Dear <My MP>,

I am the owner of a dedicated vape shop in your constituency, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ based in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Professor John Britton of the University of Nottingham, and former Chair of the Royal College of Physicians Tobacco Advisory Group, holds the view that vape stores should be deemed essential retail outlets.

Every year, over 70,000 people across the UK die of a smoking related illness. Providing ready access to safer alternative products should be at the forefront during consideration by any policy makers as to which businesses are deemed essential and permitted to remain open.

Almost all of the UK’s 3.2 million vapers are ex-smokers or current smokers. Our customers have replaced entirely or are reducing their combustible tobacco dependence with a much safer (and less addictive) alternative. However, the vast majority of those vapers are still addicted to nicotine at least to some degree, and in many cases are reliant on my business to ensure continuity of supply.

Should I be forced to close my shop, and e-cigarettes, e-liquids and associated accessories not be readily available, a proportion of our customers will be very tempted to buy a packet of cigarettes to tide them over, and the proportion that are currently using both e-cigarettes and cigarettes will revert entirely to smoking rather than vaping. Cigarettes are still available in a huge range of outlets, and are far more easily accessible than vaping products.

Unless one has made the journey of moving from smoking to a less harmful alternative, it can be hard to understand the distress that such a situation can cause to an ex-smoker. I am close enough to my customers’ experience to understand it completely. More importantly, addiction to combustible tobacco is both extremely harmful, and much easier to move towards than away from.

I therefore call on you as my MP to do everything within your power to ensure that dedicated vape stores can remain open while the spread of coronavirus and associated illness is brought under control. My business, which provides smokers in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ with the most effective and popular method of quitting smoking should at least be as essential as tobacco retailers and off-licences, and I hope that as my elected representative, you would agree.

Yours sincerely,

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