



February 2024

Dear Constituent,

Thank you for contacting me about the regulation of vaping and e-cigarettes. While e-cigarettes are not risk-free, the Government supports the use of e-cigarettes as a means to stop adults smoking and contributing towards the goal of creating the first smokefree generation.

Some of the highest success rates of those trying to stop smoking are among adults using an e-cigarette, with evidence suggesting that an additional 70,000 people stop every year as a result of using these devices. An estimated 2.4 million vapers are former smokers, and the Government's Swap to Stop Scheme aims to provide almost one in five of all adult smokers in England with a vape kit alongside behavioural support to help them quit the habit.

However, it is deeply worrying that the number of children using vapes has tripled in the past three years, with 20.5% of children having tried vaping in 2023. The advice from the Chief Medical Officer is clear: young people and those who have never smoked should not vape. As my colleague Andrea Leadsom - the Minister for Public Health has stated - it is completely unacceptable when businesses knowingly and deliberately encourage children to use a product that was designed for adults to quit smoking.

Responding to the rise in the number of children vaping, the Government has proposed banning disposable vapes, new powers to restrict flavours specifically marketed at children and changing how vapes are displayed in shops. In addition, Trading Standards Officers will be able to levy "on the spot" fines to tackle underage tobacco and vapes sales.

These measures will be supported by greater enforcement activity by Trading Standards, HMRC and Border Force. We must take every step to stop the proliferation of illicit vaping products in our communities, often imported from countries such as China and breaching UK regulations on product size and nicotine strength and sold to children. A new "illicit vapes enforcement squad" – led by Trading Standards – has been established to enforce the rules on vaping and tackle illicit vapes and underage sales, with the power to remove illegal products from shops and at our borders.

I am confident that the actions being taken by the Government will help prevent children from vaping, whilst ensuring that adult smokers are able to continue accessing a product that can help them quit.

I note all the concerns about the World Health Organisation's proposals around vaping, for the Conference of the Parties Tenth Meeting (COP10). However, the UK remains committed to the convention as a world leader in tobacco control. This is compatible with the position that my



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colleague Andrea Leadsom set out during a recent debate, that as a sovereign nation, it is not within the WHO's remit to intervene in our internal affairs.

The Government has regularly set out its position on vaping at the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. Led by the civil servant Dr Jeanelle de Gruchy, during the Conference in February 2024, the delegation will not agree to any decisions which would impact on the UK's ability to make regulated vapes available for adult smokers who wish to quit smoking.

In addition, I want to be clear that the UK has no plans to implement further restrictions on advertising and sponsorship, particularly in light of the COP's desire to see further restrictions implemented. The UK will also be pushing for assessor contributions to remain at the same level as now.

As with previous events at the Conference of the Parties, the Government will use the opportunity in 2024 to speak about the UK's progress on the implementation of tobacco control policies.

This will include the role of nicotine replacement therapy and vapes in supporting people to quit all forms of tobacco.

Once the Conference has taken place, the Government will provide a statement to Parliament and update MPs on the proceedings and key outcomes.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY