# Scotland enacts first UK ban on single-use vapes to combat youth vaping and environmental harm



A significant step has been taken in Scotland to address both environmental and public health concerns, as a new legislation prohibits the sale and distribution of single-use vapes across the country. This ban is part of a broader initiative to create a tobacco-free generation by 2034 and comes in response to escalating worries over the environmental damage and rising usage of these devices among young people.

Scotland has become the first UK nation to enact such a ban, stemming from a considerable public health commitment. Under this new law, retailers, including small shops and large supermarkets, face strict penalties for violations, with initial fines set at £200 for first offences and potentially unlimited fines or jail time for repeat offences. The importance of this measure is underscored by alarming statistics; approximately 26 million disposable vapes were estimated to have been discarded in Scotland in 2023, with more than half inadequately recycled, resulting in significant litter and fire hazards due to toxic batteries.

Acting Net Zero Secretary Gillian Martin highlighted the need for this law, citing that over half of Scotland’s disposable vapes are improperly disposed of each year, contributing to a fire risk and environmental degradation. She stated, “This change to the law fulfils a Programme for Government commitment and will help tackle the threat that single-use vapes pose to our environment as well as to our public health.”

Concerns surrounding disposable vapes extend beyond environmental impact, as recent data indicates a troubling rise in their use among children. The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health reported that in 2023, 25% of children aged 11-15 had used vapes, with disposable units being favoured by 69% of young users. This increasing trend has prompted calls for further legislative actions, including stricter regulations around advertising and packaging aimed at attracting young audiences. Sheila Duffy, Chief Executive of ASH Scotland, remarked that the ban on disposable e-cigarettes is a crucial first step in curbing the alarming increase in youth vaping.

The environmental implications of disposable vapes are profound. Research shows that more than 5 million of these devices are discarded weekly across the UK, contributing extensively to litter and plastic waste. Various conservation bodies, including Keep Scotland Beautiful, have noted the rise of these devices as the fastest-growing litter type. Barry Fisher, the organisation's Chief Executive, expressed pride in the collaborative effort that led to the ban, stating that it demonstrates the effectiveness of coordinated action against a growing environmental threat.

Looking ahead, the UK Government has also announced plans for a similar ban set to take effect in England by June 2025. The rationale behind this decision aligns with Scotland's initiative, aiming to protect children’s health while simultaneously addressing the significant ecological issues tied to vaping waste. A staggering statistic revealed that in 2022, over 40 tonnes of lithium from single-use vapes were discarded, an amount comparable to the power supply for around 5,000 electric vehicles.

