

Tobacco and Vapes Bill: Royal Assent - Fact File

Things you need to know about the Tobacco and Vapes Bill becoming law (Royal Assent)

- The UK-wide Tobacco and Vapes Bill, developed alongside the Scottish Government, Welsh Government and Northern Ireland Executive, will receive Royal Assent on 29th April 2026 having now completed all parliamentary stages. The NI Assembly consented to the Tobacco and Vapes Bill extending to NI via Legislative Consent Motion (LCM) in February 2025¹.
- The legislation will create a smoke-free generation by making it illegal to sell tobacco products to anyone born on or after 1 January 2009.
- This means children turning 18 from 2027 onwards will be the first generation never legally able to be sold tobacco products.
- Smoking is the number one preventable cause of death, disability, and ill health in the UK and kills over 2,000 people in NI every year.
- Smoking costs the UK economy around £21.3 billion every year. The Public Health Agency (PHA - NI) recently estimated that smoking costs society in Northern Ireland £450m annually².
- The 2024/25 Health Survey Northern Ireland reported that 12% of adults in Northern Ireland smoked cigarettes (approx. 180,000)³ with around three-quarters saying they wish they had never started.
- Reducing smoking-related illness will reduce the long-term pressure on the Northern Ireland's Health and Social Care Services. It is estimated that around £218 million is spent each year in Northern Ireland treating smoking related illness.
- The Act supports a shift from treatment to prevention and aims to protect future generations from nicotine addiction by banning vape advertising and sponsorship and by giving UK governments the power to regulate vape and nicotine product packaging, flavours and display. This will help reduce their appeal to children.
- It introduces powers to strengthen smoke-free protections in certain outdoor settings through secondary legislation. In addition, the Act contains powers to designate places as vape-free (and heated tobacco free), as long as they are also smoke-free.

¹ [Tobacco and Vapes Bill](#)

² [NI Audit Office Report - Tackling the Public Health Impacts of Smoking and Vaping.pdf](#)

³ [Health Survey Northern Ireland First Results 2024-25](#)

- The Act extends Northern Ireland's Tobacco Retailers Register to include businesses which sell vapes and other nicotine products. It will introduce retail licensing provisions that will be commenced in the longer term, following consultation.
- Enforcement will be strengthened by extending the current Fixed Penalty regime to capture all tobacco, vaping and nicotine products, display offences and notices for underage sales.
- Further implementation detail, including guidance and secondary regulations, will be published on GOV.UK following Royal Assent.
- This legislation is widely supported by public health experts and reflects strong public backing for action to protect children from smoking harms.