

GUIDE ON COMMENCEMENT OF THE TOBACCO AND VAPES ACT IN NORTHERN IRELAND

The day on which the Act is passed (29th April 2026)

- Health Minister and Secretary of State (SoS) for Health (UKG) have regulation-making powers from this date.
- Definitions of ‘**tobacco product**’, ‘**nicotine product**’ and ‘**vaping product**’ commenced.
- No other immediate change to the law.

29th October 2026 – Vapes & Nicotine Products and Retail Register

- **Sale and Distribution (Part 3):**
 - Ban on the sale of vaping or nicotine products to under 18s (includes nicotine and non-nicotine vapes)
 - Ban on the purchase of vaping or nicotine products on behalf of someone under 18 (proxy purchase)
 - Extension of the tobacco vending machine ban to include cigarette papers, vapes and other nicotine products.
 - Ban on the free distribution and discount of vapes and other nicotine products.
- **Tobacco Retailers Register (Part 3):**
 - Extension of the NI TRR to include businesses which sell vapes and / or other nicotine products.
 - Businesses which sell products in scope will be required to register with their local council.
 - Enforcement begins on 1st March 2027
- **Programme of Enforcement (Part 3):**
 - NI Councils programme of enforcement will extend to new provisions in Part 3 of the Bill (above)

1st January 2027 – Tobacco Age of Sale

- **Smoke-free generation**

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- Ban on the sale of tobacco products, herbal smoking product or cigarette papers to someone born on or after 1st January 2009.
- Prohibits the purchase (or attempted purchase) of tobacco and other related products on behalf of a person born on or after 1 January 2009.

1st June 2027 - Advertising and sponsorship

- **Advertising and sponsorship** - extends existing provision making it an offence to promote in the UK herbal smoking products/cigarette papers/vaping products/nicotine products

Medium / longer term - DoH NI Minister powers

The following will commence on a day appointed by the NI Health Minister and will be subject to public consultation and regulations:

- **Restrictions regarding displays of products and prices** - of tobacco products, herbal smoking products, cigarette papers, vaping products or nicotine products.
- **Extension of smoke-free provisions in public outdoor places (or workplaces)** - regulations making smoke-free places also vape-free and heated tobacco free.
- **Retail licensing scheme** - Councils (or “a council”) will be named as licensing authorities and that provisions will allow for two types of licence: personal and premises.

Medium / longer term - Secretary of State (UKG-wide) powers

The following will commence on a day appointed by the Secretary of State:

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- **Product requirements** - restrictions on products and information requirements such as retail packaging and features of products. Also includes restrictions on contents and flavours of tobacco products, tobacco related devices, herbal smoking products, cigarette papers, filters, vaping products, and nicotine products.
- **Registration and Information** - wider powers to allow for significant changes to the tobacco and vapes notification schemes for products placed on the UK market, to improve consumer safety.

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PRODUCTS IN SCOPE		PRODUCTS NOT IN SCOPE
Tobacco products Tobacco related devices Herbal smoking products	Cigarette papers Vaping products Nicotine products	Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) - NRT are licensed medicinal products regulated by the MHRA, for relief of nicotine withdrawal symptoms as an aid to smoking cessation.

DEFINITIONS		
<p>Tobacco product:</p> <p><i>A product consisting wholly or partly of tobacco and intended to be smoked, sniffed, sucked, chewed or consumed in any other way.</i></p>	<p>Nicotine product:</p> <p>a) <i>a device which is intended to enable nicotine to be delivered into the human body;</i></p> <p>b) <i>an item which is intended to form part of a device to enable nicotine to be delivered into the human body; or</i></p> <p>c) <i>any substance containing nicotine, which is intended to be delivered into the human body.</i></p>	<p>Vaping product:</p> <p>a) <i>a vape, or</i></p> <p>b) <i>a vaping substance.</i></p>