



Independent British
Vape Trade Association

CUT THROUGH THE SMOKE

Know the Facts on Vaping

**6 Month UK national campaign launched to
highlight facts around vaping**

**Vaping Saves Lives: New research confirms critical
role vaping plays in helping smokers to quit**

**How the vape sector is addressing recent
concerns**

WWW.IBVTA.ORG.UK/EXPLORETHEFACTS



THE IBVTA

The Independent British Vape Trade Association (also known as the IBVTA) represents the UK's leading vape manufacturers, importers, distributors and vendors across the UK; we have no links to the tobacco industry.

AN EVIDENCE BASED APPROACH

The UK is one of the most supportive and progressive countries in recognising the health benefits of switching from smoking to vaping. The Government has stated that vaping is 95% safer than smoking and has launched 'Swap to Stop', providing vaping devices to one million, or 1 in 6, of smokers. A recent study by Brunel University found that the NHS could save more than £500 million per year if half of England's adult smokers switched to vaping.

WHY HAVE WE LAUNCHED THIS CAMPAIGN?

The **IBVTA** has launched this major national public information campaign to clear the air of confusion around vaping whilst publishing new research that underlines the importance of vaping in helping smokers to quit. There has been a flurry of negative headlines about vaping and, according to research from a leading health charity, 40% of people now believe vaping is as or more harmful than smoking,^[1] a figure that has risen by an astonishing 60% in just three years. The **IBVTA** is on a mission to set the record straight, highlighting the benefits of vaping, how vaping devices are being used to help smokers quit and how it is crucial to the Government's ambition to make England and Wales smokefree by 2030 (Scotland 2034).

WHAT IS THE CAMPAIGN ABOUT?

The Independent British Vape Trade Association clearly recognises the challenges facing the vaping sector. This is the reason behind the six-month campaign which is designed to set out the evidence on the health benefits of switching from smoking to vaping, but also address and set our approach to the environment, better regulation and responsible retailing as well as tackling the illicit vape market.

SUPPORTED BY NEW RESEARCH

Underpinning the campaign, the **IBVTA** has published new research that emphasises the importance of vaping to quitting smoking. In a significant study of more than 6,000 adults^[2] "across the country".

37% of ex-smokers and 46% of regular smokers have tried or used a vaping device to help them quit smoking.

Of those that used a vaping device, 54% used a tank system, 51% used a single-use product and 31% used a pod system.



RESEARCH FINDINGS

VAPING & FLAVOURS

39%

of all those who have used vaping devices to help them quit, used **fruit flavours** most often.

21%

Tobacco
Flavour

20%

Menthol
Flavour

8%

Tobacco
Menthol Flavour

7%

No
Flavour

5%

Other
Flavours

SWAP TO STOP

The UK Government is introducing “**Swap to Stop**” This would involve working with councils & others to offer a million smokers a free vaping starter kit.

47%

of smokers in the United Kingdom support the Governments’ “**Swap to Stop**” scheme.

of those that quit smoking in the past year support “**Swap to Stop**”.

72%



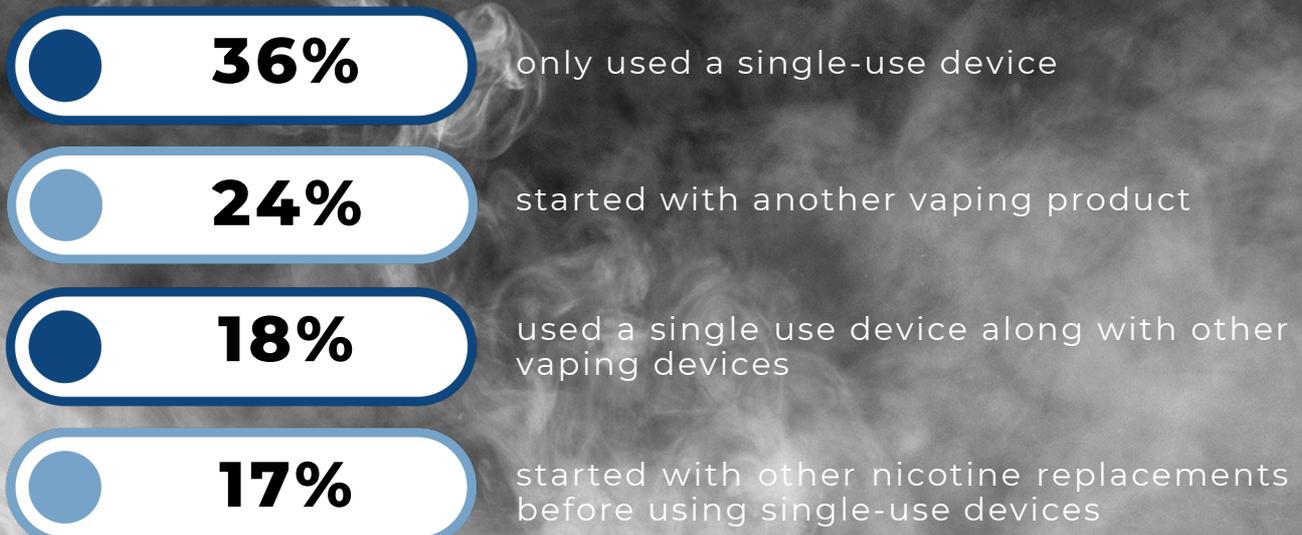
ENCOURAGING SMOKERS IN THEIR TRANSITION TO VAPING

As a current smoker what would encourage you to try or switch to vaping? By order of importance.

