

# Healthier Choices Healthier Communities

## Reducing harm from smoking

An MSP's guide to the first part of the Scottish Grocers' Federation's new campaign



# The Scottish Grocers' Federation (SGF), with members both across the convenience store sector and the major brands and businesses which supply it, is in a unique position to highlight alternatives to smoking and ultimately help Scottish communities get healthier.

We have worked alongside Trading Standards and authorities across Scotland, to ensure full and active compliance with the regulations on the sale of tobacco products and e-cigarettes. Our updated retailers guide **Regulations for NVPs and Tobacco Compliance in Scotland**, is a refresh of our previous version published in 2016, is widely distributed by Trading Standards offices across the country, ensuring retailers are familiar with and understand the key elements of the laws currently in force.

The Scottish Government has acknowledged that vaping is a tried and tested method of supporting people to stop smoking.

Our Healthier Choices, Healthier Communities campaign aims to help the government achieve its strategic objective, build upon those successes and help improve health outcomes, and this leaflet outlines the plans to policymakers.



**Dr Pete Cheema OBE**  
CEO, Scottish Grocers' Federation

# Healthier Choices, Healthier Communities

**The Scottish Grocers' Federation (SGF) brings together convenience stores across the country, and the brands they stock, into a single body which represents the non-supermarket retail sector. Most grocery stores you see on your street are likely to be a member of SGF, along with a huge number of the products you will see on their shelves.**

Because of that, SGF is in a unique position in being able to help people in Scotland to make healthier choices. Our Healthier Choices, Healthier Communities campaign is a new initiative designed to encourage greater use of less harmful products amongst our customers, and to help our retailers understand what should be sold and to whom.

The first part of Healthier Choices, Healthier Communities concerns reducing harm from smoking, and aims to improve health outcomes at the ground level by considering both prevalent causes and workable solutions.

Our campaign will support those smokers who wish to quit by raising awareness of vaping, proven to be the best known smoking alternative. NHS Scotland has said that ***"There is now agreement based on the current evidence that vaping e-cigarettes is definitely less harmful than smoking tobacco. Although most e-cigarettes contain nicotine, which is addictive, vaping carries less risk than smoking tobacco. Thus, it would be a good thing if smokers used them instead of tobacco"***.

We stand ready to help, on the front line. However, we must tread carefully. Vaping is a lifeline for smokers, but should not be used by non-smokers. SGF's Healthier Choices, Healthier Communities campaign will aim to send a clear message, nationally and in stores: if you smoke and wish to quit, then consider vaping, but if you don't smoke, don't vape.

# A smoke-free generation

**Scotland has been a trailblazer on smoking harm reduction. Scotland was the first part of the UK to ban smoking in public places, which has indisputably led to a reduction in smoking rates, either directly or indirectly. However, more than one-in-seven people in Scotland still smoke.**

To take the next step towards a smoke-free generation, we need a more grown-up, nuanced debate about vaping. Our current discourse runs the risk of throwing the baby out with the bathwater, by making it increasingly difficult for smokers to access vaping products.

There is a poor and unproductive relationship between some manufacturers of vaping products, retailers, regulators and policy-makers, and it is creating unintended consequences.

Aligned with Scottish and UK Government policies, we want to prevent children from smoking and help adult smokers who wish to quit move to less harmful alternatives, such as vapes.

There are two easily identifiable problems with vaping. **Evidence is now clear that too many young people are vaping.** We must urgently reverse the momentum, and retailers have a major part to play.

Secondly, **we must tackle the environmental damage done by single use, disposable vaping products.** They can be an important gateway to long-term vaping products for those quitting smoking, but they must stop appearing on our streets and in our parks.

The Healthier Choices, Healthier Communities campaign is about balance. We want to help create public policy which simultaneously encourages vaping amongst adults who wish to quit smoking and discourages it amongst non-smokers.

We will strike that balance by advocating for stricter controls on illegal products - with illicit trade undermining work to protect public health - as well as a change in the naming and packaging of vapes, particularly the single-use variety, while also strongly resisting restrictions on the use of flavour - the critical characteristic of vaping products which stop smokers from lapsing back to cigarettes.

Healthier Choices, Healthier Communities is a win-win campaign. We can support our local high street stores, improve our own health, and contribute to a healthier nation which will ultimately benefit us all.

# ACTION ON VAPING

## Action by **PRODUCERS**

### SGF will encourage vape producers to:

- 1 rename products to make them less appealing to children
- 2 change packaging to make it less appealing to children
- 3 encourage alternative vaping products over disposables

## Action by **RETAILERS**

### SGF will work alongside retailers to:

- 1 ensure that vaping products remain in public view, but are placed alongside tobacco products to show them as an alternative, not an addition
- 2 ensure the continued success of Challenge 25 is maintained, alongside the robust use of a refusal register, which must be checked on a regular basis by store managers
- 3 advocate the use of age-restricted till prompts in all stores
- 4 ensure retailers are registered to sell both vapes and tobacco by completing the Tobacco Register
- 5 install Challenge 25 posters and statutory warning notices, and to install Healthier Choices, Healthier Communities campaign material
- 6 provide easy waste and recycling options for disposable vaping products

## Action by **POLICYMAKERS**

### SGF will ask policymakers to:

- 1 ensure current legislation is enforced fully to punish retailers and wholesalers responsible for illegal sales of vapes
- 2 rule out an outright ban on disposable vapes - so as not to fuel illicit trade - and rule out restrictions on flavour, but consider restrictions on youth appealing names and packaging
- 3 provide a forum for open discussion by all of those with the shared aim of ensuring that smokers who wish to quit can use a less harmful alternative such as vapes, whilst ensuring that non-smokers do not

## Action by **ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES**

### SGF will ask trading standards departments to:

- 1 ensure wholesalers check that all goods are compliant and that only compliant products are distributed to retail
- 2 check that retailers are registered to sell both vapes and tobacco, where required
- 3 ensure that the reduction of illicit sale of tobacco and vaping products is a primary objective for trading standards officers
- 4 provide suitable access to recycling facilities and options for takeback
- 5 ensure strict age enforcement and control of online vape sales for under 18's



Responsible community retailing

For more information, contact Luke McGarty  
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[VIEW OUR VAPING GUIDE HERE](#)