be able to assess retailer awareness and compliance, enforcement activity, emerging industry responses and unintended consequences, including impacts on children and young people and communities experiencing the greatest tobacco-related harm.

Increased public awareness of new regulations may also generate increased reporting of suspected non-compliance, as ASH Wales has experienced through No Ifs. No Butts. following previous regulatory changes. Implementation planning should therefore ensure sufficient capacity to receive, assess and act on community intelligence from commencement. Clear referral, data-sharing and feedback arrangements with Trading

Standards Wales should be in place so that relevant reports can support intelligence-led enforcement.

Existing public-health, retail and community networks should also provide structured two-way feedback during implementation so that emerging problems can be identified and addressed quickly.

Heated tobacco device appearance

Restricting the colour and finish of heated tobacco devices

We propose to restrict the colour of heated tobacco devices to Pantone 448C (drab dark brown) with an opaque matt finish. Pantone 448C is the same colour as cigarette and hand-rolling tobacco packaging.

Restricting the colour of the device in this way would also prevent certain aesthetic features on the device, such as the presence of cosmetic lights.

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to restrict the colour of heated tobacco devices to Pantone 448C (drab dark brown) with an opaque matt finish?

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Do you agree or disagree that heated tobacco devices should be banned from having cosmetic lights? This will not apply to functional lights, like those that indicate charge level.

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please explain your answers. This could include, for example, sharing comments on whether restricting heated tobacco devices to an alternative colour may be more effective, or whether technical exemptions are required. (Optional, maximum 600 words. Please do not include any personal information in your response.)

ASH Wales supports the proposed drab brown, matt finish and the removal of cosmetic lighting from heated tobacco devices. The device is repeatedly handled and remains visible after its outer packaging has been discarded; its appearance can therefore form part of the product's marketing.

There is a case for preventive action in Wales. Awareness of heated tobacco products rose from 9% of adults in 2019 to 24% in 2025. Among 18-24-year-olds it rose from 12% to 32%.[5] European survey evidence likewise shows that awareness and experimentation have grown as products enter markets, with use concentrated among younger adults and people who smoke.[4] Regulation should act while use in Wales remains low, rather than waiting for distinctive devices to acquire established brand and lifestyle associations.

Pantone 448C is appropriate because it is already associated with standardised tobacco packaging and provides a clear visual connection with tobacco products. A matt surface is preferable to metallic, pearlescent or reflective finishes. Any permitted light should be limited to essential information such as charge, fault or operating status. It should use a fixed, subdued display and must not pulse, animate, change colour for decoration or respond to use in a way that rewards the user.

The final rules should define function rather than rely on manufacturers' descriptions of a feature. They should cover detachable panels, cases, sleeves and accessories supplied or promoted for the device; otherwise cosmetic branding could simply move to an interchangeable component. Restrictions should also cover connected, downloadable or software-enabled features, including companion apps, Bluetooth-enabled personalisation and firmware or software updates, where these alter the appearance or functionality of the device or enable themes, images, animations, games, rewards or other non-essential customisation after purchase. Safety markings required by law can be accommodated in a standard position and format without weakening the overall restriction.

Restricting branding, imagery and artwork on heated tobacco devices

We propose to ban heated tobacco devices from having images or artwork on them, except for any image that is a regulatory requirement, such as required warnings.

We also propose to limit branding to a single brand name, which would be subject to a set font, size and colour on the device.

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to restrict all branding, imagery and artwork on heated tobacco devices?

- **Agree**
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please explain your answer. This could include, for example, sharing comments on which of the proposed restrictions you do or do not think should apply. (Optional, maximum 600 words. Please do not include any personal information in your response.)

ASH Wales agrees that heated tobacco devices should not carry branding, artwork or decorative imagery. Permitting a small logo or design motif on the reusable device would preserve a powerful form of advertising after the outer pack has been thrown away.

This is not a theoretical concern for Wales. Awareness of heated tobacco has increased markedly, especially among young adults.[5] At the same time, heated tobacco is not a proven stop-smoking treatment and the WHO is clear that lower exposure to some chemicals does not make these products harmless.[13] A device that looks prestigious, technological or medically reassuring can distort that message.

The prohibition should extend to removable covers, charging cases, lanyards and other accessories sold with or specifically for the device. Only legally required markings and tightly prescribed operating information should remain. The rules should also prevent embossing,

textures or repeated symbols from recreating brand identity without using a conventional logo.

Restricting digital screens on heated tobacco devices

We propose that digital screens on heated tobacco devices are restricted to only display safety and status information, such as battery levels.

Do you agree or disagree that digital screens on heated tobacco devices should be restricted to only the display of safety and status information such as battery level, and be greyscale in colour (black, white and grey only)?

- **Agree**
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please explain your answer. This could include, for example, sharing comments if you think there should be any exemptions to this proposal. (Optional, maximum 600 words. Please do not include any personal information in your response.)

ASH Wales agrees. Screens on heated tobacco devices should be limited to information needed to operate the product safely, such as battery level, temperature warning, fault status or maintenance. Games, animations, personalised greetings, rewards, consumption tracking presented as an achievement, and links to promotional content should be prohibited.

The distinction should be based on what the screen does, not simply on-screen size. Heated tobacco awareness among Welsh 18–24-year-olds rose from 12% in 2019 to 32% in 2025.[5] Removing entertainment and personalisation features is a proportionate way to prevent a tobacco device being marketed as a desirable piece of consumer technology.

Stopping heated tobacco devices imitating other products

We propose to limit the potential appeal of heated tobacco devices by stopping them from looking like other products, such as drink bottles and game devices.

This proposal aligns with the restrictions we are proposing for vape devices. It will ensure that heated tobacco devices do not appear more attractive than vapes.

Do you agree or disagree that heated tobacco devices should not be permitted to mimic the design of other products and items? The objective of this proposal is to limit the appeal or attractiveness of heated tobacco devices.

- **Agree**
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please explain your answer. This could include, for example, sharing comments if you think there should be any exemptions to this proposal. (Optional, maximum 600 words. Please do not include any personal information in your response.)

ASH Wales agrees that heated tobacco devices should not be permitted to imitate other products. This should include toys, games devices, cosmetics, food and drink products, stationery and other everyday consumer items. Imitation can disguise the nature of a tobacco-related device, increase novelty and make it easier to carry or use without recognition.

The prohibition should apply to the overall design and presentation of the device, rather than only preventing exact replicas. It should therefore consider characteristics including shape, size, configuration and functionality, as well as colours, imagery and other visual features.

The restriction should also cover devices that can transform, fold, extend, rotate, reconfigure or otherwise change after purchase so that they resemble another product. The rules should similarly prevent interchangeable components, accessories or software-enabled features from being used to circumvent the restriction.

Regulations should be sufficiently broad and future-proofed to capture new designs rather than relying on a fixed list of prohibited products or features. Enforcement guidance should include illustrated examples while allowing emerging products to be assessed against the purpose of the regulation: whether their design or functionality enables them to imitate another product or increases their appeal through doing so.

No exemption should be permitted solely because an imitative feature is described by a manufacturer as functional or decorative. Any exemption should be limited to features genuinely necessary for safe operation or accessibility.

This is a sensible preventive measure while heated tobacco use in Wales remains low but awareness is rising.[5] Regulation should prevent these products developing novelty or lifestyle features that could increase their appeal before such designs become established in the market.

Time allowed to implement new device requirements

If and when new requirements are introduced, manufacturers will need time to ensure their devices are compliant. Retailers may also need time to sell old stock that does not comply with new law.

There should be a long enough notice period before new requirements come into force. This period would start from when the details of the new requirements are made clear. We have not yet decided what is the best way to share those details, but it could be, for example, in a government response to this consultation or when regulations are presented to the relevant national Parliament.

We propose that a minimum notice period of 12 months would be enough. This would mean heated tobacco devices would need to comply with any new requirements by the end of a 12-month implementation period. However, a longer or shorter notice period may be needed, and we welcome views on this.

Do you agree or disagree with our proposed implementation period of no less than 12 months (from when the detail of any new requirements is clear)?

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please explain your answer. This could include, for example, sharing comments on whether the proposed implementation period should be shorter or longer, or on implications that the proposed implementation period could have for manufacturers, retailers or other groups. Please reference any evidence that you have considered to support your response. (Optional, maximum 600 words. Please do not include any personal information in your response.)

ASH Wales believes that 12 months should be the maximum implementation period for the proposed heated tobacco device requirements. The compliance date should therefore be no more than 12 months from the point at which the final technical requirements have been published in full.

The implementation period should begin only when manufacturers, retailers and enforcement bodies have complete specifications. These should cover colour measurement and finish; permitted lights and screens; branding and mandatory markings; detachable and interchangeable components; cases, sleeves and accessories; software or downloadable features; and devices that can transform, reconfigure or otherwise change their appearance or functionality after purchase. Welsh and English implementation guidance should be available at the same time.

