

Tobacco and vapes: packaging, appearance and display



Response from Together (Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights) to UK Government's consultation on the packaging, appearance and display of various tobacco products and vapes.

September 2026

About Together (Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights)

Together (Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights) is an alliance that works to improve the awareness, understanding and implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and other international human rights treaties across Scotland. We have over 600 members ranging from large international and national non-governmental organisations (NGOs) through to small volunteer-led after school clubs and interested professionals. The views expressed in this submission are based on wide consultation with our members but may not necessarily reflect the specific views of every one of our member organisations. Views expressed separately should also be taken into account.

Introduction

Together (Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights) welcomes the opportunity to comment on proposals for regulating tobacco, vaping and nicotine product packaging, to implement the Tobacco and Vapes Act 2026.

Our response focuses on aspects of the proposals which have the greatest impact on children's rights as enshrined under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Our answers are primarily informed by international guidance, research by Children's Parliament and Action on Smoking and Health (ASH) Scotland, and academic publications. In particular, we discuss the effects that the proposals may have on children's rights to health (Article 24), to seek and access information (Articles 13 and 17), to education (Article 28) and to protection from harmful substances (Article 33).

We welcome the proposals for stricter regulations on the packaging, display, and sale of vapes and e-cigarettes, with a view to reducing the appeal and accessibility of such products to children and young people. Children and young people must be equipped with a deeper understanding of the health-related consequences associated with vapes and e-cigarettes, so that they are able to make informed decisions about their bodies and lifestyles as they increasingly encounter such products and substances.

We have answered only the questions most relevant to our expertise, and for which we have the most evidence from children and young people and our members. We encourage UK Government to have regard to submissions from our member organisations and ASH Scotland on the remaining questions.

We call on the UK Government to conduct a Child Rights Impact Assessment (CRIA) of the packaging, display and sale of vapes and e-cigarettes to ensure that regulation adequately protects children and young people from harmful substances, reduces the appeal and accessibility of these products, and upholds their rights to health, information and education.

Section 2: Tobacco packaging

Proposals for further plain packaging requirements

1. Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to introduce the plain packaging requirements outlined above for all tobacco products?
This does not include cigarettes and hand-rolling tobacco which already have strict plain packaging requirements.

Agree.

2. Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to introduce the plain packaging requirements outlined above for heated tobacco devices?

Agree.

3. Please explain your answers. This could include, for example, sharing your views on which tobacco products plain packaging requirements should or should not be introduced for, or specific elements of our proposals which you agree or disagree with. (Optional, maximum 600 words. Please do not include any personal information in your response.)

We agree with the proposals for plain packaging requirements for all tobacco products. Regarding vapes specifically, Children's Parliament's research with children and young people found that bright, colourful packaging can entice children and young people to try vapes,¹ meaning that packaging that uses only a drab, dark brown colour with a matte finish, as proposed, may reduce the appeal of such products for children and young people.

Text health warnings on the packaging of heated tobacco devices and cigarette papers

1. Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to introduce text health warnings on the packaging of heated tobacco devices?

Agree.

¹ Children's Parliament (2026). *If Vapes Are Cool I Wanna Be Weird*, p6.
[https://www.childrensparliament.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Vaping_CHRD_Issue_report-
RGB_2026_Copy.pdf](https://www.childrensparliament.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Vaping_CHRD_Issue_report-RGB_2026_Copy.pdf) [Date accessed: 23.09.2026]

2. Please explain your answers.

Under Articles 13 and 17 of the UNCRC, children and young people have the right to seek and access information,² a sentiment echoed in General comment no. 4 issued by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child.³ General comment no. 15 also emphasises that children and young people “require information and education on all aspects of health to enable them to make informed choices in relation to their lifestyle”.⁴ Given that text health warnings on the packaging of heated tobacco devices are intended to inform users of the associated risks, this proposal would be aligned with international guidance and could equip children and young people with further knowledge of the consequences associated with the use of heated tobacco devices.

Picture health warnings on the packaging of more products and devices

1. Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to introduce picture health warnings on the packaging of all tobacco products? This builds on requirements that are already in place for most tobacco products.

Agree.

2. Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to introduce picture health warnings on the packaging of heated tobacco devices?

Agree.

3. Please explain your answers.

Please see our response to the previous long answer question concerning text health warnings on the packaging of heated tobacco devices.

² UN General Assembly, Convention on the Rights of the Child, United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 1577, p. 3, 20 November 1989, <https://www.refworld.org/legal/agreements/unga/1989/en/18815>. See Articles 13 and 17.

