

NAWDO statement on UK Government's announcement on disposable vapes ban (February 2024)

NAWDO supports the recent announcement by the UK Government to ban disposal vapes [1]. While the focus of the ban is public health; NAWDO welcomes the attention paid to the negative environmental impacts of disposable vapes.

As noted in the NAWDO statement of July 2023, there is a major impact on waste management operations from, often irresponsibly, discarded vapes; particularly single-use or disposable vapes. Updated research by Material Focus published in late 2023 [2] noted that approximately 7.7 million disposable vapes are thrown away in the United Kingdom each week, with a significant number entering the municipal waste stream. These vapes are a hazard for collection crews, waste management facilities and its operatives due to the lithium batteries inside causing fires when pierced, damaged, or crushed.

An increasing number of fires in waste management facilities and collection trucks are caused by disposable vapes and other items containing lithium batteries within the waste. Aside from the environmental impact of waste related fires, it also causes significant disruption to waste services provided by NAWDO members. In addition, the financial cost of waste related fires to councils and the waste management industry is significant and increasing; with related impacts on the sector's ability to insure facilities and equipment becoming an increasing concern.

NAWDO supports the ban on the sale of disposable vapes, combined with a robust collection system under extended producer responsibility (EPR) to deal with those vapes that are still in circulation. Members also welcome the proposals for a new category for vapes in the currently open consultation on the review of the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment regulations [3]. NAWDO wants to work constructively with Government and the wider sector on moving away from single use and disposable items which utilise valuable natural resources. We need to shift from a consumption-based approach to one that places sustainability over convenience to reduce the overall impact on the planet.

[End]

[1] [Disposable vapes banned to protect children's health - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

[2] [Disposable single-use vapes thrown away have quadrupled to 5 million per week \(materialfocus.org.uk\)](https://materialfocus.org.uk)

[3] [Consultation on reforming the producer responsibility system for waste electrical and electronic equipment 2023 - Defra - Citizen Space](#)

NAWDO media statement

About us:

NAWDO, the National Association of Waste Disposal Officers, is the primary network and voice for local authorities with statutory responsibility for waste treatment and disposal. NAWDO was formed in 1992 and its members include London Boroughs, Metropolitan, Unitary, Joint Waste Disposal Authorities, Waste Partnerships and County Councils from all UK regions (except Scotland) to keep up to date with the fast-changing waste and resources industry. Through NAWDO local authorities are provided with presentation on regional, national, international and strategic forums and groups to inform, influence and collaborate with key stakeholders and policy makers. NAWDO is entirely run by volunteers and through its Policy and Advisory (P&A) Committee it sets the direction of the organisation with member engagement. With over 80 members NAWDO represents around 80% of all local authorities with waste disposal duties in the UK. NAWDO holds quarterly meetings where its members, central government, regulators, waste industry and other affiliated groups discuss and debate challenges and current developments in the waste and resources industry, helping shape and influence (future) decisions and policy. It also provides an online forum where members can openly discuss and debate current and relevant issues facing senior officers with waste treatment and disposal portfolios.

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