Twelve months should provide sufficient time for manufacturers to redesign devices and adjust production and supply chains, and for retailers to manage existing stock. Manufacturers regularly change device designs, finishes and product ranges, and there should be no open-ended exemption for existing models. Nor should there be an additional prolonged sell-through period after the compliance date, which would delay the effect of the regulations and complicate enforcement.

Where possible, implementation should be coordinated with related packaging and device requirements so that manufacturers, retailers, enforcement bodies and the public have clear and consistent compliance dates.

Trading Standards Wales should receive reference images, practical guidance, training and access to technical advice well before commencement. Guidance should address potential circumvention, including replacement parts, sleeves, cases, downloadable features and products capable of changing their appearance after purchase. Enforcement should consider the product as supplied and how it can reasonably be configured or modified by the consumer, rather than assessing only its appearance at the point of sale.

As set out elsewhere in our response, adequate and sustained enforcement capacity will be essential. Monitoring arrangements should be established before commencement so that emerging products and attempts to circumvent the requirements can be identified quickly and addressed consistently across Wales.

A clear 12-month deadline, supported by complete technical specifications, coordinated implementation and effective enforcement preparation, should provide sufficient time for

legitimate businesses to comply without unnecessarily delaying the public-health benefits of the regulations.

Vaping and nicotine product packaging and flavour descriptors

Definition of vaping products

Throughout this section, we refer to ‘vaping products’. This includes vapes, as well as other vape components and refill containers sold separately from the device.

Restricting the colour on packaging for all vaping and nicotine products

We propose that the packaging for vaping and nicotine products should be white.

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to restrict the colour of packaging of all vaping products to white?

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don’t know

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to restrict the colour of packaging of all nicotine products to white?

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don’t know

Please explain your answers. (Optional, maximum 600 words. Please do not include any personal information in your response.)

ASH Wales supports neutral white packaging for vaping products, nicotine pouches and other consumer nicotine products, alongside restrictions on other packaging features that can create visual appeal. The objective should be to reduce attractiveness to children, young people and people who do not use nicotine while ensuring that vaping remains accessible to adults who smoke as a route away from combustible tobacco. The latest Cochrane review found high-certainty evidence that nicotine e-cigarettes increase smoking quit rates compared with nicotine replacement therapy, equivalent to about four additional quitters per 100 people.[38]

The latest Welsh youth data support action. The 2025 School Health Research Network survey of more than 130,000 learners found that 5.2% of pupils in Years 7–11 vaped at least weekly, down from 7% in 2023, while 12.8% of Year 11 learners vaped at least weekly and 21% of learners had ever vaped.[39] ASH Wales's 2023 Youth Vaping Survey of 12,524 secondary-school pupils provides additional detail on patterns of use: 92% of current young vapers reported using nicotine-containing products and 45% said they could not get through

the school day without vaping.[26] The two surveys use different measures and should not be directly compared, but together they show why youth appeal and dependence remain important concerns.

A 2026 survey of adults in Wales found that 80% supported banning sweet names, cartoons and bright colours on vape packaging, while 72% supported restrictions on how vape flavours are described.[6]

Experimental UK research has also found that standardised vape packaging reduces appeal among young people without increasing appeal among adults.[27] The same preventive principle should apply to newer nicotine products. ASH Wales's trends research found that awareness of nicotine pouches among 18-24-year-olds in Wales reached 79% in 2025, with 10% reporting current use.[5]

A white background alone should not be treated as standardised packaging. ASH Wales's retail observations indicate that parts of the vaping market already use predominantly white packaging while retaining prominent logos, coloured lettering, imagery and flavour-linked colour coding. The regulations should therefore restrict the wider design features through which promotional appeal could be recreated.

Requirements should apply to every visible layer of packaging, including refill containers, bottles, pods and inner packaging. They should restrict colours, imagery, logos, promotional text, metallic or reflective finishes, transparent windows, cut-outs and unusual pack structures. Required information such as product name, nicotine strength, ingredients and health warnings should appear in prescribed formats. Branded sleeves, stickers or other additions that could restore promotional features should also be covered.

Implementation must also consider perceptions of relative harm. Among Welsh adults aware of vapes, 54% believed vaping was as harmful as or more harmful than smoking, while only 28% identified it as less harmful.[6] The impact of packaging restrictions should therefore be evaluated against both objectives: reducing appeal to children and non-users while ensuring that adults who smoke are not discouraged from switching completely to vaping.

Implementation should be accompanied by clear, independently developed public-health communications about relative risk and accessible cessation support.

Overall, white packaging should form part of a comprehensive standardisation regime. Without restrictions on other visual and structural features, promotional appeal could simply move from background colour to typography, imagery, branding or pack design.

Restricting imagery, branding, text and other promotional features

We propose that the packaging for all vaping and nicotine products should not include imagery, and that all text on the packaging, including any branding or brand names, should be in a standard colour, font and typeface.

There should be no other promotional features on the outside or inside of packs or attached to the packaging, such as links to social media accounts or any feature that suggests a financial benefit, such as vouchers or discounts.

We recognise that there may be a case to allow packaging of vaping products to display a picture of the product contained inside (for example, a mouthpiece). We welcome views on whether any limited exemptions may be appropriate in the free text box.

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to introduce the restrictions to imagery, branding, text and promotional features outlined above for the packaging of all vaping products?

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to introduce the restrictions to imagery, branding, text and promotional features outlined above for the packaging of all nicotine products?

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please explain your answers. This could include, for example, your views on whether there should be any exemptions or further restrictions. You may also indicate any elements of the proposal you disagree with and why, or elements you feel could be further strengthened. (Optional, maximum 600 words. Please do not include any personal information in your response.)

ASH Wales supports the proposed restrictions on imagery, branding, text and promotional features. Child-oriented appeal can be created through the combination of colour, cartoon graphics, confectionery language, imagery and brand names; regulating only one element risks leaving the overall promotional effect intact.

Evidence from Wales supports this approach. A 2026 survey of adults in Wales found that 80% supported banning sweet names, cartoons and bright colours on vape packaging, while 72% supported restrictions on how vape flavours are described.[6]

The rules should prohibit characters, food and drink imagery, youth-culture references, lifestyle claims and other features that make products resemble sweets, toys or soft drinks. Brand names should not become a route for prohibited flavour, confectionery or lifestyle claims.

Permitted brand and product names should appear only in a prescribed colour, typeface, size and position. The same restrictions should apply to outer packaging, refill containers, pods, multipacks and inner packaging, as well as promotional inserts, stickers, sleeves, promotional QR codes, website links and social-media links.

Any exemptions should be tightly defined. Where an image of a component, such as a mouthpiece, is genuinely necessary to identify or safely use the product, it should be limited to one factual image in a prescribed maximum size, position, scale, viewing angle and neutral background, with no branding, lifestyle treatment or enhanced visual effects.

Required instructions, ingredients, health warnings and independently determined public-health or cessation information should remain possible in a prescribed, non-promotional format.

Restricting the shape, materials and safety features of packaging for all vaping and nicotine products

We propose that packaging used for vaping and nicotine products should use uniform shapes. For example, the packaging for devices or coils should use a similar shape, such as a rectangular cuboid, depending on their dimensions.

We also propose that manufacturers should not use materials that enhance a product's appeal, such as:

- glossy plastics
- holographic foils
- other tactile features, for example fuzzy or velvety materials

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal that packaging for all vaping products should have uniform shapes, and that there should be restrictions on materials and finishes that can enhance appeal?

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal that packaging for all nicotine products should have uniform shapes, and that there should be restrictions on materials and finishes that can enhance appeal?

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Vapes are already required to have child-resistant and tamper-evident packaging. We propose to introduce this requirement for all vaping and nicotine products.

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal that packaging for all vaping products should be both child-resistant and tamper-evident?

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal that packaging for all nicotine products should be both child-resistant and tamper-evident?

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please explain your answers. This could include, for example, indicating any elements of the proposal that you disagree with and why, if there are elements that you feel could be further

strengthened or other features that should be included. (Optional, maximum 600 words. Please do not include any personal information in your response.)

ASH Wales also supports uniform packaging shapes and restrictions on materials and finishes that enhance product appeal. Packaging should use standardised shapes appropriate to the product type and should not use novelty structures or decorative finishes to recreate visual or sensory appeal. Glossy, holographic and tactile or textured finishes should be prohibited, with any exemptions limited to features genuinely required for safety, accessibility or product function.

Regulations should allow manufacturers to add optional age-verification technology to vapes, such as requiring users to verify their age through a connected smartphone. This could help prevent use by under 18s. Manufacturers using this technology should include safeguards against tampering, as insecure devices could be modified to bypass age checks or add other functions.

ASH Wales supports child-resistant and tamper-evident packaging across vapes and consumer nicotine products. These safeguards should apply to refill bottles, prefilled pods and nicotine-pouch containers as well as the outer pack.

The 2025 School Health Research Network survey found that 5.2% of learners in Years 7–11 vaped at least weekly, rising to 12.8% in Year 11.[39] ASH Wales's 2023 Youth Vaping Survey adds important detail: among current young vapers, 92% reported using nicotine-containing products and 45% said they could not get through the school day without vaping.[26] Child-resistant packaging is therefore relevant both to poisoning risk and to the wider need to reduce early nicotine dependence.

Standards should be based on recognised child-resistance testing, not an unverified manufacturer claim. Packages must remain usable by adults with limited dexterity, and safety instructions should be concise and accessible. The Welsh Government should work with DHSC and Welsh-language partners to explore how Welsh-language safety information can be incorporated while ensuring that essential information remains legible. Tamper evidence should be obvious at purchase without adding colourful or novelty features.

Restricting flavour descriptions on vaping and nicotine products packaging

Single lead flavour

We propose to restrict flavour descriptors on the packaging for vaping and nicotine products to a single, recognised flavour name, like apple or strawberry. This would include restricting hyphenated or combined flavour names, such as blueberry-apple.

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to restrict flavour descriptors on the packaging of all vaping products to a single lead flavour?

- **Agree**
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to restrict flavour descriptors on the packaging of all nicotine products to a single lead flavour?

- **Agree**

- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Concept, sensory, food and drink categories

We also propose restricting any concept or sensory words from being used to describe a flavour.

A concept name refers to any flavour name that does not directly describe a recognisable food, drink or natural flavour. Instead, the word conveys a mood, an idea, a brand or even a number or codename, rather than describing an actual flavour. This could include flavour names such as:

- 'Unicorn Dream'
- 'DC100'

A sensory name refers to a recognisable taste, smell or sensation experienced when using a vape or nicotine product, such as 'Mint Blast'.

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal that concept and sensory flavour descriptors should be restricted on the packaging of all vaping products?

- **Agree**

- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal that concept and sensory flavour descriptors should be restricted on the packaging of all nicotine products?

- **Agree**

- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

We also propose restricting descriptor names of certain food and drink categories that appeal to children and young people. This includes flavours like:

- confectionery and sweets (such as 'Chocolate', 'Candy' and 'Bubblegum')
- desserts and cakes (such as 'Brownie' and 'Cheesecake')
- alcohol and other drinks (such as 'Cola')

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal that confectionery, sweets, dessert and cake name descriptors should be restricted on the packaging of all vaping products?

- **Agree**

- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal that confectionery, sweets, dessert and cake name descriptors should be restricted on the packaging of all nicotine products?

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal that alcohol and drink name descriptors should be restricted on the packaging of all vaping products?

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal that alcohol and drink name descriptors should be restricted on the packaging of all nicotine products?

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please explain your answers. This could include, for example, your views on any elements of the proposal that you disagree with and why, or any flavour names that you believe should or should not be restricted. You may also wish to comment on whether there should be any differences in how these restrictions apply to vaping and nicotine products. (Optional, maximum 600 words. Please do not include any personal information in your response.)

ASH Wales supports the proposed restrictions on flavour descriptions, including limiting products to a single recognised lead flavour. We do not see a need to permit two flavour descriptors. A single descriptor provides consumers with basic information about the flavour while reducing the opportunity for increasingly elaborate combinations to be used as a form of promotion.

There is strong support in Wales for restricting how flavours are presented. A 2026 survey of adults in Wales found that 72% supported restricting how vape flavours are described.[6]

Flavour preferences among adults who vape have changed substantially. Survey data for Wales show reported use of tobacco-flavoured vapes among adult vapers falling from 41% in 2015 to 15% in 2025, while fruit flavours increased from 15% to 44%.[5] These figures do not establish that flavours cause smoking cessation, but they demonstrate that many adults who vape use non-tobacco flavours. The regulations should therefore distinguish between restricting promotional flavour descriptions and restricting the flavours themselves.

ASH Wales supports restrictions on confectionery, sweets, desserts, cakes, alcohol and drink descriptors, as well as concept and sensory descriptions. Terms designed to convey excitement, novelty, fantasy or other experiences should not provide an alternative route for promoting nicotine products to children.

Welsh evidence also indicates that flavour is only one element of youth appeal. Public Health Wales found that sweet smells and flavours contribute to the attractiveness of vapes to young people.[28] However, ASH Wales's 2023 Youth Vaping Survey of 12,524 secondary-school pupils found that only 8% of current young vapers identified taste or flavour as their main reason for vaping.[26] This reinforces the need for flavour-description restrictions to operate alongside wider controls on packaging, imagery, branding and promotion.

The restrictions should apply consistently to product and brand names, packaging, online listings, price lists and shelf labels so that prohibited descriptors cannot simply be relocated elsewhere. Spelling variations, abbreviations or brand names should not be permitted to recreate prohibited descriptions.

Before implementation, DHSC and the Welsh Government should test the permitted descriptors and overall presentation with children and young people, including those who currently vape and those who do not, to assess their appeal and how they are understood.

Product information on and inside vaping and nicotine products packaging

We propose that the packaging of all vaping and nicotine products should have:

- a full list of ingredients, including flavour agents
- expiration details
- an age restriction symbol, for example a crossed-out 18 symbol
- a standardised display of nicotine strength, for example in milligrams, millilitres or as a percentage
- nicotine delivery per puff or pouch, where relevant

We also propose that relevant products should have a nicotine warning label on the front and back of the packaging. For example, this warning could say 'This product contains nicotine which is a highly addictive substance'. Packaging should also have clear instructions on appropriate waste disposal.

Where applicable, we propose that certain products have an instruction leaflet to inform users of any appropriate warnings and the adverse effects of nicotine.

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to require the consumer information listed above on and inside the packaging of all vaping products?

- **Agree**
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to require the consumer information listed above on and inside the packaging of all nicotine products?

- **Agree**
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please explain your answers. This could include, for example, sharing comments on any elements of the proposal that you disagree with and why, if there are areas that you feel could be further strengthened or areas that have been missed and should be included. (Optional, maximum 600 words. Please do not include any personal information in your response.)

ASH Wales agrees with both proposals and supports clear, standardised consumer information on the packaging of all vaping and nicotine products. The information should enable adults to understand and compare products while leaving manufacturers little scope to use factual labelling as a vehicle for promotion.

Nicotine strength should be presented in one mandatory format across each product category. Any percentage equivalent should be secondary. Terms such as “light”, “smooth” or “extra strong” should not be permitted unless they have an independently defined meaning. Evidence indicates that existing formats such as “2%” and “20mg/ml” can confuse consumers, with some incorrectly interpreting 2% as a low nicotine strength.[29] DHSC should therefore user-test proposed formats with adults who smoke and vape to establish which presentation is most clearly understood.

Packaging should include a complete ingredients list, including flavouring agents, together with expiry and batch information, manufacturer or importer details, appropriate safety instructions and a clearly visible 18+ symbol. Information should appear in prescribed locations and remain legible on smaller products. Where the complete information cannot be presented clearly on the packaging, it should be provided through an accompanying leaflet without reducing the essential information displayed on the pack.

ASH Wales supports providing information about nicotine delivery per puff or pouch only where an independent and validated method for calculating it has been established. Nicotine delivery from a vape can vary according to the device, liquid composition, settings and the way it is used. Manufacturers should not be permitted to make unverified claims about nicotine delivery or puff counts. Any standardised figure should be accompanied by a clear explanation that actual delivery may vary.[30]

Communication about nicotine and relative risk requires particular care. Among Welsh adults who were aware of e-cigarettes, 54% incorrectly believed that vaping was as harmful as or more harmful than smoking, while only 28% correctly identified it as less harmful.[6] Prominent nicotine warnings, without appropriate context, could reinforce misconceptions about the principal causes of smoking-related disease and discourage adults who smoke from switching completely to a less harmful alternative.

Implementation should therefore be accompanied by independently developed public-health communications explaining that vaping is less harmful than smoking and can help adults who smoke to quit, while making clear that vaping is not risk-free and is not intended for children or non-smokers. Manufacturers should not be permitted to use mandatory information to make unsupported health or cessation claims.

For products supplied in Wales, instruction leaflets and associated digital information should be available in Welsh and English. The Welsh Government should work with DHSC and Welsh-language partners to explore how Welsh-language wording can also be incorporated into mandatory packaging information. Any bilingual format should be tested on smaller packaging to ensure that essential information remains prominent and legible.

Waste-disposal instructions should explain clearly that vapes, batteries and nicotine-containing products must not be placed in general household waste. Any QR code or other machine-readable or connected feature, including NFC or augmented-reality links, should lead only to independent regulatory, disposal or cessation information and not to

manufacturer-controlled marketing, rewards, personalisation or promotional content. For users in Wales, this should include access to Help Me Quit and its free bilingual app, alongside telephone, text and website support.

