

# Scottish Government submission of 1 May 2022

## PE1932/A – Ban smoking in Scotland and develop a strategy for vaping

The Scottish Government considers the use of vaping devices as one of a number of tools, along with medication patches and lozenges, which can assist current smokers to stop using tobacco products. While current evidence indicates that vaping is less harmful than smoking, vaping is not harm-free and should not be used by children, young people or adult non-smokers.

At this point there is limited evidence on the long-term harms vaping could cause due to the relatively short period of time that products have been available. The clinical impacts of long-term use could take decades to manifest. Vaping products should only be used as a tool to help people stop smoking tobacco. They are not a lifestyle accessory. In addition, while it is possible to vape without using nicotine, most vape devices contain nicotine which is a highly addictive substance.

While we continue to work towards addressing historic trends of high smoking rates, we are aware that technological and cultural advancements can bring about new public health concerns. The emergence of vaping products, including electronic cigarettes, as an alternative to tobacco is one such concern. The full impact of their long-term use is not yet known and could have a negative impact on public health in years to come.

An outright ban on smoking in favour of a pro-vaping policy is not something that the Scottish Government is considering.

Smoking rates continue to decline in Scotland and we are currently working on a refreshed Tobacco Control Action Plan that will deliver innovative actions to maintain this reduction and help us realise our ambition of raising a tobacco free generation by 2034.

Scotland has a world-leading approach to public health initiatives and, as the health impacts generated by long-term use of these products, with or without nicotine, are currently uncertain, the Scottish Government

is considering using devolved powers to restrict the advertising channels not currently banned (such as billboards and bus shelters, etc.).

The recently closed consultation on Vaping gave everyone in Scotland an opportunity to express their views on the proposed policies. As signatories to the World Health Organisation's Article 5.3 protocol, which demands that we protect public health policy from the influence of tobacco companies, all respondents were asked to disclose links to the tobacco industry. As VPZ supplies and sells products manufactured by that industry any potential dialogue between the Scottish Government, Scottish Parliament, individual MSPs and VPZ will be restricted.