- GOVERNMENT ASSURANCE OF VAPING SAFETY**
- FREE VAPING PRODUCTS AS PART OF “SWAP TO STOP”**
- AVAILABILITY OF VAPING PRODUCTS**
- EVIDENCE THAT VAPING HELPS YOU QUIT SMOKING**
- VAPING IS CHEAPER THAN SMOKING**
- VAPING IS A BETTER LIFESTYLE**
- VAPING IS NOT A LONG-TERM ADDICTION**
- POSITIVE MEDIA COVERAGE ABOUT VAPING**
- SMOKING WAS MADE MORE EXPENSIVE**

SINGLE-USE DEVICES ARE AN IMPORTANT AID TO QUITTING

Of those that used a single-use device to help them quit





SINGLE-USE DEVICES ARE AN IMPORTANT AID TO QUITTING

Of those that started with a single-use device to help them quit and whether they would consider switching

would consider switching to other forms of vaping product

43%

32%

would prefer to use nicotine patches

would choose nicotine gum

23%

22%

seek support from a GP

would make use of an NHS Stop Smoking Service

19%

72%
OF EX-SMOKERS

56%
OF SMOKERS

believe single-use devices are helpful in assisting individuals to reduce their smoking

49%

used a single-use vape due to ease of use

- 40% Affordability
- 37% Flavours
- 27% Availability
- 26% Prevents the urge to smoke tobacco
- 23% Just to try them
- 18% Product Quality
- 14% Product Design
- 11% Product Packaging



SMOKING CESSATION

The **IBVTA** strongly supports the Government's ambition to make England smokefree by 2030. In the last 12 months, the Government commissioned a review of the government's ambition to make England by 2030. The Khan Review^[3] found that "without further action, England will miss the Smoke-Free 2030 target by at least 7 years" including the following key recommendation:

"THE GOVERNMENT MUST EMBRACE THE PROMOTION OF VAPING AS AN EFFECTIVE TOOL TO HELP PEOPLE TO QUIT SMOKING TOBACCO"

In April 2023, Minister for Public Health, Neil O'Brien MP set out the government's plans to "exploit the potential of vaping as a powerful tool to stop smoking".

Vaping is already estimated to contribute to about 50k to 70k additional smoking quits per year in England. However, vapes are not yet being used widely enough to reach their full potential as smoking quit aids, showing the potential power of it as a tool. A 'swap to stop' partnership is a scheme where smokers are provided with a vape starter kit alongside behavioural support to help them completely stop smoking.

This is very clear & unequivocal support for vaping, but recent months have seen a flurry of negative headlines about vaping. This is inaccurate & the Government's own data suggests that vaping is 95% safer than smoking. Not only this, vaping is a key step on the journey towards quitting smoking. We welcome the ambition of the Government's 'Swap to Stop' scheme^[4], which will provide vapes to one million smokers to help them quit.

The facts highlight the role that vaping can play with the number of 18-year-olds who regularly smoked falling from 24.5% in 2021 to 19.5% in 2022, a 20% decrease in one year alone, and a 12% decrease was also observed in 25-year-olds^[5]. Whilst vaping appears to be significantly influencing younger adult smokers' behaviour, it is also key to providing long-term adult smokers with the products they need to quit smoking for good. To put this in a broader context, the proportion of current smokers in the UK in 2022 was 12.9%, or 6.4 million people, compared with 20.2% in 2011. Considerable progress has been made to move the UK towards a smokefree status and vaping has played a significant role. Therefore, it is vital that the facts on vaping are clear and evidence-based in order that the 6.4 million current smokers can make informed decisions concerning vaping.



ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES

The **IBVTA** actively encourage our members to put sustainability front and centre and we are committed to working together with the industry. We provide support to our members in meeting their legal obligations and have identified and promote reputable recycling businesses who are licensed Approved Authorised Treatment Facilities (AATF) with the appropriate vape product schemes in place.



Vape stores across the UK are increasingly offering take-back schemes for used vapes. Customers can find their nearest recycling point on the [Recycle Your Electricals postcode locator](#).

For more information on why we need to recycle vapes visit [Recycle Your Electricals](#)

Single use vapes are currently subject to the same waste electrical (WEEE) and waste battery import tariffs as rechargeable vapes. This means that importers are obliged to join a Producer Compliance Scheme (PCS), and to report the annual imported weight of electrical and electronic equipment, batteries and packaging. They are then required to pay tariffs based on the weight of each type of material imported.

The **IBVTA** has highlighted two issues to government which currently means single-use vapes aren't recycled to the extent they could be. The first is that among "legitimate" importers compliance with WEEE and waste battery regulations is low.

The second is that illegally imported illicit vapes form a large part of the market, and it is inconceivable that those illegal importers are paying for membership of a PCS.



ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES

The **IBVTA** believes that positive action is required to correct these issues. These should include effective controls at borders to avoid the importation of illicit vape products, and a careful examination of the way in which vape products are categorised for waste material tariffs to ensure their disposal costs are fairly collected and allocated to waste service providers.

Additionally, the disposal costs of any illicit products that are seized by Trading Standards should be wholly borne by the retailer, distributor and/or importer depending on culpability. Such retrieval should become a statutory power for all Local Authorities carrying out Trading Standards operations without the need for further legal action.

Members of the **IBVTA** are comprehensively and consistently reminded of their obligations to comply with all current environmental and waste management regulations illustrated in our factsheet [\[6\]](#). Alongside this, we strongly encourage our members' customers to enjoy products responsibly and dispose of them sustainably. Vapes, like anything with a plug, battery, or cable, should never be binned or littered and should always be recycled. You can recycle in major supermarkets, specialist vape shops and other outlets. Customers can find their nearest recycling point on the [Recycle Your Electricals postcode locator](#).

The vaping sector is constantly evolving with new product innovations and whilst there is a clear emphasis from our members on delivery of increased efficiencies in the recycling process, we are also encouraging further innovation to mitigate environmental impacts in the production phase and the supply chain before the products reach their end of use.



BETTER REGULATION & RESPONSIBLE RETAILING

Vaping products are sold across large supermarkets, pharmacists, vaping stores as well as smaller symbol and independent retail stores. A vast majority of these stores are experienced in retailing age-restricted products, with the necessary age-checks in place.

Under the current UK system, businesses that do not typically sell age-restricted products are able to purchase vaping products from third parties in the supply chain and sell them to the public. This has led to a significant rise in vaping products being made available in non-traditional outlets. We believe this should be addressed and stand ready to support the Government on this.



Based on evidence provided by public health groups such as ASH, the primary source for young people appears to be shops, either purchased directly or on their behalf. The ASH Smokefree GB Youth Survey, 2023 found that among 11-17-year-olds who have ever tried vaping, 73% reported their first source of vapes as being given them by someone else, versus 26.3% having purchased vapes themselves. Of those in the same age group who currently vape, just under half (46%) continue to access products by being given them by others.

“Undisciplined” convenience stores, corner shops, mobile phone cover shops, etc. are likely the biggest suppliers to children. Corner shops seem to be the most commonly cited, which is reiterated by the finding in ASH data that 26% of the 11-17-year-olds who currently use vapes say they purchase from a newsagent, a corner shop or an off-licence.

The **IBVTA** supports measures that ensure retailers age verify before making a sale and also ensure where possible that products are also not being purchased on behalf of under-18s, so-called proxy purchasing. Successful campaigns, such as Challenge 25 have been implemented for other age restricted items and we’d support a similar initiative in this area.

At present, fines for those retailers caught selling to under18s are low and often not enforced. We’re calling for tougher sanction against retailers that sell to under-18s, including raising the fines to £10,000. We would also support a retail registration scheme would ensure that there are sufficient records of who is selling vaping products and therefore link to their ability to be able to sell vaping products.



TACKLING THE ILLICIT VAPE MARKET

The flow of illicit and counterfeit products into the UK poses a public health and a law enforcement challenge. There is a large and highly organised black market, alongside small-time opportunists. Intelligence led operations against the former are likely to result in recovery of lost tax revenue income in addition to cutting off supply to illicit trade. The **IBVTA** conservatively estimates these lost revenues to be great than £200M in VAT and £70M in excise duty.

The **IBVTA** works with Trading Standards and other relevant authorities to stop this flow, and authorities ensure products on UK shelves are safe and legitimate. We support the need to facilitate the establishment of the illicit vapes enforcement squad and we will work with our members to support this initiative where we can with, for example, the provision of intelligence and insights.

Because regulations restrict single use “disposable” products to a capacity of 2ml, and the illicit market is more typically in products of 6ml and over, relaxing the e-liquid fill requirement to 6ml, or even higher, will mean legal products compete with illicit for consumer value, driving the adult trade (which is the majority of purchases) back to retailers that carry out age verification. This will also reduce the environmental impact of single use vapes.



Example seizure, source: Oxfordshire County Council

REFERENCES AND LINKS

[1]<https://ash.org.uk/resources/view/use-of-e-cigarettes-among-adults-in-great-britain-2021>

[2]IBVTA member commissioned Opinium survey of 6,000 UK adults (Fieldwork conducted in July 2023). IBVTA member commissioned Opinium focus groups of smokers and ex-smokers (August 2023)

[3][Khan Review: making smoking obsolete](#)

[4]<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/minister-neil-obrien-speech-on-achieving-smokefree-2030-cutting-smoking-and-stopping-kids-vaping>

[5]<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/add.16044>

[6]www.ibvta.org.uk/supporting-sustainability



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CONTACT THE IBVTA

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO KNOW MORE ABOUT
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PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE WWW.IBVTA.ORG.UK/EXPLORETHEFACTS
OR CONTACT US AT INFO@IBVTA.ORG.UK

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