Time allowed to implement new packaging requirements

If and when new requirements are introduced, manufacturers will need time to update their packaging to be compliant. Retailers may also need time to sell old stock that does not comply with the new law.

There should be a long enough notice period before new requirements come into force. This period would start from when the details of the new requirements are made clear. We have not yet decided what is the best way to share those details, but it could be, for example, in a government response to this consultation or when regulations are presented to the relevant national Parliament.

We propose a minimum notice period of 12 months would be enough. This would mean all products in scope of our vaping and nicotine product packaging proposals would need to comply with any new regulatory requirements by the end of a 12 month implementation period. However, a longer or shorter notice period may be needed, and we welcome views on this.

Do you agree or disagree with our proposed implementation period of no less than 12 months (from when the detail of any new requirements is clear)?

- ☒ Agree
- ☒ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Don't know

Please explain your answer. This could include, for example, sharing comments on whether the proposed implementation period should be shorter or longer, or on implications that the proposed implementation period could have for manufacturers, retailers or other groups. Please reference any evidence that you have considered to support your response. (Optional, maximum 600 words. Please do not include any personal information in your response.)

ASH Wales believes that 12 months should be the maximum implementation period for the proposed vaping and nicotine product packaging requirements. The compliance date should therefore be set at 12 months from the point at which the final requirements have been published in full, with no provision for an extension beyond this period.

Twelve months should provide ample time for manufacturers to redesign packaging and adjust production and supply chains, and for retailers to manage existing stock. There is recent precedent for a considerably shorter transition. In developing the ban on single-use vapes, the Welsh Government and other UK governments agreed to provide a minimum six-month transition period to allow businesses time to adapt. In Wales, the 1 June 2025 commencement date was formally confirmed on 22 October 2024, giving businesses just over seven months from that announcement to implementation.[41]

The implementation period should begin only once the final specifications are clear. These should cover permitted flavour descriptors, packaging colour, branding, imagery and

promotional features, nicotine-strength information, and requirements applying to multipacks, refill containers, pods and other packaging. Welsh and English guidance should be published simultaneously. Retailers, particularly small convenience businesses, should receive clear visual guidance and one unambiguous compliance date.

There should not be an additional prolonged sell-through period after that date. Businesses will already have had 12 months to manage existing stock, and extending the transition further would unnecessarily delay implementation and complicate enforcement.

Trading Standards Wales should receive practical guidance, product illustrations, training and access to technical advice well before commencement. Compliance monitoring should also examine whether prohibited branding or descriptions are relocated onto sleeves, stickers, accessories, shelf labels, price lists or online listings.

ASH Wales's No Ifs. No Butts. platform could complement official monitoring by enabling the public to report potentially non-compliant products and retail practices, with appropriate referral and feedback arrangements agreed with Trading Standards Wales.

Our wider comments on the need for adequate enforcement capacity, monitoring and evaluation, and coordinated implementation in Wales are set out in our response to the equivalent question on tobacco packaging.

Vape device appearance

Restricting the colour and finish of vapes

We propose restricting the colour of vape devices, including all visible parts, to:

- white, black or grey, with only one of those colours per device
- a matt finish
- no variation in shades or opacity

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to limit the colour of a vaping device (including all visible parts) to white, black or grey with a matt finish?

- **Agree**
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Do you agree or disagree that vape devices should be banned from having cosmetic lights? This would not apply to functional lights, such as those that indicate charge level.

- **Agree**
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please explain your answer. This could include, for example, sharing comments on whether you think no restrictions should apply, if you think only a subset of the proposed colours should be allowed or if you think alternative colours should be allowed. Equally, you may want to highlight

technical exemptions that should be considered. (Optional, maximum 600 words. Please do not include any personal information in your response.)

ASH Wales agrees with both proposals. Vape devices should be restricted to a precisely defined range of neutral colours: white, black or grey. They should have a matt finish, and cosmetic lights should be prohibited. This would remove features that can make vaping products appear fashionable, collectable or toy-like, while maintaining a visual distinction from the dissuasive brown proposed for heated tobacco devices.

Experimental evidence supports regulating device appearance. A randomised study involving more than 15,000 people aged 16–29 in England, Canada and the United States found that 67.1% of those shown standardised white disposable vapes reported no interest in trying them, compared with 62.8% shown branded devices. The authors concluded that standardising device colour and branding reduced young people’s interest in trying vapes.[31]

The study also identified a potential unintended effect among young people who smoked. Among participants who had smoked but not vaped in the previous 30 days, 47.5% shown standardised devices reported no interest in trying them compared with 37.5% shown branded devices.[31] This should be considered carefully because vaping is considerably less harmful than smoking and can provide a route away from combustible tobacco.

The need to reduce youth appeal remains clear in Wales. The 2025 School Health Research Network survey of more than 130,000 learners found that 5.2% of learners in Years 7–11 vaped at least weekly, down from 7% in 2023, rising to 12.8% among Year 11 learners. Around 9,100 learners in Years 7–11 were estimated to vape regularly.[39]

A 2026 survey of adults in Wales also found that 80% supported banning sweet names, cartoons and bright colours on vape packaging.[6] Although this question concerned packaging rather than devices, it provides additional evidence of strong public support in Wales for restricting visual features that may appeal to children.

The permitted white, black and grey colours should be defined precisely. Regulations should prohibit gradients, patterns, metallic or pearlescent finishes, transparent coloured sections, colour-changing materials and collectable editions. Controls should cover all visible and interchangeable components so that colourful designs cannot be recreated through mouthpieces, tanks, pods or removable panels.

Cosmetic lights, illuminated logos and decorative lighting effects should be prohibited. A tightly defined exemption should apply to lights genuinely required for safe operation, such as indicators for charging, battery level, activation, faults or overheating. Functional lights should be no more prominent than necessary and should not incorporate animations, decorative patterns or colour-changing effects.

Any further exemptions should be limited to features genuinely necessary for safety, accessibility or operation. The impact of the restrictions should be monitored after implementation, including whether they reduce youth appeal while avoiding unintended barriers to adults who smoke switching completely to vaping.

Restricting branding, imagery, and artwork on vapes

We propose that vapes are banned from having images or artwork, except for where these may be a legal requirement, such as warnings.

We also propose that branding should be limited to a single brand name, which would be subject to a set font, size and colour on the device. This aligns with the restrictions we are proposing for heated tobacco devices.

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to restrict all branding, imagery and artwork on vapes?

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please explain your answer. This could include, for example, sharing comments on whether you think none or only some of the proposed restrictions should apply. (Optional, maximum 600 words. Please do not include any personal information in your response.)

ASH Wales agrees that branding, imagery and artwork should be removed from vaping devices. Only a single standardised brand or product name, legally required information, safety markings and information genuinely necessary for operating the device should be permitted.

Applying restrictions to the device as well as its packaging is important. A vape remains visible and continues to be handled and used after its packaging has been discarded. Allowing prominent branding or imagery on the device would therefore undermine the wider objective of reducing the promotional appeal of vaping products.

The restrictions should cover logos, images, artwork, engravings, decorative patterns and removable or interchangeable components. Manufacturers should not be able to reproduce a recognisable logo or brand identity through patterns, symbols or the arrangement of otherwise permitted elements while technically omitting the brand name.

The rules should also cover digital displays and connected or software-enabled features, including companion apps, Bluetooth-enabled personalisation and firmware or software updates. Images, logos, animations, downloadable themes or other visual customisation should not provide a means of restoring branding or promotional imagery after purchase or through a software update.

Any permitted brand or product identifier should appear only once and in a prescribed font, size, colour and position. Functional and safety information should remain permitted but should be no more prominent than necessary.

The evidence supporting restrictions on device appearance is set out in our response to the preceding question.

Restricting the digital screens on vapes

We propose that digital screens on vapes are prohibited, except for screens which display safety and status information such as battery and liquid levels.

Do you agree or disagree that digital screens on vapes should be restricted to only the display of safety and status information such as battery level, and be greyscale in colour (black, white and

grey only)? This would not include lights that indicate status information, such as when the device is being recharged.

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please explain your answer. This could include, for example, sharing comments if you think there should be any exemptions to this proposal. (Optional, maximum 600 words. Please do not include any personal information in your response.)

ASH Wales supports restricting digital screens on vaping devices to essential safety, status and operating information and requiring displays to be greyscale.

Permitted information could include battery and liquid levels, charging status, power settings, fault or safety warnings and child-lock status. Games, animations, images, social functions, personalised rewards, promotional messages and other entertainment or decorative features should be prohibited.

The restrictions should be sufficiently broad to cover features added or altered after purchase through software or firmware updates. Manufacturers should not be able to circumvent restrictions on device appearance and branding by subsequently introducing downloadable themes, images, animations or other forms of visual customisation.

Any exemption should be based on genuine operational, safety or accessibility requirements. Displays should be subdued and non-animated except where movement is genuinely necessary to communicate a safety or operating function.