³ *CRC/GC/2003/4. Para 6.*

⁴ *CRC/C/GC/15. Para 59.*

Pack inserts in packaging for all tobacco and herbal smoking products and heated tobacco devices

1. Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to introduce pack inserts for all tobacco products? This does not include cigarettes and hand-rolling tobacco which we are addressing separately to this consultation.

Agree.

2. Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to introduce pack inserts for heated tobacco devices?

Agree.

3. Please explain your answers. This could include, for example, sharing comments on specific tobacco products for which you do or do not think pack inserts should apply. (Optional, maximum 600 words. Please do not include any personal information in your response.)

Please see our responses to the previous long answer questions regarding text health warnings and picture health warnings on the packaging of certain tobacco products.

Section 4: Vaping and nicotine products packaging and flavour descriptors

Restricting the colour on packaging for all vaping and nicotine products

1. Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to restrict the colour of packaging of all vaping products to white?

Agree.

2. Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to restrict the colour of packaging of all nicotine products to white?

Agree.

3. Please explain your answers.

Research by Children's Parliament suggests that bright, colourful packaging can entice children and young people to try vapes,⁵ meaning that plain white packaging, as

⁵ *Children's Parliament (2026). If Vapes Are Cool I Wanna Be Weird, p6.*
[https://www.childrensparliament.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Vaping_CHRD_Issue_report-
RGB_2026_Copy.pdf](https://www.childrensparliament.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Vaping_CHRD_Issue_report-
RGB_2026_Copy.pdf) [Date accessed: 23.09.2026]

proposed, may reduce the appeal of such products for children and young people. Findings from the 2026 ASH Smokefree Youth GB Survey echoed this sentiment; 80.9% of respondents aged 11-17 supported a ban on the use of bright colours and cartoon characters on the packaging of vape products as a means to reduce vaping.⁶

Restricting imagery, branding, text and other promotional features

1. Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to introduce the restrictions to imagery, branding, text and promotional features outlined above for the packaging of all vaping products?

Agree.

2. Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to introduce the restrictions to imagery, branding, text and promotional features outlined above for the packaging of all nicotine products?

Agree.

⁶ Scottish Government (2026). *Vaping and smoking among Scottish adolescents – results from the ASH Smokefree GB Youth survey 2026*. <https://www.gov.scot/publications/vaping-smoking-scottish-adolescents-results-ash-smokefree-gb-youth-survey-2026/pages/4/> [Date accessed: 23.09.2026]

3. Please explain your answers. This could include, for example, your views on whether there should be any exemptions or further restrictions. You may also indicate any elements of the proposal you disagree with and why, or elements you feel could be further strengthened. (Optional, maximum 600 words. Please do not include any personal information in your response.)

A study utilising data from the 2021 ASH Smokefree Great Britain survey found that respondents aged 11-18 were less interested in trying vape products in a drab, olive green standardised packaging with no brand imagery, compared to products with fully branded packaging.⁷ Standardising the font size, typeface and colour across packaging for all vaping and nicotine products may thus minimise their appeal to children and young people and help to reduce vaping.

Restricting the shape, materials and safety features of packaging for all vaping and nicotine products

1. Do you agree or disagree with our proposal that packaging for all vaping products should have uniform shapes, and that there should be restrictions on materials and finishes that can enhance appeal?

Agree.

2. Do you agree or disagree with our proposal that packaging for all nicotine products should have uniform shapes, and that there should be restrictions on materials and finishes that can enhance appeal?

Agree.

3. Do you agree or disagree with our proposal that packaging for all vaping products should be both child-resistant and tamper-evident?

Agree.

4. Do you agree or disagree with our proposal that packaging for all nicotine products should be both child-resistant and tamper-evident?

Agree.

⁷ Taylor, E. et al. (2023). 'Association of Fully Branded and Standardized e-Cigarette Packaging With Interest in Trying Products Among Youths and Adults in Great Britain'. *Jama Network Open*, 6(3).

Restricting flavour descriptions on vaping and nicotine products packaging

Single lead flavour

1. Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to restrict flavour descriptors on the packaging of all vaping products to a single lead flavour?

Agree.

2. Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to restrict flavour descriptors on the packaging of all nicotine products to a single lead flavour?

Agree.

Concept, sensory, food and drink categories

1. Do you agree or disagree with our proposal that concept and sensory flavour descriptors should be restricted on the packaging of all vaping products?

Agree.

2. Do you agree or disagree with our proposal that concept and sensory flavour descriptors should be restricted on the packaging of all nicotine products?

