# Ban on single-use vapes may be undermined by rise of disposable-like reusable models



The impending ban on single-use vapes in the UK, set to take effect on 1 June 2025, comes amid growing concerns regarding the environmental impacts of these devices. Campaigners warn that despite the legislation aimed at curbing the proliferation of disposable models, a new wave of affordable reusable vapes may undermine its effectiveness. These developments raise critical questions about the future of vaping habits and the necessary measures to mitigate environmental harm.

Current legislation prohibits the sale of disposable vapes, devices that are non-rechargeable and non-refillable, typically discarded irresponsibly rather than recycled. A staggering five million of these products were discarded each week in the UK last year, nearly quadrupling from the previous year. The government’s initiative targets the alarming increase in vape consumption among the youth, where 20% of 11 to 17-year-olds reported having tried vaping by 2023. This statistic underscores the urgency for effective regulations that not only protect public health but also address escalating environmental concerns.

Green organisations such as Material Focus argue that the ban may not solve the waste crisis entirely. They point out that manufacturers have begun developing new models that, while technically refillable or rechargeable, closely mimic the appearance and cost of disposable vapes. Scott Butler, executive director of Material Focus, emphasised the pressing issue, stating, “Without quick and extensive action, the threat of a ‘vapocalypse’ remains… new big puff and pod vape models are already contributing to an environmental nightmare.” These innovations present an ironic twist, as they circumvent the very restrictions intended to mitigate ecological damage.

The call for more robust regulations echoes through comments made by Hazel Cheeseman, chief executive of Action on Smoking and Health. She contends that the current legislation may be insufficient to foster a vaping market that is environmentally sustainable. Cheeseman argues that comprehensive regulations are essential to ensure products are not only less harmful to consumers but also designed to reduce their environmental footprint. The consensus among health and environmental experts indicates that the government must anticipate the industry's rapidly shifting landscape and reinforce regulation accordingly.

Mary Creagh, the Minister for Nature, has affirmed that while the immediate focus is on the upcoming ban, the government is preparing to enact further restrictions as part of a broader tobacco and vape legislation. Creagh noted, “I’m confident that my colleagues in the Department of Health will not hesitate to use those powers should what we’re doing this weekend not achieve the goals.” By ensuring that future products adhere to stricter environmental standards, the government hopes to avert unanticipated consequences stemming from loopholes in the legislation.

As discussions around sustainability intensify, there is also a push for improved recycling infrastructure. Statistics reveal that over 90% of vape producers and retailers currently fail to comply with environmental regulations regarding the collection and recycling of their products. The need for enhanced consumer education around responsible disposal methods cannot be overstated, as many vapers are either unaware of recycling options or have had negative experiences when attempting to recycle their devices. John Dunne, director general of the UK Vaping Industry Association, echoed this sentiment, calling for a concerted effort across the waste chain to establish more convenient disposal points.

In light of these challenges, the government is contemplating significant reforms to electrical waste regulations, including improving the collection of vapes. Additionally, educational initiatives aimed at raising public awareness about the environmental impact of vaping are crucial. As Claire Shrewsbury from the Wrap charity noted, the upcoming ban should pave the way for more sustainable options, yet further efforts are necessary to inform consumers about recycling and responsible disposal practices.

