



Peter Dowd MP, Sir Roger Gale MP and Sir Mark Hendrick MP  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

Dear Chairs,

Following our written evidence contributed to the Tobacco and Vapes Bill on 20 December 2024, I would like to raise some additional points relating to the oral evidence sessions for the Bill in January 2025.

The Independent British Vape Trade Association (IBVTA) is a collaborative organisation and is not owned by any one individual company or group of companies, it is owned collectively by all its members. The IBVTA helps to foster research and manufacturing excellence, in order to support a robust, yet proportionate, regulatory landscape that adequately reflects the needs of vaping stakeholders and recognises vaping as a sector in its own right. All IBVTA members are free from any ownership or control by the tobacco and pharmaceutical industries.

Firstly, whilst giving appreciation to the time pressures the Committee is under, the IBVTA is concerned that the independent vaping industry has not been given the opportunity to present oral evidence in relation to measures in the Bill which will have a material effect on their sector.

The measures constitute one of the largest vape market interventions in almost a decade, and the companies chosen to present oral evidence to the Committee do not accurately reflect the makeup of the industry. Small and micro UK businesses disproportionately comprise the dedicated vape retail portion of the sector, and it was disappointing that only very large supermarket and convenience retail chains were represented in the oral evidence sessions.

Furthermore, in line with one of the main objectives of the Bill to create a smoke-free generation by 2040, independent vape shops are an important resource for adult smokers who are trying to quit smoking, and are able to provide valuable insight on how to keep this offering effective.

Dedicated and professional vape shops have long provided the valuable service of giving tailored advice along with the most suitable products to help adult smokers to quit combustible tobacco products<sup>1</sup>. The IBVTA encourages the Bill Committee to reflect on how to ensure this important service is preserved. Seeking the views of the independent vaping industry on this matter would be beneficial, in order to avoid any unintended consequences for adults who would otherwise be smoking as the Bill passes through Parliament.

Secondly, we would also like to draw the Committee's attention to the erroneous claim, made in evidence presented by Professor Steve Turner, that vaping causes 'popcorn lung'. This is a long-standing myth, which is at best an 'urban myth' and is routinely debunked by credible sources, for example:

**Cancer Research UK:**

Cancer Research UK provides a resource on its website that explains what 'popcorn lung' is, what causes it, and whether e-cigarettes are harmful. It draws the conclusion that there have been no confirmed cases of 'popcorn lung' linked to e-cigarettes.

*"Does vaping cause popcorn lung?"*

- *E-cigarettes don't cause the lung condition known as popcorn lung*
- *There have been no confirmed cases of popcorn lung reported in people who use e-cigarettes*"<sup>2</sup>

### **NHS:**

The NHS website provides resources to those looking to quit smoking, and addresses common myths and facts presented regarding vaping. The website states that vaping does not cause 'popcorn lung'.

*"Vaping does not cause "popcorn lung", the common name for a rare disease called bronchiolitis obliterans. The disease was found in a group of factory workers exposed to a chemical (diacetyl) used to flavour popcorn. Diacetyl is contained in cigarette smoke, but it is banned as an ingredient in UK-regulated nicotine vapes and e-liquids."*<sup>3</sup>

### **UK Health Security Agency:**

The UK Health Security Agency published a blog that addressed common misconceptions surrounding vaping. It states that the chemical diacetyl, at very high levels of exposure, have been associated with what we commonly call 'popcorn lung', and that this ingredient is banned from vapes in UK.

*"One of the most commonly held concerns is that e-cigarettes might cause 'popcorn lung'. This came about because some flavourings used in e-liquids to provide a buttery flavour contain the chemical diacetyl, which at very high levels of exposure has been associated with the serious lung disease bronchiolitis obliterans.*

*The condition gained its popular name because it was initially observed among workers in a popcorn factory.*

*However, diacetyl is banned as an ingredient from e-cigarettes and e-liquids in the UK. It had been detected in some e-liquid flavourings in the past, but at levels hundreds of times lower than in cigarette smoke. Even at these levels, smoking is not a major risk factor for this rare disease."*<sup>4</sup>

Taking the evidence from the UK Health Security Agency, this further emphasises the importance of a regulated vape industry, to keep potentially harmful chemicals such as diacetyl out of e-liquids, and prevent an unregulated industry from flourishing.

Alternative nicotine products present significantly lower health risks and can serve as a valuable pathway either to reduced harm or complete nicotine abstinence. Public misconceptions about vaping's relative health risks have contributed to widespread misunderstandings about their comparative risk. This knowledge gap often prevents smokers from fully transitioning to vaping as a less harmful alternative, and the IBVTA would encourage the Committee to reject claims of 'popcorn lung' caused by vaping while considering their impact on further iterations of the Bill.

Ensuring that smoking and vaping are treated and recognised in accordance with their different levels of associated harms is important, as this will help determine the attractiveness of vaping as an alternative for adult smokers. This is important not only for public health, but for the negating the cost impact of smoking on the NHS and the public purse. The IBVTA is keen to work with the Committee to ensure balanced regulation that enables smokers to transition completely away from more harmful tobacco products.

Yours sincerely,



Gillian Golden

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<sup>1</sup> [Ward E, Cox S, Dawkins L, Jakes S, Holland R, Notley C. A Qualitative Exploration of the Role of Vape Shop Environments in Supporting Smoking Abstinence. Int J Environ Res Public Health. 2018 Feb 9;15\(2\):297. doi: 10.3390/ijerph15020297. PMID: 29425117; PMCID: PMC5858366.](#)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/causes-of-cancer/does-vaping-cause-popcorn-lung>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.nhs.uk/better-health/quit-smoking/ready-to-quit-smoking/vaping-to-quit-smoking/vaping-myths-and-the-facts/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://ukhsa.blog.gov.uk/2018/02/20/clearing-up-some-myths-around-e-cigarettes/>

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