



Monday 25 November 2024

Dear Member of Parliament,

This week you will have the opportunity to be part of history. As doctors and nurses, we urge you to support the Tobacco and Vapes Bill as it comes before the Commons for its Second Reading on Tuesday 26 November and in this letter set out why.

This world-leading Bill will prevent the legal sale of tobacco to people born after 1 January 2009 protecting the next generation of children and young people from lethal tobacco products. Smoking and second-hand smoke exposure continues to pose significant harm to public health and is a leading cause of preventable diseases, including lung cancer, heart disease, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). With an estimated 74,600 deaths and a cost of £46 billion each year in England, there is incontrovertible evidence that smoking is harmful to individuals with serious implications for wider society¹.

Second-hand smoke exposure is responsible for numerous health issues, including respiratory infections, asthma, and even sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). The introduction of smoke free public spaces led to improved child health outcomes, including fewer premature births and reduced asthma admissions². Just this month the National Child Mortality Database found that the most common recorded modifiable factors by CDOPs during reviews of infant deaths were smoking by a parent/carer³. It is for these reasons that we support proposals in the Bill that would enable the Secretary of State to extend the indoor smoking ban to outdoor spaces.

We are increasingly concerned about the rising prevalence of youth vaping. Vaping is a valuable tool to help many of the six million smokers in the UK quit, however it is not risk free and the addictive nature of nicotine in these products can lead to a lifelong dependency, serving as a gateway to traditional cigarette use amongst young people who have never smoked⁴. Research shows that approximately one million people in England now vape despite never having been regular smokers, this is a seven-fold increase in just three years⁵. We support the Chief Medical Officer's statement, "If you smoke, vaping is much safer; if you don't smoke, don't vape; marketing vapes to children is utterly unacceptable". This Bill takes vital steps to curb youth vaping including powers to regulate the industry to lessen the appeal and accessibility of non-

¹ <https://www.aomrc.org.uk/publication/academy-position-statement-tobacco-and-vapes/>

² <https://www.aomrc.org.uk/publication/academy-position-statement-tobacco-and-vapes/>

³ <https://www.ncmd.info/publications/child-death-review-data-release-2024/>

⁴ <https://www.rcpch.ac.uk/resources/policy-briefing-vaping-young-people>

⁵ <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2024/oct/02/one-million-people-in-england-vape-despite-never-having-smoked-regularly-study-finds>

disposable vapes to children in addition to the ban on disposables vapes that will be introduced in June 2025.

This Bill represents a critical step towards protecting public health, particularly the health of our younger generations. By implementing stricter regulations on the sale and marketing of tobacco and vaping products, we can reduce the prevalence of these harmful substances to children and young people.

We urge you to support this vital legislation and are here to help as it makes its passage through parliament. Ahead of Second Reading, we share [this briefing from the Smokefree Action Coalition](#) alongside [this statement from the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges](#). If you would like further briefing materials on the health impacts of these measures as the Bill continues its passage, please contact public.affairs@rcpch.ac.uk.

In supporting this Bill, you will help protect a new generation from falling prey to nicotine addiction, saving many lives.

Yours sincerely,

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