How to respond to the UK Government's 'Tobacco and vapes: packaging, appearance and display' consultation by 2 October 2026

The UK Government is running a four-nations consultation on proposals to restrict the packaging, appearance and display of tobacco, vapes and other recreational nicotine products such as nicotine pouches until 23:59 on Friday 2 October 2026.

Important measures that are being proposed include:

- Plain packaging for vapes and other recreational nicotine products such as nicotine pouches and hiding them out of sight in shops.
- Restricting vape and recreational nicotine products' flavour descriptors to one word.
- Restricting the branding and colour of vaping devices to black, white or grey.
- Restricting all tobacco products including heated tobacco products, cigarette papers, cigars, cigarillos and smokeless tobacco to drab brown packaging with health warnings and hiding them out of sight in shops.
- Restricting the branding and colour of heated tobacco devices to drab brown.

ASH Scotland is encouraging everyone to respond to the consultation to express support for restricting these addictive, health harming products to protect our children and young people.

Responding to the consultation

Go to the survey on the UK Government's website here. On the '**How to complete this survey'** consultation web page, click on the 'Next' button at the bottom.

In the '**About you**' web page, select whether you are 'An individual sharing my personal views and experience', 'An individual sharing my professional views' or 'On behalf of an organisation'. And select Yes/No in response to the question about whether you have direct or indirect links to, or receive funding from, the tobacco industry'.

The next web page asks you about the size of your organisation, which country/countries in the UK it is located and the name of your organisation. You are then asked to select the main focus of work so, if you are responding on behalf of a local youth group, select 'Other' and write 'youth organisation' in the box.

Select 'None of the above' in the final question to show that you do not work or are providing views on behalf of organisations involved in the sale/supply of tobacco or nicotine products.

If you would like to answer a series of specific questions about '**Tobacco packaging'**, '**Heated tobacco device appearance**', '**Vaping and nicotine product packaging and flavour descriptors**', '**Vape device appearance**', '**Retail display'**, '**Retail display – vaping and nicotine products**', '**Consultation stage impact assessments**' select 'Yes' at the bottom of each web page.

ASH Scotland's suggested responses

Tobacco packaging

ASH Scotland suggests responding 'agree' to all questions.

Heated tobacco device appearance

ASH Scotland suggests responding 'agree' to all questions.

Vaping and nicotine product packaging and flavour descriptors

ASH Scotland suggests responding:

'disagree' to the question about plain white packaging as we advocate for vapes to have drab brown packaging, similar to cigarettes and tobacco.

'agree' to the question about restricting flavour descriptors.

Vape device appearance

ASH Scotland suggests responding:

'agree' to the questions about restricting lights, branding and screens.

'disagree' to the questions about limiting device colour to black, white or grey, as ASH Scotland advocates for the device colour to be limited to drab brown, as this is the most off-putting colour.

Retail display: tobacco products

Choose 'Scotland' if you are responding as an individual or an organisation located only in Scotland.

.

ASH Scotland suggests responding:

'agree' to the questions about restricting the display of tobacco products, smoking-related products, herbal smoking products and heated tobacco devices; expanding the maximum visible area of a display unit for waterpipes like shisha; and restricting the display of prices for heated tobacco devices and herbal smoking products.

'disagree' to the questions about allowing the display of heated tobacco devices and herbal smoking products and their prices in relevant trade premises and specialist tobacconists and about removing the existing display exemption for bulk tobacconists in Scotland. ASH Scotland advocates for a consistent and comprehensive display ban, free from loopholes to protect public health and prevent the normalisation of tobacco and nicotine products among particularly young people.

Retail display: vapes and nicotine products

ASH Scotland suggests responding:

‘agree’ to the question about requiring vapes and nicotine products to be kept hidden from view.

‘disagree’ to the question about making trade premises exempt from these restrictions and to the question about giving pharmacies in Scotland a partial exemption.

A public health consensus holds in Scotland that vapes should not be recommended for smoking cessation, which aligns with the World Health Organization’s precautionary approach. WHO’s clinical guidelines on smoking cessation are clear that there is still not enough evidence to recommend vapes as quit smoking aids. No vaping product has been licensed as a medicinal therapeutic by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) in the UK or by any other medicines regulator anywhere in the world.

People in Scotland who want to quit smoking are recommended to access NHS Scotland’s free Quit Your Way services delivered by qualified health professionals which improve the chances of success by three to four times and/or use medically licensed quit smoking aids such as Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT).

Consultation stage impact assessments

Finally, you will be asked if you want to answer questions on the consultation stage impact assessments.

ASH Scotland suggests responding ‘No’ to skip the section and submit your response.