In conclusion, while the ban on single-use vapes represents a crucial step towards addressing both public health concerns and environmental issues, a multifaceted approach involving stricter regulations, improved recycling infrastructure, and enhanced consumer education will be essential in genuinely reducing the threat of plastic pollution and fostering a sustainable future for vaping in the UK.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/warning-over-environmental-vapocalypse-despite-ban-on-disposable-versions-KBA244W2QVNGZPPTSSWRL5UMPA/), [[4]](https://www.ft.com/content/5569ed1e-c812-44ee-a62f-10249c91b76c)
* Paragraph 2 – [[2]](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-crackdown-on-single-use-vapes), [[5]](https://www.theguardian.com/society/2023/sep/08/call-for-uk-ban-on-single-use-vapes-as-more-than-5m-discarded-each-week)
* Paragraph 3 – [[3]](https://www.euronews.com/green/2024/10/01/planet-of-the-vapes-how-big-a-problem-are-e-cigarettes-and-where-can-they-be-recycled), [[6]](https://www.materialfocus.org.uk/?press-releases=over-90-of-vape-producers-and-retailers-in-the-uk-are-still-failing-to-meet-environmental-regulations)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/warning-over-environmental-vapocalypse-despite-ban-on-disposable-versions-KBA244W2QVNGZPPTSSWRL5UMPA/), [[6]](https://www.materialfocus.org.uk/?press-releases=over-90-of-vape-producers-and-retailers-in-the-uk-are-still-failing-to-meet-environmental-regulations)
* Paragraph 5 – [[2]](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-crackdown-on-single-use-vapes), [[4]](https://www.ft.com/content/5569ed1e-c812-44ee-a62f-10249c91b76c)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/warning-over-environmental-vapocalypse-despite-ban-on-disposable-versions-KBA244W2QVNGZPPTSSWRL5UMPA/), [[6]](https://www.materialfocus.org.uk/?press-releases=over-90-of-vape-producers-and-retailers-in-the-uk-are-still-failing-to-meet-environmental-regulations)
* Paragraph 7 – [[5]](https://www.theguardian.com/society/2023/sep/08/call-for-uk-ban-on-single-use-vapes-as-more-than-5m-discarded-each-week), [[6]](https://www.materialfocus.org.uk/?press-releases=over-90-of-vape-producers-and-retailers-in-the-uk-are-still-failing-to-meet-environmental-regulations)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/warning-over-environmental-vapocalypse-despite-ban-on-disposable-versions-KBA244W2QVNGZPPTSSWRL5UMPA/> - 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 decision aims to reduce environmental waste and curb the rising use of disposable vapes among young people. Single-use vapes, which are non-rechargeable and non-refillable, often end up in general waste or as litter, contributing to pollution. The ban is part of the government's commitment to fostering a circular economy and protecting the environment. Businesses will have until 1 June 2025 to sell existing stock before the ban takes effect.
3. <https://www.euronews.com/green/2024/10/01/planet-of-the-vapes-how-big-a-problem-are-e-cigarettes-and-where-can-they-be-recycled> - The UK government has announced a ban on the sale of single-use vapes, effective from 1 June 2025, due to environmental concerns. Last year, approximately five million single-use vapes were discarded or littered each week in the UK, nearly four times the previous year's figure. These devices contain materials like lithium and plastic, which can harm the environment when not properly recycled. The ban aims to reduce waste and encourage the use of more sustainable vaping products. However, challenges remain in developing efficient recycling processes for these devices.
4. <https://www.ft.com/content/5569ed1e-c812-44ee-a62f-10249c91b76c> - England and Wales will implement a ban on disposable vapes starting next summer to protect children's health and address waste issues. The UK government's legislation, introduced to parliament, grants businesses until June 1, 2025, to sell existing stock. Circular Economy Minister Mary Creagh highlighted the wastefulness of single-use e-cigarettes. Despite vaping aiding smokers to quit, the UK government raised concerns about its rising appeal to youths, with 20% of 11-17-year-olds trying vaping by 2023. Environmental concerns include five million single-use vapes discarded weekly and significant lithium use.
5. <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2023/sep/08/call-for-uk-ban-on-single-use-vapes-as-more-than-5m-discarded-each-week> - Research indicates that over five million single-use vapes are discarded or littered each week in the UK, prompting calls for a ban on these devices. Environmental groups and health experts express concern over the environmental impact and the appeal of these products to young people. The discarded vapes contribute to pollution and pose fire risks due to their lithium batteries. The UK government is considering implementing a ban to address these issues and protect both the environment and public health.
6. <https://www.materialfocus.org.uk/?press-releases=over-90-of-vape-producers-and-retailers-in-the-uk-are-still-failing-to-meet-environmental-regulations> - Material Focus reports that over 90% of vape producers and retailers in the UK are failing to meet environmental regulations, with no improvement since 2023. This non-compliance means they are not paying the costs of collection and recycling of vapes, which they are legally obliged to do. The forthcoming ban on single-use vapes, due to be implemented in 2025, highlights the need for effective recycling systems and responsible waste management in the vaping industry.
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 decision aims to reduce environmental waste and curb the rising use of disposable vapes among young people. Single-use vapes, which are non-rechargeable and non-refillable, often end up in general waste or as litter, contributing to pollution. The ban is part of the government's commitment to fostering a circular economy and protecting the environment. Businesses will have until 1 June 2025 to sell existing stock before the ban takes effect.