# One in four south London shops flout UK disposable vape ban on day of launch



On the day a new government ban on single-use vapes came into effect in the UK, evidence emerged that many shopkeepers were willing to flout the law. Investigators found that one in four vape sellers in south London sold disposable e-cigarettes, which have been deemed harmful to both public health and the environment, to a reporter posing as a customer. Brightly packaged and available in enticing flavours, these devices have increasingly been blamed for a surge in youth vaping, prompting the government to act decisively.

The ban, which prohibits the sale of non-rechargeable and non-refillable vapes, aims to reduce the prevalence of vaping among children—a trend that has seen the proportion of young vapers soar from just 0.8% in 2013 to a staggering 7.2% last year. According to data from NHS Digital, approximately 30% of children in the Yorkshire and Humber region have experimented with vaping. Such numbers illustrate the urgent need for regulators to intervene in a market that has exploited the appeal of flavourful, disposable products to attract younger consumers.

Despite the legal constraints that retailers now face, many are already reporting significant financial losses due to unsold stock. One shopkeeper noted that they had approximately £2,000 worth of disposable vapes they could not sell, leading to worries about how to handle this inventory. Shopkeepers who are complying with the ban expressed frustration and concern that the crackdown could force them into a precarious financial position, as they compete against businesses willing to ignore the new regulations. Some shopkeepers had anticipated the legislation and began advising customers to transition to reusable vaping options prior to the ban.

The government has framed this ban within a broader ecological context, as millions of single-use vapes are discarded weekly, contributing to pollution and waste management challenges. Environmental campaigners have raised alarms about the potential rise of similar products masquerading as compliant. For instance, new “big puff” vapes, which are designed to appear reusable while lacking critical features like replaceable coils, threaten to undermine the ban’s intent. Scott Butler, executive director of Material Focus—an organisation focused on sustainable waste management—has warned of a 'vapocalypse,' where continued market manipulation could exacerbate environmental issues.

Current regulations surrounding vaping also dictate that manufacturers are responsible for providing proper recycling schemes for the vapes they produce. However, many users remain unaware of how or where to recycle these devices, indicating that there is still much work to be done in public education around created waste. Councillor David Fothergill, chair of the Local Government Association's Community Wellbeing Board, has echoed these concerns and cautioned against the dangers of stockpiling disposable vapes, which pose both fire hazards and environmental threats if disposed of improperly.

Meanwhile, the UK government is reportedly working on additional regulations that could further protect public health and the environment. Nature Minister Mary Creagh has mentioned the ongoing Tobacco and Vapes Bill, which will introduce further restrictions on vaping. Yet, responses from critics like Hazel Cheeseman, chief executive of Action on Smoking and Health, suggest that existing measures may not be sufficient and that more comprehensive overhaul is necessary to mitigate the appeal of vaping among young people.

As the situation unfolds, regulatory bodies are keenly aware that if compliance is not strictly enforced, the effectiveness of this ban could be compromised. The coming months will likely reveal whether these pioneering approaches to vaping legislation can successfully curb the rise of youth vaping while mitigating environmental harm.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14769885/vape-ban-today-mailonline-investigates-traders.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-crackdown-on-single-use-vapes)
* Paragraph 2 – [[3]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cd7n3zyp114o), [[4]](https://www.thegrocer.co.uk/technology-and-supply-chain/disposable-vapes-to-be-banned-in-bid-to-tackle-youth-vaping/687599.article)
* Paragraph 3 – [[5]](https://www.vapouround.com/news/advocates-speak-out-against-uk-governments-disposable-vape-ban/), [[6]](https://www.news-medical.net/news/20241025/UK-to-ban-disposable-vapes-in-effort-to-protect-youth-health-and-environment.aspx)
* Paragraph 4 – [[4]](https://www.thegrocer.co.uk/technology-and-supply-chain/disposable-vapes-to-be-banned-in-bid-to-tackle-youth-vaping/687599.article), [[6]](https://www.news-medical.net/news/20241025/UK-to-ban-disposable-vapes-in-effort-to-protect-youth-health-and-environment.aspx)
* Paragraph 5 – [[2]](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-crackdown-on-single-use-vapes), [[7]](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-crackdown-on-single-use-vapes)
* Paragraph 6 – [[5]](https://www.vapouround.com/news/advocates-speak-out-against-uk-governments-disposable-vape-ban/), [[6]](https://www.news-medical.net/news/20241025/UK-to-ban-disposable-vapes-in-effort-to-protect-youth-health-and-environment.aspx)
* Paragraph 7 – [[5]](https://www.vapouround.com/news/advocates-speak-out-against-uk-governments-disposable-vape-ban/), [[6]](https://www.news-medical.net/news/20241025/UK-to-ban-disposable-vapes-in-effort-to-protect-youth-health-and-environment.aspx)
* Paragraph 8 – [[7]](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-crackdown-on-single-use-vapes)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14769885/vape-ban-today-mailonline-investigates-traders.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-crackdown-on-single-use-vapes> - The UK government has announced a ban on the sale and supply of single-use vapes, effective from 1 June 2025. This measure aims to protect children's health and the environment by reducing waste and discouraging youth vaping. The ban will apply to non-rechargeable, non-refillable vapes, which are often discarded improperly, contributing to environmental pollution. The government is working with devolved administrations to ensure consistent implementation across the UK.
3. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cd7n3zyp114o> - The UK government has confirmed plans to ban the sale of single-use disposable vapes in England and Wales from 1 June 2025. This decision is intended to protect children's health and prevent environmental damage. The government has coordinated with devolved nations to align the ban's implementation dates, with Wales confirming it will follow suit. Vaping industry leaders have expressed concerns that the ban could lead to a rise in illegal sales of these products.
4. <https://www.thegrocer.co.uk/technology-and-supply-chain/disposable-vapes-to-be-banned-in-bid-to-tackle-youth-vaping/687599.article> - The UK government plans to ban disposable vapes to address the rise in youth vaping. Single-use vapes have been identified as a key driver behind the alarming increase in underage vaping, with the proportion of 11 to 17-year-old vapers using disposables increasing almost ninefold in the past two years. The ban is part of broader efforts to protect children's health and prevent environmental damage associated with disposable vapes.
5. <https://www.vapouround.com/news/advocates-speak-out-against-uk-governments-disposable-vape-ban/> - Vape advocates have expressed concerns following the UK government's announcement of a ban on disposable vapes, effective from 1 June 2025. Industry leaders warn that the ban could lead to a rise in illegal sales of these products. Studies have shown that vaping has played a significant role in reducing smoking rates among adults, with disposable vapes contributing to this decline. Critics argue that the ban may stall progress in reducing smoking rates.
6. <https://www.news-medical.net/news/20241025/UK-to-ban-disposable-vapes-in-effort-to-protect-youth-health-and-environment.aspx> - The UK government has announced a ban on disposable vapes, effective from 1 June 2025, aiming to protect youth health and the environment. Public Health Minister Andrew Gwynne emphasized the need to reduce the appeal of disposable vapes to children and prevent nicotine addiction. The ban is part of the UK's broader environmental strategy, aligning with the government's commitment to achieving net-zero carbon emissions and reducing waste.
7. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-crackdown-on-single-use-vapes> - The UK government has announced a ban on the sale and supply of single-use vapes, effective from 1 June 2025. This measure aims to protect children's health and the environment by reducing waste and discouraging youth vaping. The ban will apply to non-rechargeable, non-refillable vapes, which are often discarded improperly, contributing to environmental pollution. The government is working with devolved administrations to ensure consistent implementation across the UK.