

**Creating a smokefree generation and tackling youth vaping – North London Waste Authority Response**

**Link to consultation:** <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/creating-a-smokefree-generation-and-tackling-youth-vaping>

**Closing date: 6 December 2023**

NLWA has not sought to answer every question within the Consultation Document but have focused on the section “restricting the supply and sale of disposable vaping products”.

***Do you agree or disagree that there should be restrictions on the sale and supply of disposable vapes?***

***That is, those that are not rechargeable, not refillable or that are neither rechargeable nor refillable.***

- Agree
- Disagree
- Don't know

***Please explain your answer and provide evidence or your opinion to support further development of our approach. (maximum 300 words)***

Disposable vapes contribute to the fastest growing waste stream in the UK, destroying vital resources and polluting our planet. Their complex material composition means that they will always be logistically difficult, labour intensive and expensive to recycle, which is why we believe a total ban is the best solution.

As the UK's second largest waste disposal authority, North London Waste Authority encourages residents to either take their single-use vapes to one of its eight reuse and recycling centres, or use a take-back scheme – however, these schemes are inconsistent despite the legal obligations on retailers. With a large proportion being disposed of incorrectly, it is time to take action and preserve our environment and precious resources, especially when there is a reusable alternative available.

***Do you agree or disagree that restrictions on disposable vapes should take the form of prohibiting their sale and supply?***

- Agree
- Disagree
- Don't know

***Please explain your answer and provide evidence or your opinion to support further development of our approach. (maximum 300 words)***

While we appreciate that vapes may be a tool to help people stop smoking, there are refillable and reusable options already on the market, these need to be the only option. Disposable vapes are unnecessary and unsustainable.

Plastic is wreaking havoc on the environment and while we welcome existing efforts to tackle this problem, disposable vapes are even more toxic than the single-use items already banned. Taxpayers should not have to bear the costs of recycling them and picking them up when they've been littered. Disposable vapes also responsible for damaging vehicles and machinery as a result of battery fires, which incurs costs to repair them.

***Do you agree or disagree that an implementation period for restrictions on disposable vapes should be no less than 6 months after the law is introduced?***

- Agree
- Disagree
- Don't know

***Please explain your answer and provide evidence or your opinion to support further development of our approach. (maximum 300 words)***

An estimated 420,000 disposable vapes are bought in north London alone every single month, with more than half ending up littering our streets or being thrown in the bin, so urgent action is needed.

They contain precious lithium and copper, which are critical for our green transition but are being depleted at an unsustainable rate. The disposable vapes sold in north London each year contain the same amount of copper as at least 11 vital electric vehicle charging stations.

Single-use vapes are also dangerous for rubbish collectors as the lithium batteries inside are a major fire risk. In fact, research by Material Focus found that more than 700 fires in bin lorries and recycling centres across the country have been caused by batteries in general waste.

We need to act now to prevent further damage to vehicles and machinery, environmental destruction and harm to lives.

***Are there other measures that would be required, alongside restrictions on supply and sale of disposable vapes, to ensure the policy is effective in improving environmental outcomes?***

***Please explain your answer and provide evidence or your opinion to support further development of our approach. (maximum 300 words)***

We need to move away from a dangerous throwaway culture, and that includes limiting all unnecessary single-use items wherever possible. Reusable and refillable vapes and associated products which remain on the market must be easily recyclable, including their packaging. The burden for ensuring these items are recycled should be put on retailers and manufacturers, not local authorities.