Stopping vapes imitating other products

Currently vapes can and do copy the design of other products, such as highlighter pens, refillable water bottles and game devices.

We propose to limit the potential appeal of vapes by stopping them from looking like other products.

Do you agree or disagree that vapes should not be permitted to mimic the design of other products and items? The objective of this proposal is to limit the appeal or attractiveness of vapes.

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please explain your answer. This could include, for example, sharing comments if you think there should be any exemptions to this proposal. (Optional, maximum 600 words. Please do not include any personal information in your response.)

ASH Wales agrees that vapes should not be permitted to imitate other products. This should include toys, gaming devices, sweets, drinks, cosmetics, stationery and other everyday consumer items. Such designs can increase novelty and appeal and may make vaping devices less readily recognisable as nicotine products.

The prohibition should apply to the overall design and presentation of the device rather than requiring it to be an exact copy of another product. It should therefore cover characteristics such as shape, size, configuration and functionality, as well as visual features.

Importantly, the restriction should also cover devices that can transform, fold, extend, rotate, reconfigure or otherwise change so that they resemble another product. Interchangeable components, cases, sleeves or other accessories should not provide a means of circumventing the restriction.

The regulations should be sufficiently broad and future-proofed to capture emerging designs rather than relying solely on a fixed list of prohibited products. Illustrated guidance would be helpful for manufacturers, retailers and enforcement officers, but should not limit the scope of the underlying prohibition.

Any exemption should be limited to features genuinely necessary for safe operation or accessibility. A feature should not be exempt simply because a manufacturer describes it as functional or decorative.

Time allowed to implement new device requirements

If and when new requirements are introduced, manufacturers will need time to ensure their devices are compliant. Retailers may also need time to sell old stock that does not comply with new law.

There should be a long enough notice period before new requirements come into force. This period would start from when the details of the new requirements are made clear. We have not yet decided what is the best way to share those details, but it could be, for example, in a government response to this consultation or when regulations are presented to the relevant national Parliament.

We propose that a minimum notice period of 12 months would be enough. This would mean all vapes would need to comply with any new regulatory requirements by the end of a 12 month implementation period. However, a longer or shorter notice period may be needed, and we welcome views on this.

Do you agree or disagree with our proposed implementation period of no less than 12 months (from when the detail of any new requirements is clear)?

- ☒ Agree
- ☒ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Don't know

Please explain your answer. This could include, for example, sharing comments on whether the proposed implementation period should be shorter or longer, or on implications that the proposed implementation period could have for manufacturers, retailers or other groups.

Please reference any evidence that you have considered to support your response. (Optional, maximum 600 words. Please do not include any personal information in your response.)

ASH Wales believes that 12 months should be the maximum implementation period for the proposed vape device requirements. The compliance date should therefore be set at 12 months from the point at which the final technical requirements have been published in full, with no provision for an extension beyond this period.

Twelve months should provide sufficient time for manufacturers to redesign devices and adjust production and supply chains, and for retailers to manage existing stock. There is recent precedent for a shorter transition. In developing the ban on single-use vapes, the Welsh Government and other UK governments agreed to provide a minimum six-month transition period to allow businesses time to adapt. In Wales, the 1 June 2025 commencement date was formally confirmed on 22 October 2024, giving businesses just over seven months from that announcement to implementation.[41]

For vape devices, the final specifications should clearly define permitted colours and finishes and distinguish prohibited cosmetic features from lights, screens and markings genuinely required for safe operation. They should also explain how requirements apply to visible and interchangeable components, accessories, digital displays, software-enabled features and devices capable of being transformed or reconfigured.

Complete Welsh and English guidance, supported by clear illustrations of compliant and non-compliant products, should be available from the start of the implementation period.

Trading Standards services in Wales should receive training, technical guidance and access to a clear route for resolving questions before commencement. Enforcement bodies should also be able to obtain information from manufacturers where necessary to determine whether a feature claimed to be functional is genuinely required for safe operation.

There should be one clear compliance date and no prolonged additional sell-through period for existing models. Businesses will already have had 12 months to prepare. Allowing non-compliant devices to remain on sale beyond that point would unnecessarily delay implementation and make the requirements more difficult for retailers, consumers and enforcement officers to understand.

Our wider comments on enforcement capacity, monitoring and coordinated implementation in Wales are set out in our responses to the preceding implementation questions.

Retail display: tobacco and related products

Requested temporary and incidental displays in England, Wales and Northern Ireland

Under existing legislation, tobacco products cannot be displayed inside or outside most shops across the UK. However, tobacco products can be shown to a customer following a request. The request must be by a person who is of the legal age of sale in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. We call this a 'requested temporary display' in this consultation.

Requested temporary displays enable informed purchasing decisions. As a result of a requested temporary display, other people nearby may also incidentally see these products. Current legislation in England, Wales and Northern Ireland also makes allowances for:

- restocking
- staff training
- pricing
- display unit maintenance

We call this ‘incidental display’ in this consultation.

Restricting the retail display of cigarette papers, heated and other tobacco-related devices and herbal smoking products in England, Wales and Northern Ireland

Tobacco products

We propose that the requested temporary display of all tobacco products should only be allowed from behind a sales counter, and not another location within a retail setting.

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to introduce a legal requirement that the requested temporary display of all tobacco products must take place from behind a sales counter?

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don’t know

Cigarette papers, heated and other tobacco-related devices and herbal smoking products

We propose that most of the restrictions and allowances that apply to the display of tobacco products should apply to cigarette papers, heated and other tobacco-related devices and herbal smoking products too.

This includes:

- restricting the display of these products outside of all retail settings and inside the majority of retail settings
- providing allowances enabling display unit restocking, maintenance, pricing, staff training and requested temporary displays
- permitting the same maximum visible areas (1.5 square meters)

We also propose that the requested temporary display of these products should only be allowed from behind a sales counter, and not another location within a retail setting in the same way as we are proposing to make this a legal requirement for tobacco products.

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to restrict the display of cigarette papers? This would include the requirement that their requested temporary display must take place from behind a sales counter.

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don’t know

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to restrict the display of heated and other tobacco-related devices? This would include the requirement that their requested temporary display must take place from behind a sales counter.

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to restrict the display of herbal smoking products? This would include the requirement that their requested temporary display must take place from behind a sales counter.

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please explain your answers. This could include, for example, sharing comments on why you think our proposed restrictions should or should not apply to certain types of products. (Optional, maximum 600 words. Please do not include any personal information in your response.)

ASH Wales agrees with all four proposals. Requested temporary displays of tobacco products should take place only from behind the sales counter, with equivalent restrictions applying to cigarette papers, heated and other tobacco-related devices and herbal smoking products.

Display restrictions should apply consistently across products associated with smoking. Otherwise, promotional activity may shift from tightly regulated products to related products that remain visible.

The requirement should apply to all tobacco products, including cigars and cigarillos. Among Welsh adults who smoked, 29% reported having tried cigarillos in 2022 and 65% had heard of them. By 2026, 32% had tried them and 71% had heard of them.[6][32] Evidence in Great Britain also found that in 2024, 33% of 11-to-18-year-olds who had tried smoking had used cigarillos, rising to 43% among regular smokers.[1] This supports consistent treatment of cigars and cigarillos within the proposed display rules.



Cigarette papers and filters should also be included. A 2025 photograph supplied by ASH Wales shows cigarette papers openly displayed in a Welsh retailer in brightly coloured packs featuring cartoon-style graphics and names including Bubble Gum, Banana, Red Lolly Pop and Popcorn.[33] Papers and filters can also be marketed with menthol and other flavours. Leaving them visible would preserve a route for tobacco-related promotion. ASH Wales therefore recommends explicitly including cigarette filters within the restrictions. Scotland already restricts the display of smoking-related products including cigarette papers, tubes and filters where tobacco is sold.[34]

Heated and other tobacco-related devices should be covered because their appearance and branding can promote the associated tobacco product. Herbal smoking products should also be included because their combustion produces harmful smoke and their presentation should not imply that they are a safe alternative to tobacco.

Requested displays should be brief, take place only following a request from a customer legally entitled to purchase the product and be made from behind the sales counter. Allowances for restocking, staff training, pricing and maintenance should be limited to what is reasonably necessary.

These measures also have an equity benefit in Wales. Smoking prevalence is 22.6% in the most deprived communities compared with 6.8% in the least deprived, while £489.8 million of the annual cost of smoking falls within the most deprived fifth of communities.[21] Removing routine retail exposure is a population-wide intervention that does not depend on people seeking help or engaging with health services.

Trading Standards services will require clear illustrated guidance and consistent monitoring, with community intelligence from No Ifs. No Butts. complementing formal inspection and enforcement data.