Agree.

3. Do you agree or disagree with our proposal that confectionery, sweets, dessert and cake name descriptors should be restricted on the packaging of all vaping products?

Agree.

4. Do you agree or disagree with our proposal that confectionery, sweets, dessert and cake name descriptors should be restricted on the packaging of all nicotine products?

Agree.

5. Do you agree or disagree with our proposal that alcohol and drink name descriptors should be restricted on the packaging of all vaping products?

Agree.

6. Do you agree or disagree with our proposal that alcohol and drink name descriptors should be restricted on the packaging of all nicotine products?

Agree.

7. Please explain your answers. This could include, for example, your views on any elements of the proposal that you disagree with and why, or any flavour names that you believe should or should not be restricted. You may also wish to comment on whether there should be any differences in how these restrictions apply to vaping and nicotine products.

Research by Children's Parliament and ASH Scotland finds that children and young people often cite taste and flavour descriptors as one of the reasons why they are drawn to try vapes, or keep using them.⁸ 61% of current vapers use vapes with fruity flavours, while 16% choose other sweet flavours such as vanilla, candy, and/or soft drinks; flavour descriptors that make reference to fruit, confectionery and other sweet items should thus be prohibited as they may make vapes more enticing to children and young people.¹⁰ Moreover, reference to 'ice flavours' - ingredients added to vape flavours to produce a cooling sensation - should also be restricted as they have been shown to increase the appeal of such products.¹¹ Corroborating this, 73.4% of 11-17-year-old respondents to the 2026 ASH Smokefree GB Youth survey expressed support for regulations on how flavours can be described.¹²

⁸ Children's Parliament (2026). *If Vapes Are Cool I Wanna Be Weird*, p10.

https://www.childrensparliament.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Vaping_CHRD_Issue_report_RGB_2026_Copy.pdf [Date accessed: 23.09.2026]

⁹ ASH Scotland (2026). *Use of vapes and other novel tobacco and nicotine products among young people in Great Britain*. p23. <https://ash.org.uk/uploads/youth-vaping-fact-sheet-2026-FINAL.pdf?v=1784642092> [Date accessed: 23.09.2026]

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Tackett et al (2025). 'Effects of 'Ice' flavoured e-cigarettes with synthetic cooling agent WS-23 or menthol on user-reported appeal and sensory attributes'. *Tobacco Control*, 34(2), 175-182.

¹² Scottish Government (2026). *Vaping and smoking among Scottish adolescents – results from the ASH Smokefree GB Youth survey 2026*. <https://www.gov.scot/publications/vaping-smoking-scottish-adolescents-results-ash-smokefree-gb-youth-survey-2026/pages/4/> [Date accessed: 23.09.2026]

Product information on and inside vaping and nicotine products packaging

1. Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to require the consumer information listed above on and inside the packaging of all vaping products?

Agree.

2. Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to require the consumer information listed above on and inside the packaging of all nicotine products?

Agree.

3. Please explain your answers. This could include, for example, sharing comments on any elements of the proposal that you disagree with and why, if there are areas that you feel could be further strengthened or areas that have been missed and should be included.

Children and young people repeatedly call for more education on vapes and the potential health-related implications they carry, as learning about the consequences from an early age could deter them from using such harmful substances.¹³ Product information on and inside the packaging of vaping and nicotine products could thus help to achieve this aim by serving an educational function. This would be in line with children and young people's rights to education and information, under Articles 28, 13 and 17 of the UNCRC,¹⁴ in fulfilment of their rights to health and protection from harmful substances under Articles 24 and 33.¹⁵

¹³ *Children's Parliament (2026). If Vapes Are Cool I Wanna Be Weird*, p9.
https://www.childrensparliament.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Vaping_CHRD_Issue_report-RGB_2026_Copy.pdf [Date accessed: 23.09.2026]

¹⁴ UN General Assembly, Convention on the Rights of the Child, United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 1577, p. 3, 20 November 1989, <https://www.refworld.org/legal/agreements/unga/1989/en/18815>. See Articles 28, 13 and 17.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* See Articles 24 and 33.

Section 5: Vape device appearance

Restricting the colour and finish of vapes

1. Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to limit the colour of a vaping device (including all visible parts) to white, black or grey with a matt finish?

Agree.

2. Do you agree or disagree that vape devices should be banned from having cosmetic lights? This would not apply to functional lights, such as those that indicate charge level.

Agree.

