

## Lesson 3

### Should be banned

<p>The Children's Commissioner for England, Rachel De Souza said the government would be "failing a generation" if these "highly addictive and sometimes dangerous products" were allowed to become mainstream. "We urgently need stricter regulation of this 'wild west' market. It is insidious that these products are intentionally marketed and promoted to children, both online and offline."</p> <p><a href="#">The Children's Commissioner's response to 'Youth vaping: call for evidence' (June 2023)</a></p>	<p>Disposable vapes are expensive in comparison to refillable ones which are cheaper in the long run. For refillable vapes there is an initial expense of the device, but afterwards the e-liquid and coils are cheaper in comparison to single use disposable vapes. For the average vaper, disposable vapes cost on average £151/month compared to refillable vapes which cost on average £52/month.</p>	<p>In January 2023 the Scottish Government commissioned <a href="#">Zero Waste Scotland</a> to carry out a review of the environmental impact of single use vapes. They found that:</p> <p>The total emissions associated with single-use vapes in 2022 in <b>Scotland</b> was estimated to be between 3375 and 4292 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e (CO<sub>2</sub>e stands for carbon dioxide <b>equivalent</b>. It is a metric measure that is used to compare emissions from various greenhouse gases on the basis of their global warming potential by converting amounts of other gases to the equivalent amount of CO<sub>2</sub>).</p>	<p>There has been a significant rise in teenage vaping which correlates with an increase in the use of disposable vapes. If disposable vapes were banned, refillable vapes may be too expensive for many teenagers which might discourage teenagers from taking up vaping.</p> <p><i>"Children who vape mainly use cheap disposables, which can be bought for under a fiver..."</i> (<a href="#">Deborah Arnott, Chief Executive of health charity ASH</a>)</p>
<p>Since the dawn of disposables, many variants have subsequently been banned. Many people have concerns that some of the products do not follow existing legal requirements.</p> <p>For instance, <b>Morrisons</b> has banned the sale of popular e-cigarette Elf Bars from its stores nationwide. The food retailer has taken the action following concerns regarding the legal compliance of the Elf Bar 600 disposable electronic cigarettes with the UK's trading standards, banning the entire range from its stores. It comes after the watermelon flavour of the Elf Bar 600, a product made by the Chinese electronic cigarette manufacturer Elf Bar, was found to have at least <a href="#">50 per cent more than the legal limit for nicotine e-liquid</a>.</p>	<p><a href="#">Professor Sir Chris Witty</a> said:</p> <p><i>"Companies trying to addict children for profit are behaving in a shameful way. Yet it is undoubtedly happening. In England, the proportion of 11 to 15 year olds using vapes increased from 6% to 9% from 2018 to 2021 and is still rising. Companies are marketing products targeted specifically at children using colours, flavours and cheap disposable options, whatever they may claim."</i></p>	<p>Although vapes are covered in plastic, the <b>lithium</b> inside the battery forms a key material hidden inside the vapes. Each single-use vapes contains on average 0.15g of lithium and with over 1.3 million single-use vapes thrown away every week this accumulates to <b>10 tonnes of lithium a year</b>, equivalent to the lithium in batteries inside 1,200 electric vehicles. (<a href="#">Material Focus</a>)</p> <p>N.B. Lithium mining can be very environmentally destructive and often happens in indigenous lands in South America.</p>	<p>A lot of people don't know how to dispose of vaping products. When they heat up, they have been known to cause fires.</p> <p><i>"There was no clue on the packaging of the vape about how to properly dispose of it. A tiny white symbol of a crossed-out bin is the only indication that the device shouldn't just be placed with the rest of your rubbish."</i></p> <p>(<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2023/may/03/recycle-disposable-vape-single-use-e-cigarettes-lithium">https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2023/may/03/recycle-disposable-vape-single-use-e-cigarettes-lithium</a>)</p>
<p>The batteries in disposable vapes could be recharged, if they had a charging port. Instead, they're made to be used for a very short time and then thrown away. <b>Using a reusable battery in a single-use product just doesn't make sense.</b></p> <p>If disposable vapes were rechargeable they could be re-used up to 300 times. This would drastically reduce the number of vapes ending up in landfill every day.</p> <p>Lithium is required for our transition to clean energy. For instance it is a key element in batteries for electric vehicles and for the storage of renewable energy.</p> <p>(Greenpeace website: <a href="https://www.greenpeace.org.uk/news/are-disposable-vapes-bad-for-the-environment/">https://www.greenpeace.org.uk/news/are-disposable-vapes-bad-for-the-environment/</a>)</p>	<p>1.3 million single use vapes are thrown away every week, per annum this is enough to cover 22 football pitches. The number of vapes thrown away are contributing to the fastest growing waste stream in the UK.</p> <p>(Research commissioned by <a href="#">Material Focus</a>)</p>	<p>"It took decades to understand relationship of cigarette smoking to cancer and respiratory illnesses – my worry is we could be sleepwalking into a similar situation here... If you know about lung development, you know that if you inhale potentially noxious, volatile substances there is a huge potential for an inflammatory reaction that could have a minor or a major effect. There is lots of evidence it causes significant coughing and breathlessness. We're not seeing lots of highly damaged lungs yet, but there are cases reported where the inflammatory response is overwhelming and causes permanent scarring."</p> <p>(<a href="#">Dr Mike McKean, vice president for policy at the RCPCH and a paediatric respiratory consultant</a>)</p>	<p>Of the millions of vapes that are bought each week, few are recycled. Sweep Kuusakoski, one of the UK's biggest electronics recycling plants, processes just 700 vapes a week.</p> <p>(<a href="#">Financial Times report</a> by Oliver Barnes and Alexandra Heal in London March 7 2023)</p>
<p><a href="#">Dr Mike McKean</a> said:</p> <p><i>"It is clear that children and young people are being <b>targeted by e-cigarette companies</b> with bright packaging, exotic flavours and enticing names. Disposable e-cigarettes are growing in popularity amongst children and young people and can be accessed easily in newsagents and sweet shops. Nowadays <b>there is a vape shop on almost every high street</b>... These companies are simply interested in <b>'hooking' children</b> and young people to make a profit off them – there is absolutely no thought or care about their health and wellbeing."</i></p>	<p>Many people are worried about the <a href="#">exploitation of children</a> mining of cobalt in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Cobalt is an input in lithium-ion batteries. Recently, TikToker Micah Ndango <a href="#">quit disposable vapes</a> and is trying to raise awareness about the mining of cobalt via their TikTok platform.</p>	<p><a href="#">The World Health Organisation</a> on the tobacco industry:</p> <p><i>"The multi-billion-dollar industry recruits new tobacco and nicotine users to reward investors with as much profit as possible and keep its business alive. Tobacco and related industries have increasingly preyed on children and adolescents, employing advertising tactics and targeting them directly with a new portfolio of products that threaten their health. These industries are moving at a rapid speed to launch existing and new products and use every means to expand their market share before regulations can catch up with them."</i></p>	