Retail display of prices for cigarette papers, heated and other tobacco-related devices and herbal smoking products in England, Wales and Northern Ireland

Retailers can display prices for tobacco products in 3 formats:

a single price list that can be permanently on display at each point of sale, but must be text-only and subject to size and font requirements

a picture price list that can include product images and can only be shown in response to a request by a person who is of the legal age of sale

small price labels that can be placed on the covered shelf or on the display unit where the product is kept, pending sale

We propose to apply the same price display principles to:

cigarette papers

all tobacco-related devices, including heated tobacco devices

herbal smoking products

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to restrict the display of prices for cigarette papers?

Agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Disagree

Don't know

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to restrict the display of prices for all tobacco-related devices including heated tobacco devices?

Agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Disagree

Don't know

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to restrict the display of prices for herbal smoking products?

Agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Disagree

Don't know

Please explain your answers. This could include, for example, sharing comments on why you think our proposed restrictions should or should not apply to certain types of products.

(Optional, maximum 600 words. Please do not include any personal information in your response.)

ASH Wales agrees with all three proposals. The existing tobacco price-display principles should apply to cigarette papers, heated and other tobacco-related devices and herbal smoking products. Price information should be factual, uniform and no more prominent than necessary to enable an adult customer to make an informed purchase.

Price displays must not become an alternative form of advertising once the products themselves are hidden. The regulations should prohibit brand colours, logos, decorative typefaces, promotional images, slogans and other promotional claims. They should also prevent separate branded price lists or layouts that recreate blocks of brand promotion.

Permanently displayed price lists should be text-only and follow prescribed requirements for size, font, colour and layout. Picture price lists should be shown only following a request from a customer legally entitled to purchase the product. Any images should show only products that comply with the new requirements and should not be enlarged, enhanced or accompanied by promotional material.

ASH Wales also recommends that cigarette filters are expressly included within the price-display restrictions. Filters are manufactured and marketed for use with tobacco and can carry flavour-led branding and promotional imagery. Excluding them would create an unnecessary inconsistency with cigarette papers and could provide an alternative promotional route.

The regulations should also make clear that price displays cannot be used to give promotional prominence to particular products through crossed-out prices, “special offer” or “best value” messaging, loyalty promotions, multi-buy messaging or similar techniques.

DHSC and the Welsh Government should provide clear guidance and model templates to support consistent implementation. The needs of Welsh speakers should be considered in the design of price information and guidance, while ensuring requirements remain clear and proportionate for retailers.

Trading Standards services should receive templates, illustrated examples and technical guidance before commencement so that the requirements can be interpreted and enforced consistently across Wales.

Exemptions to display restrictions for tobacco products, cigarette papers, tobacco-related devices and herbal smoking products in England, Wales and Northern Ireland

Across the UK, there are exemptions that allow for tobacco products and their prices to be on display inside certain premises. These premises include:

- relevant trade premises (those that are only accessible to people that work in the tobacco trade)
- specialist tobacconists
- bulk tobacconists (including duty-free tobacco areas)

In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, we propose to maintain current exemptions for tobacco products for relevant trade premises and specialist tobacconists.

If and when additional retail display restrictions are brought in, we also propose that relevant trade premises and specialist tobacconists will continue to be allowed to display the following products, and their prices:

- cigarette papers
- heated and other tobacco-related devices
- herbal smoking products

We propose to remove the bulk tobacconist exemption for tobacco products and to not replicate it for any other products in scope of this consultation, since it presents a situation where products may be visibly accessible to the public, including children and young people.

Display exemptions for trade premises

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to allow for the display of cigarette papers and their prices in relevant trade premises?

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to allow for the display of tobacco-related devices, including heated tobacco devices, and their prices in relevant trade premises?

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to allow for the display of herbal smoking products and their prices in relevant trade premises?

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please explain your answers. This could include, for example, why you think certain exemptions should or should not be considered as well as any additional exemptions you think are necessary. (Optional, maximum 600 words. Please do not include any personal information in your response.)

ASH Wales agrees with exemptions for genuine trade-only premises, provided displays are not visible from outside or accessible to the public. Entry must be restricted to people working in the relevant trade, and the exemption should not extend to consumer-facing events, showrooms or mixed-use areas.

The exemption should be clearly and narrowly defined, with proportionate evidence that access is genuinely trade-only. This would allow distribution businesses in Wales to operate without creating a route for public tobacco promotion.

Display exemptions for specialist tobacconists

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to allow for the display of cigarette papers and their prices inside specialist tobacconists?

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- **Disagree**
- Don't know

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to allow for the display of tobacco-related devices, including heated tobacco devices, and their prices inside specialist tobacconists?

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- **Disagree**
- Don't know

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to allow for the display of herbal smoking products and their prices inside specialist tobacconists?

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- **Disagree**
- Don't know

Please explain your answers. This could include, for example, sharing comments on why you think proposed exemptions should or should not be considered as well as any additional exemptions you think are necessary. (Optional, maximum 600 words. Please do not include any personal information in your response.)

ASH Wales does not support retaining the display exemption for specialist tobacconists. A shop specialising in cigars or other tobacco should not receive greater freedom to promote products that cause serious harm than an ordinary retailer.

An exemption would be especially difficult to justify in Wales, where smoking is attributable to an estimated 3,845 deaths and 17,195 hospital admissions each year and the mortality rate is more than three times higher in the most deprived fifth than in the least deprived fifth.[14] Specialist status does not reduce the health risk or the promotional effect of a display.

All specialist tobacconists should therefore comply with the same public-facing display restrictions. Any genuinely necessary handling of products for a requested sale can be accommodated through the proposed temporary-display rules, with clear enforcement guidance for Welsh local authorities.

Display exemptions for bulk tobacconists

We propose to remove the bulk tobacconist exemption for tobacco products and their prices and to not replicate it for any other products in scope of this consultation. Keeping the exemption would mean children and young people may still be able to see these products.

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to remove and not replicate this exemption for all products in scope of this consultation?

- **Agree**
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please explain your answer. Where possible please include any information on any costs to bulk tobacconists associated with removing this exemption for tobacco products, including the number of businesses likely to be affected. (Optional, maximum 600 words. Please do not include any personal information in your response.)

ASH Wales supports removing the bulk-tobacconist exemption and not reproducing it for duty-free premises or airports. Tobacco promotion should not become acceptable because the pack is large, the customer is travelling or the sale takes place in a particular retail setting.

Duty-free presentation can combine visibility, price promotion and implied value, undermining both display controls and the role of price in encouraging quitting. This matters when tobacco spending has an unusually large effect on poverty in Wales: the relative after-housing-cost poverty rate rises by 3 percentage points once that expenditure is included.[22]

Businesses should receive the same clear notice and guidance as other retailers. Any compliance costs should be assessed, but they do not justify maintaining a public-facing promotional exemption.

Requested temporary and incidental display in Scotland

Tobacco products and smoking-related products can be shown to a customer following a request, we call this a requested temporary display. Requested temporary displays enable informed purchasing decisions.

As a result of a requested temporary display, other people nearby may also incidentally see these products. Current legislation in Scotland also makes allowances to enable restocking, staff training, pricing and display unit maintenance where necessary. We call this an incidental display.

Retail display of tobacco products, smoking-related products, heated tobacco devices and herbal smoking products in Scotland

Tobacco products and smoking-related products

We propose that the requested temporary display of tobacco products and smoking-related products should only be allowed from behind a sales counter, and not another location within a retail setting.

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to introduce a legal requirement that the requested temporary display of tobacco products and smoking-related products must take place from behind a sales counter?

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Heated tobacco devices and herbal smoking products

We propose to ban the retail display of heated tobacco devices and herbal smoking products in Scotland. As part of this, we propose that the existing restrictions and allowances that apply to the retail display of tobacco products and smoking-related products should apply to these products too.

This includes:

- restricting the display of products in places where they are offered for sale
- allowances for incidental displays and requested temporary displays
- permitting the same maximum visible areas (0.1 square metres)

We also propose that the requested temporary display of these products should only be allowed from behind a sales counter, and not another location within a retail setting. This is the same way as we are proposing to make this a legal requirement for tobacco products and smoking-related products.

To make it more practical for the retailers of waterpipes like shisha to comply with regulations due to their size, we are also proposing an expansion of the maximum permitted area of display as a result of a requested temporary display or incidental display for waterpipes.

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to restrict the display of heated tobacco devices? This would include the requirement that their requested temporary display must take place from behind a sales counter.

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to restrict the display of herbal smoking products? This would include the requirement that their requested temporary display must take place from behind a sales counter.

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree

- Disagree
- Don't know

Do you agree or disagree that the maximum visible area of display unit permitted as a result of a requested or incidental display of herbal smoking products or heated tobacco devices in Scotland should be 0.1 square metres?

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Waterpipes

We propose to expand the maximum visible area of display unit permitted as result of a requested or incidental display for waterpipes like shisha, due to their size.

If we expand the area of display, what size do you think it should be increased to?