3. Please explain your answer. This could include, for example, sharing comments on whether you think no restrictions should apply, if you think only a subset of the proposed colours should be allowed or if you think alternative colours should be allowed. Equally, you may want to highlight technical exemptions that should be considered.

Children and young people have said that making vapes "ugly" and "plain" would take away from the appeal to try, buy, and/or use them regularly.¹⁶ Restricting the colour palette and use of cosmetic lights for vaping devices may therefore be conducive to reducing their appeal.

Restricting branding, imagery, and artwork on vapes

1. Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to restrict all branding, imagery and artwork on vapes?

Agree.

¹⁶ *Children's Parliament (2026). If Vapes Are Cool I Wanna Be Weird, p8.*
[https://www.childrensparliament.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Vaping_CHRD_Issue_report-
RGB_2026_Copy.pdf](https://www.childrensparliament.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Vaping_CHRD_Issue_report-
RGB_2026_Copy.pdf) [Date accessed: 23.09.2026]

2. Please explain your answer. This could include, for example, sharing comments on whether you think none or only some of the proposed restrictions should apply.

Please see our earlier response to the long answer question in Section 4, specifically the subsection entitled "Restricting imagery, branding, text and other promotional features".

Stopping vapes imitating other products

1. Do you agree or disagree that vapes should not be permitted to mimic the design of other products and items? The objective of this proposal is to limit the appeal or attractiveness of vapes.

Agree.

Section 6: Retail display

Retail display of tobacco products, smoking-related products, heated tobacco devices and herbal smoking products in Scotland

1. Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to introduce a legal requirement that the requested temporary display of tobacco products and smoking-related products must take place from behind a sales counter?

Agree.

Restricting the display of vaping and nicotine products across the UK

1. Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to restrict the display of vaping products? This would include the requirement that their requested temporary display must take place from behind a sales counter.

Agree.

2. Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to restrict the display of nicotine products? This would include the requirement that their requested temporary display must take place from behind a sales counter.

Agree.

3. Please explain your answers. This could include, for example, sharing comments on why you think our proposed restrictions should or should not apply to certain types of products.

The 2026 ASH Smokefree GB Youth survey found that 77% of young vapers found it “very easy” (44%) or “quite easy” (33%) to access vapes; 73% of young smokers voiced a similar sentiment, with 24% finding it “very easy” and 49% finding it “quite easy” to access cigarettes.¹⁷ In light of this, it is crucial to reduce the accessibility of vapes and nicotine products to children and young people. As identified in a report by the Children's Parliament, the wide accessibility of vapes makes it more likely for children and young people to try them, especially if shops display them openly and/or sell them without requiring ID.¹⁸ Young people have expressed that vapes should be sold away from parks, playgrounds, schools, and other places that children and young people frequent, and if sold in a shop, should be hidden out of sight similarly to cigarettes.^{19 20} In this vein, in addition to a display ban, 80.2% of respondents to the 2026 ASH Smokefree GB Youth survey agreed that the advertising and promotion of vapes at point of sale, for example at the till and at shop entrances, should be banned.²¹

¹⁷ ASH Scotland (2026). *Use of vapes and other novel tobacco and nicotine products among young people in Great Britain*. p29. <https://ash.org.uk/uploads/youth-vaping-fact-sheet-2026-FINAL.pdf?v=1784642092> [Date accessed: 23.09.2026]

¹⁸ Children's Parliament (2026). *If Vapes Are Cool I Wanna Be Weird*, p7. https://www.childrensparliament.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Vaping_CHRD_Issue_report_RGB_2026_Copy.pdf [Date accessed: 23.09.2026]

¹⁹ Ibid. See p8 and p16.

²⁰ Children in Scotland (2025). *Disposable vapes ban in Scotland: Children and young people call for further action*. <https://childreninscotland.org.uk/news-article/disposable-vapes-ban-in-scotland-children-and-young-people-call-for-further-action/> [Date accessed: 23.09.2026]

²¹ Scottish Government (2026). *Vaping and smoking among Scottish adolescents – results from the ASH Smokefree GB Youth survey 2026*. <https://www.gov.scot/publications/vaping-smoking-scottish-adolescents-results-ash-smokefree-gb-youth-survey-2026/pages/4/> [Date accessed: 23.09.2026]

For further information, please contact Christina Yuen, Policy Assistant

Together (Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights)

Email: **christina@togetherscotland.org.uk**

Web: www.togetherscotland.org.uk BlueSky: **@together-sacr.bsky.social**

The Melting Pot, 15 Calton Road, Edinburgh, EH8 8DL