As public health officials and environmental advocates rally around this initiative, the hope remains that these legislative moves will catalyse a cultural shift towards reduced vaping among youth and foster a more sustainable approach to consumer products. Continued advocacy for comprehensive policies and public education will be crucial in ensuring the enforcement of these new regulations and the protection of future generations.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://news.stv.tv/world/uk-ban-on-single-use-vapes-comes-into-force), [[4]](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-crackdown-on-single-use-vapes)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://news.stv.tv/world/uk-ban-on-single-use-vapes-comes-into-force), [[2]](https://www.rcpch.ac.uk/news-events/news/huge-win-child-health-planet-government-announces-ban-disposable-vapes), [[5]](https://www.rcpch.ac.uk/resources/policy-briefing-vaping-young-people)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://news.stv.tv/world/uk-ban-on-single-use-vapes-comes-into-force), [[3]](https://www.theguardian.com/society/2024/dec/16/more-than-a-million-vapes-a-day-in-uk-thrown-away-says-research), [[6]](https://www.theguardian.com/society/2023/sep/08/call-for-uk-ban-on-single-use-vapes-as-more-than-5m-discarded-each-week)
* Paragraph 4 – [[2]](https://www.rcpch.ac.uk/news-events/news/huge-win-child-health-planet-government-announces-ban-disposable-vapes), [[5]](https://www.rcpch.ac.uk/resources/policy-briefing-vaping-young-people)
* Paragraph 5 – [[2]](https://www.rcpch.ac.uk/news-events/news/huge-win-child-health-planet-government-announces-ban-disposable-vapes), [[3]](https://www.theguardian.com/society/2024/dec/16/more-than-a-million-vapes-a-day-in-uk-thrown-away-says-research), [[4]](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-crackdown-on-single-use-vapes)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://news.stv.tv/world/uk-ban-on-single-use-vapes-comes-into-force), [[3]](https://www.theguardian.com/society/2024/dec/16/more-than-a-million-vapes-a-day-in-uk-thrown-away-says-research), [[6]](https://www.theguardian.com/society/2023/sep/08/call-for-uk-ban-on-single-use-vapes-as-more-than-5m-discarded-each-week)
* Paragraph 7 – [[2]](https://www.rcpch.ac.uk/news-events/news/huge-win-child-health-planet-government-announces-ban-disposable-vapes), [[4]](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-crackdown-on-single-use-vapes), [[7]](https://www.rcpch.ac.uk/news-events/news/childrens-doctors-call-outright-ban-disposable-e-cigarettes)
* Paragraph 8 – [[1]](https://news.stv.tv/world/uk-ban-on-single-use-vapes-comes-into-force), [[6]](https://www.theguardian.com/society/2023/sep/08/call-for-uk-ban-on-single-use-vapes-as-more-than-5m-discarded-each-week)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://news.stv.tv/world/uk-ban-on-single-use-vapes-comes-into-force> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.rcpch.ac.uk/news-events/news/huge-win-child-health-planet-government-announces-ban-disposable-vapes> - The UK Government has announced a ban on disposable vapes, effective from 1 June 2025 in England, with similar bans expected across the UK. This decision follows calls from the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH) to address youth vaping and environmental concerns. In 2023, a quarter of 11-15-year-olds used a vape, with disposable vapes being the most frequently used device at 69%. Additionally, research indicates that 5 million disposable vapes are discarded each week in the UK, contributing to environmental waste. The ban aims to protect children's health and the environment by reducing the prevalence of disposable e-cigarettes.
3. <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2024/dec/16/more-than-a-million-vapes-a-day-in-uk-thrown-away-says-research> - Research commissioned by Material Focus and conducted by Opinium reveals that over 1.3 million disposable vapes are discarded every week in the UK, amounting to more than a million vapes a day. This significant waste contributes to environmental concerns, as these devices contain lithium-ion batteries that can pose fire risks if damaged. The UK government has announced a ban on single-use vapes, effective from June 2025, to address these environmental and health issues. The ban aims to curb the environmental damage caused by disposable vapes and reduce their use among young people, aligning with the government's goal of creating a tobacco-free generation by 2034.
4. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-crackdown-on-single-use-vapes> - The UK government has laid legislation to ban the sale of single-use vapes from 1 June 2025. Single-use vapes are non-rechargeable and non-refillable, often discarded as general waste or littered, leading to environmental pollution. The ban aims to reduce waste, protect the environment, and curb the rise of young people taking up vaping. In 2022, over 40 tonnes of lithium from single-use vapes were discarded, equivalent to the amount used to power 5,000 electric vehicles. The legislation is part of the government's commitment to developing a circular economy and reducing waste.
5. <https://www.rcpch.ac.uk/resources/policy-briefing-vaping-young-people> - The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH) has released a policy briefing on vaping among young people. The briefing highlights that more than one in five (22%) of 11-15-year-olds reported using vapes in 2021 in England. Among 11-15-year-olds in the UK, 4.0% currently use vapes, compared to 14.1% of 16-17-year-olds and 20.2% of 18-year-olds in 2022. The briefing also notes that the most frequently used device in 2023 for young people in the UK was a disposable vape at 69%, a significant increase from 7.7% in 2021. The RCPCH emphasizes the need for further research on the long-term effects of vaping on young people and calls for stronger regulations to protect children's health.
6. <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2023/sep/08/call-for-uk-ban-on-single-use-vapes-as-more-than-5m-discarded-each-week> - A report by Material Focus reveals that over 5 million single-use vapes are discarded each week in the UK, leading to environmental pollution and potential fire hazards due to their lithium-ion batteries. The report highlights the need for a ban on single-use vapes to address these issues. The UK government has announced plans to ban the sale of single-use vapes from June 2025, aiming to reduce environmental damage and curb the rising use among young people. The ban is part of the government's commitment to creating a tobacco-free generation by 2034.
7. <https://www.rcpch.ac.uk/news-events/news/childrens-doctors-call-outright-ban-disposable-e-cigarettes> - Children's doctors are calling for an outright ban on disposable e-cigarettes due to concerns about their impact on children's health and the environment. The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH) highlights that at least 1.3 million disposable vapes are thrown away every week in the UK, contributing to environmental pollution. The RCPCH emphasizes the need for stronger regulations to protect children's health and calls for an outright ban on disposable e-cigarettes to address these concerns.