- 0.5 square metres
- 1 square metre
- 1.5 square metres
- Don't know
- Other (please specify)

Smoking-related products

The current list of 'smoking-related products', as defined by the Tobacco and Primary Medical Services (Scotland) Act 2010, includes:

- cigarette papers
- cigarette tubes
- filters that do not form part of a tobacco product or smoking-related product
- apparatus for making cigarettes
- cigarette holders
- pipes for smoking tobacco products (which would include waterpipes like shisha)

Do you agree or disagree that the current list of smoking-related products reflects all tobacco-related devices used for smoking currently available to purchase?

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please explain your answers. This could include, for example, sharing comments on why you think our proposed restrictions should or should not apply to certain types of products, or comments in relation to the proposed maximum visible area of display unit permitted as a result of a requested or incidental display for waterpipes, like shisha. (Optional, maximum 600 words. Please do not include any personal information in your response.)

Not applicable to ASH Wales.

Display of prices for heated tobacco devices and herbal smoking products in Scotland

Current regulations in Scotland restrict the display of prices for tobacco products and smoking-related products in places where tobacco products are offered for sale. Prices must be presented in a consistent format using specific fonts and can only include the:

- brand name of the product
- number of units in the package or the net weight of the product
- price of the product

For cigars, the information displayed can also include the country of origin and dimensions. For pipe tobacco, it can include the cut and type of tobacco used.

Retailers can display prices for tobacco products and smoking-related products in 3 formats:

- a single price list, which can be permanently displayed at each point of sale but must be text-only and meet size and font requirements
- a picture price list, which can include product images and can only be shown in response to a request by a customer
- small price labels, which can be placed on the covered shelf or display unit where the product is kept, pending sale

We propose to apply the same principles for the display of prices to:

- heated tobacco devices
- herbal smoking products

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to restrict the display of prices of heated tobacco devices?

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to restrict the display of prices for herbal smoking products?

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please explain your answers. This could include, for example, sharing comments on why you think our proposed restrictions should or should not apply to certain types of products. (Optional, maximum 600 words. Please do not include any personal information in your response.)

Not applicable to ASH Wales.

Exemptions to display regulations for tobacco products, smoking-related products, heated tobacco devices and herbal smoking products in Scotland

In Scotland, there are exemptions that allow tobacco products, smoking-related products and their respective prices to be on display inside certain premises. These premises include:

- trade tobacconists
- specialist tobacconists
- bulk tobacconists and duty-free tobacco areas

We propose to maintain current exemptions for tobacco products and smoking-related products for relevant trade premises and specialist tobacconists. If and when additional retail display restrictions are brought in, we also propose that relevant trade premises and specialist tobacconists will continue to be allowed to display the following products, and their prices:

- heated tobacco devices
- herbal smoking products

We propose to remove the bulk tobacconist exemption for tobacco products and smoking-related products and to not replicate it for any other products in scope of this consultation, because these products may be visibly accessible to the public, including children and young people.

Display exemptions for trade premises

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to allow for the display of heated tobacco devices and prices in relevant trade premises in Scotland?

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to allow for the display of herbal smoking products and prices in relevant trade premises in Scotland?

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please explain your answers. If you have comments on business exemptions to our display proposals, please include them here. This could include, for example, why you think certain exemptions should or should not be considered as well as any additional exemptions you think are necessary. (Optional, maximum 600 words. Please do not include any personal information in your response.)

Not applicable to ASH Wales.

Display exemptions for specialist tobacconists

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to allow for the display of heated tobacco devices and prices in specialist tobacconists in Scotland?

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to allow for the display of herbal smoking products and prices inside specialist tobacconists in Scotland?

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please explain your answers. This could include, for example, sharing comments on why you think proposed exemptions should or should not be considered as well as any additional exemptions you think are necessary. (Optional, maximum 600 words. Please do not include any personal information in your response.)

Not applicable to ASH Wales.

Display exemptions for bulk tobacconists

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to remove and not replicate the bulk tobacconist exemption for all products in scope of this consultation?

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please explain your answer. Where possible please include any information on any costs to bulk tobacconists associated with removing this exemption for tobacco products. (Optional, maximum 600 words. Please do not include any personal information in your response.)

Not applicable to ASH Wales.

Definition of vaping products

Throughout this section, we refer to 'vaping products'. This includes vapes, as well as other vape components and refill containers sold separately from the device.

Retail display: vaping and nicotine products

We propose that the display of vaping products and nicotine products is restricted.

We propose that the same allowances for temporary and incidental displays as we have proposed for most other products within scope of this consultation are applied across the UK. This includes a temporary requested display taking place behind a sales counter. This would make the maximum visible area permitted for a requested temporary display or incidental display:

- 1.5 square metres in England, Wales and Northern Ireland
- 0.1 square metres in Scotland

We also propose that a requested temporary or incidental display of vaping or nicotine products must not result in the display of:

- tobacco products (and smoking-related products in Scotland)
- cigarette papers
- heated and other tobacco-related devices
- herbal smoking products

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to restrict the display of vaping products? This would include the requirement that their requested temporary display must take place from behind a sales counter.

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to restrict the display of nicotine products? This would include the requirement that their requested temporary display must take place from behind a sales counter.

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Do you agree or disagree that the requested temporary or incidental display of vaping and nicotine products should not result in the display of tobacco products (and smoking-related products in Scotland), cigarette papers, heated and other tobacco devices or herbal smoking products?

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please explain your answers. This could include, for example, sharing comments on why you think our proposed restrictions should or should not apply to certain types of products. (Optional, maximum 600 words. Please do not include any personal information in your response.)

ASH Wales supports restricting the retail display of vaping and consumer nicotine products and agrees that temporary or incidental displays should not result in tobacco products, cigarette papers, heated tobacco devices or herbal smoking products becoming visible. Shops selling vapes and nicotine products that do not contain tobacco should be allowed to display a sign such as 'Want to stop smoking? Vapes and nicotine products sold here'. If permitted, the sign font, size and colour should be regulated to ensure it informs adult smokers but does not encourage uptake in non-smoking children or adults.

The restrictions should protect children and young people while maintaining a clear distinction between vaping and smoking. Vaping is considerably less harmful than smoking and can help adults who smoke to quit. Vaping and nicotine products should therefore be stored and displayed separately from tobacco and should not be presented in a way that implies equivalent harm.

There is strong evidence for action in Wales. A 2026 survey of adults in Wales found that 80% supported banning vape advertising and promotion at the point of sale, including 58% of smokers, while 86% supported some restrictions on vape visibility in shops, including 74% of smokers.[6]

The latest Welsh youth data also demonstrate the continuing need to reduce exposure. The 2025 School Health Research Network survey of more than 130,000 learners found that 5.2% of pupils in Years 7-11 vaped at least weekly, rising to 12.8% in Year 11. Around 9,100 learners in Years 7-11 were estimated to vape regularly.[39]

ASH Wales's 2024 Retailer Survey also found that 83% of participating Welsh retailers supported requiring vapes to be kept behind the counter and 71% supported banning all in-store vape advertising.[36]

Restrictions should cover actual products, packaging, empty or dummy packs and display cards so that branding cannot simply remain visible once products are placed behind the counter. Requested displays should be brief, take place behind the sales counter and be limited to what is necessary for an adult customer to make an informed choice.

The distinction from tobacco is particularly important because misperceptions about relative harm are already widespread. Among Welsh adults aware of vapes, 54% believed vaping was as harmful as or more harmful than smoking, while only 28% regarded it as less harmful.[6] This concern is reinforced by the Welsh Smoking Toolkit Study, which reports that roughly two in three smokers believe vapes are equally or more harmful than cigarettes.[42]

Display restrictions should therefore be implemented alongside accurate, independently developed public-health information about the relative risks of smoking and vaping and access to cessation support.

The impact of the restrictions should be evaluated in Wales, including youth awareness and use, adult perceptions of relative harm, smoking cessation and switching, and retailer compliance. If evidence shows that the restrictions are not adequately reducing children's exposure, further restrictions should be considered.

Display of prices of vaping and nicotine products across the UK

Across the UK, we propose to apply the same principles for the display of prices of tobacco products to:

- vaping products
- nicotine products

We propose that the price lists for vaping and nicotine products are permitted to also include nicotine strength and ingredients. This will help consumers make informed purchases.

We propose that separate price lists must be used for vaping and nicotine products and for tobacco products, for both permanently displayed price lists and picture prices lists, given vaping and nicotine products carry lower levels of harm than tobacco products.

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to restrict the display of prices for vaping products, and allow for additional information on nicotine strength and ingredients?

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to restrict the display of prices for nicotine products and allow for additional information on nicotine strength and ingredients?

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please explain your answers. This could include, for example, sharing comments on why you think our proposed restrictions should or should not apply to certain types of products. (Optional, maximum 600 words. Please do not include any personal information in your response.)

ASH Wales agrees with both proposals. Price information for vaping and consumer nicotine products should be factual, standardised and no more prominent than necessary to support an informed purchase.

