New Nicotine Alliance UK

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For Immediate Release

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Grassroots campaign launched to fight the vaping ban

Charity says government proposals risk public health, jobs and freedom

- A public vaping ban risks pushing former smokers back to cigarettes and deterring others from switching
- There is no scientific evidence that second-hand vapour harms bystanders, making the ban disproportionate and unjustified
- The government admits policy will cost businesses £532 million with no clear economic or health benefit

LONDON, March 23, 2026: The UK government's proposal to ban vaping in all public places has sparked strong opposition from advocates of evidence-based policymaking, public health, and business groups, who warn that the measure is disproportionate, unscientific, and economically damaging.

The proposed ban would extend existing smoke-free laws to include vaping in all indoor public spaces, including workplaces, pubs, clubs and even specialist vape shops. The New Nicotine Alliance, who have launched the Save Vaping campaign to fight the ban, argues that it risks undermining years of progress in reducing smoking rates and could produce serious unintended consequences.

A bad health policy

Public health experts warn that treating vaping the same as smoking sends a dangerous and misleading signal. While smoking remains one of the leading causes of preventable death in the UK, vaping is widely recognised as a significantly lower-risk alternative for adult smokers.

"Unlike cigarette smoke, there is no evidence that second-hand vapour harms people nearby," said Louise Ross, former New Nicotine Alliance trustee and veteran of Stop Smoking Services. "Being able to vape in a place where you can't smoke will lead to more people switching to a far safer way of using nicotine. This is a public health win."

Critics also highlight the impact such a ban could have on wider public understanding of relative risk. Surveys consistently show that many smokers already have poor knowledge about the reduced harm of vaping compared with smoking.

"When government treats vaping and smoking as if they are the same, it reinforces the false belief that they carry similar risks," Ross added. "Creating vape free places will just make the general public think that vaping is as harmful as smoking.

Costs to business

Beyond public health concerns, the proposal is expected to impose significant costs on businesses, particularly in the hospitality sector. The government's own Impact Assessment estimates the policy could cost businesses £532 million.

Hospitality venues may see reduced footfall from customers who vape, while also facing new compliance burdens. Businesses would be required to install signage and enforce the ban, placing staff in the difficult position of policing customer behaviour.

“Most venues already manage vaping sensibly themselves and our customers are perfectly happy with the current position”, says Simon Thomas, the proprietor of London’s Hippodrome Casino. “What changes with a national ban is that it turns something that venues currently handle as a house policy into a legal liability. If someone stealth vapes in a busy bar or casino, suddenly the owner is the one who can be fined, which puts an unreasonable enforcement burden on hospitality businesses.”

No scientific justification

Critics emphasise that there is no scientific basis for extending smoke-free laws to vaping. Multiple independent evidence reviews have found that secondhand exposure to vapour does not pose a measurable health risk to bystanders. A review by Public Health England found that “International peer-reviewed evidence indicates that the risk to the health of bystanders from exposure to e-cigarette vapour is extremely low” and concluded that “e-cigarette use is not covered by smokefree legislation and should not routinely be included in the requirements of an organisation's smokefree policy.”

“Suppose a pub landlord wants to have one room for vaping,” said former director of Action on Smoking and Health Clive Bates, “or a hotel wants to ban vaping in bedrooms and the restaurant, but allow it in the bar, or a care home wants to allow it in certain places, or a homeless shelter wants a space for vaping, or a coffee shop wants to cater for people who have switched from smoking to vaping? That should be their call. For the government to tell them they can't allow vaping even if they want to, there has to be a good reason, and there just isn't one.”

Call to action

The Save Vaping campaign is now urging members of the public, businesses, and public health stakeholders to respond to the government’s consultation and make their views known.

“This consultation is a critical opportunity,” NNA Chair, Bernice Evans, said. “If people believe in evidence-led policy, harm reduction, and proportionate regulation, they should speak up. Policies like this should not be made without challenge.”

The consultation remains open, with responses expected to play a key role in shaping the final decision. You can access the government consultation and submit a response at this page.

ENDS

Issued on behalf of the New Nicotine Alliance

Note to Editors: The NNA is a registered UK charity staffed by consumer volunteers, formed to increase understanding about the benefits of “new” risk-reduced nicotine products and a better recognition of long-term recreational use of nicotine as a powerful incentive for smoking cessation[1].

[1] https://nnalliance.org/