



Rt Hon Dame Andrea Leadsom MP
Minister for Public Health, Start for Life and Primary Care
Department of Health and Social Care
39 Victoria Street
London

May 16, 2024

Dear Dame Andrea Leadsom,

Re: Your recent personal remarks to Tobacco and Vapes Bill Committee

On behalf of the UK Vaping Industry Association (UKVIA), I wish to express our concerns at the recent personal comments you made to the Tobacco & Vapes Bill Committee, which do a great disservice to the legitimate independent vape industry and wholly misrepresent our position on youth vaping.

I refer to the session in which a vape licensing scheme was proposed as an amendment to the Bill, where you said:

"I am grateful to the hon. Lady [Mary Glendon MP] for giving me the chance to give my personal opinion on licensing. It is a license for the vaping industry to get rid of the competition, make loads more money and focus even more on addicting children to vapes. It is the most cynical of all the cynical proposals I have seen. I am literally in no way in support of a licensing regime. I see lots of nods around the room; I hope that my personal view is clear and am glad that it seems to be shared by a number of hon. Members."

While I accept that these are your genuinely held views, I want to make it clear that our membership and the whole of the legitimate vape industry takes great exception to the idea that we seek to 'addict children to vapes' and we find these remarks to be inappropriate, false and disrespectful. I hope we can find common ground in agreeing that, over the years, vaping has been instrumental in helping millions of adult smokers in the UK quit cigarettes and must be allowed to continue to do so. We also share common ground that youth vaping uptake is a serious issue which needs to be urgently and effectively addressed.

Children should not be vaping and these numbers need to come down; you have no argument from the industry on this point.

The proposed vape retail and distributor licensing scheme is predicted to generate upwards of £50m in annual self-sustaining funding – at no additional cost to taxpayers – which would be used to empower Trading Standards and support a much-needed and proactive programme of enforcement. It would also see retailers and distributors face fines of up to £10,000 and £100,000 respectively if they are caught flouting the law or trading without a licence.

We completely refute the idea that the industry exists to addict children to vapes and the UKVIA has long called for the MHRA to be given powers to deny authorisation to products featuring cartoon characters, child-appealing designs and flavour descriptors; quite frankly we cannot understand why these powers don't already exist.

Vaping is an age-gated adult product which, just like alcohol and cigarettes, should not get into the hands of children. We want to work with the Government, regulators, enforcement agencies, local authorities and all appropriate stakeholders to prevent youth access and I would be happy to discuss this issue with you.

Finally, I urge you to reconsider your comments and apologise for the terrible injustice you have meted out on the UK vaping industry.



For the avoidance of doubt, we are at pains to stress that the UKVIA does not have any members owned or controlled by the tobacco industry, nor does it accept any funding from tobacco industry participants.

Best wishes,

John Dunne
Director General
UK Vaping Industry Association