Separate price lists should be required for tobacco products and for vaping and nicotine products. This would help maintain the important distinction between combustible tobacco and products carrying substantially lower levels of harm. For vaping products in particular, maintaining that distinction is important for adults who smoke who may use vaping as a route away from smoking.

Price lists for vaping and nicotine products should be permitted to include nicotine strength and ingredients in a prescribed format, enabling consumers to compare relevant product information without creating additional opportunities for promotion.

This distinction is particularly important in Wales. A 2026 survey of adults in Wales found that, among those aware of vapes, 54% believed vaping was as harmful as or more harmful than smoking, while only 28% regarded it as less harmful.[6] Combining tobacco and vaping

products within the same price list could further blur the distinction between their relative risks.

Any picture price list should only be shown following a request from an adult customer and should use compliant, non-promotional product images.

Restrictions on flavour descriptions should also apply to price lists, shelf labels and digital price displays. Otherwise, descriptions prohibited on packaging could simply be relocated to the point of sale. Permanently displayed lists should be text-only and follow prescribed requirements for font, size, colour and layout. Brand colours, logos, decorative typefaces and promotional pricing language should not be permitted.

For Wales, the Welsh Government should work with DHSC to provide clear Welsh and English guidance and model templates for retailers. Trading Standards Wales should receive these materials before implementation so that businesses can comply consistently and promotional price displays can be identified and addressed.

Exemptions to display restrictions of vaping and nicotine products across the UK

Across the UK, it is permitted to display tobacco products inside premises that are only accessible to people working in the tobacco trade as long as this is not visible to the public from the outside. We propose to have this exemption to allow for relevant trade premises to display vaping products and nicotine products.

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to allow for the display of vaping products in relevant trade premises?

- **Agree**
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to allow for the display of nicotine products in relevant trade premises?

- **Agree**
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please explain your answers. If you have comments on business exemptions to our display proposals, please include them here. This could include, for example, why you think certain exemptions should or should not be considered as well as any additional exemptions you think are necessary. (Optional, maximum 600 words. Please do not include any personal information in your response.)

ASH Wales agrees with both proposals, provided the exemption is limited to genuine trade-only premises. Vaping and nicotine products may be displayed where access is restricted to people working in the relevant trade and the displays are not visible to the public from outside.

The exemption should apply only to legitimate wholesale, distribution, storage and other business-to-business activity. It should not extend to ordinary retail premises, specialist vape shops, consumer-facing showrooms, exhibitions or events, or mixed-use areas accessible to members of the public.

ASH Wales supports the consultation's distinction between genuine trade premises and specialist vape shops. A retail business should not qualify for an exemption simply because it specialises in vaping or nicotine products. This would undermine the purpose of the wider display restrictions and could maintain highly visible branded displays in premises accessible to children and young people.

Businesses relying on the exemption should be able to demonstrate that the relevant premises or area is genuinely trade-only. Clear definitions and proportionate guidance would help Trading Standards distinguish legitimate business-to-business activity from public-facing retail.

Exemptions to display restrictions for vaping and nicotine products in pharmacies in England, Wales and Scotland

We welcome views on exemptions that allow a limited display of vaping and nicotine products inside community pharmacies in England, Wales and Scotland. For example, this could include locked transparent display units. This could help people to try to quit smoking, while restricting accessibility to young people.

However, we do not propose that the same exemption applies to vape shops, since they are not clinical settings.

Do you agree or disagree that community pharmacies in England, Wales and Scotland should be permitted an exemption to allow for the limited display of vaping and nicotine products?

- **Agree**
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please explain your answer. This could include, for example, why you think certain exemptions should or should not be considered as well as any additional exemptions you think are necessary. (Optional, maximum 600 words. Please do not include any personal information in your response.)

ASH Wales supports a carefully controlled exemption allowing community pharmacies to display vaping products. Pharmacies are an appropriate setting in which adults who smoke can receive evidence-based advice about the full range of options available to help them stop smoking, and vaping should form part of that conversation.

There is strong evidence supporting nicotine e-cigarettes as a smoking-cessation aid. The 2026 Cochrane living systematic review found high-certainty evidence that nicotine e-cigarettes increase smoking quit rates compared with nicotine replacement therapy (NRT).[38]

This is also reflected in real-world behaviour in Wales. The Smoking Toolkit Study, based on representative monthly surveys of adults in Wales, reports that vapes are the most popular

aid used in a smoking quit attempt and that approximately one in three smokers use vapes.[42] At the same time, the Welsh STS reports that around two in three smokers believe vapes are equally or more harmful than cigarettes.[42] These findings strengthen the case for ensuring that smokers can discuss vaping in a trusted healthcare setting alongside other cessation options.

NICE guidance recommends that nicotine-containing e-cigarettes should be accessible to adults who smoke and discussed alongside other cessation interventions, taking account of individual preferences, circumstances and previous experience.[43] Recognising vaping as a cessation option does not require vaping products to be classified or presented as medicines. Rather, a pharmacy provides an opportunity for a healthcare professional to explain the evidence, relative risks and different cessation options and support an informed choice.

This is particularly important given wider misunderstanding of relative harm in Wales. A 2026 survey of adults in Wales found that, among those aware of vapes, 54% believed vaping was as harmful as or more harmful than smoking, while only 28% regarded it as less harmful.[6] Removing vaping products entirely from view in pharmacies could therefore be counterproductive if it reinforces the perception that vaping carries risks equivalent to smoking.

Any pharmacy display should be carefully controlled and focused on cessation rather than promotion. Products should be behind the counter or within a locked transparent unit, inaccessible to children, with no manufacturer advertising or price promotion. Pharmacy staff should receive appropriate evidence-based guidance on relative risk and the full range of cessation options and should be able to refer people directly into Help Me Quit where appropriate.

ASH Wales does not support automatically extending the exemption to nicotine pouches or other novel consumer nicotine products that do not currently have an equivalent evidence base as smoking-cessation aids.

The exemption should be developed in Wales with Community Pharmacy Wales, Public Health Wales and Help Me Quit and evaluated to assess whether it supports informed choice, switching and successful quitting while preventing uptake among children and non-smokers.

ASH Wales does not support an equivalent exemption for specialist vape shops, which do not provide the same healthcare setting or cessation support.

Time allowed to implement all new display restrictions

If and when new requirements are introduced, retailers will need time to update their shops to comply with the necessary changes.

There should be a long enough notice period before new requirements come into force. This period would start from when the details of the new requirements are made clear. We have not yet decided what is the best way to share those details, but it could be, for example, in a government response to this consultation or when regulations are presented to the relevant national Parliament.

We propose that a minimum notice period of 6 months would be enough. This would mean the display of products in scope would need to comply with any new requirements by the end of a

6-month implementation period. However, a longer or shorter notice period may be needed, and we welcome views on this.

Do you agree with our proposal that there should be a minimum of 6 months' notice (from when the detail of any new requirements is clear)?

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please explain your answer. This could include, for example, sharing comments on whether the proposed implementation period should be shorter or longer, or on implications that the proposed implementation period could have for manufacturers, retailers or other groups. Please reference any evidence that you have taken into account to support your response. (Optional, maximum 600 words. Please do not include any personal information in your response.)

ASH Wales believes that six months should be the maximum implementation period for the new display restrictions, provided the period begins only when the final requirements, exemptions and permitted price-display formats have been published in full.

Six months should provide retailers with sufficient time to change display practices and make necessary alterations to retail fixtures. There is also recent precedent for a six-month transition: several provisions of the Tobacco and Vapes Act 2026 commence six months after Royal Assent, including the vaping and nicotine-product vending-machine ban, allowing businesses time to adapt.[40]

Welsh and English guidance should be available from the start of the implementation period and include clear illustrations of compliant and non-compliant displays, requirements for shop windows and collection points, permitted temporary and incidental displays, price lists and the required separation between tobacco, vaping and nicotine products.

Evidence suggests that retailers can adapt to stronger controls. ASH Wales's 2024 Retailer Survey found that 83% of participating Welsh retailers supported requiring vapes to be kept behind the counter and 71% supported prohibiting all in-store vape advertising.[36] UK research following tobacco point-of-sale display restrictions and standardised packaging also found that around three-quarters of small retailers reported either no negative impact or a positive impact.[37] These findings do not directly test a six-month implementation period but indicate that clearly designed retail controls can be implemented without widespread negative effects.

The Welsh Government should use the implementation period to prepare Trading Standards services and communicate directly with retailers, particularly small and independent businesses. This should include training, model layouts, technical guidance and a clear route for resolving queries.

There should be one clear compliance date without an extended transitional or sell-through period that leaves non-compliant displays in place. Initial enforcement should be proportionate and accompanied by clear advice, while deliberate or repeated non-compliance should attract appropriate action.

Compliance should be monitored from commencement. Community intelligence through No Ifs. No Butts. could complement official inspection and enforcement data, with clear referral and feedback arrangements agreed with Trading Standards Wales.

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