

VAPE RETAILER ENFORCEMENT REPORT



UK Vaping Industry Association

Overview

Concerns over underage and illicit vape sales are at an all-time high and calls to bring the hammer down on rogue retailers, who are putting young people, the public and the legitimate sector at risk, have never been louder. At the same time Trading Standards, which is responsible for bringing these unscrupulous sellers to book has faced significant budget cuts and has been calling out for much-needed resources and direction from the Government.

The UK Vaping Industry Association (UKVIA) has undertaken a study into the current enforcement landscape for the vape sector and shows there is a need for much more support for Trading Standards and for the introduction of a vape retailer and distributor licensing scheme to put a stop to rogue sellers for good.

As part of the Freedom of Information (FOI), the UKVIA has analysed data provided by 17 major city and London borough councils. Key findings of this investigation include*:

***Note:** Unless stated otherwise, all data refers to all 17 respondents and is for the period 2022 to May 31, 2024.

1,867

retailers visited on suspicion they were involved in the sale and supply of illicit/non-compliant vape products

334

 physical retailers were identified as engaging in underage vape sales

Almost 390,000

vapes seized – most of which were put in storage, destroyed or sent to a recycling centre

Just one

 respondent said the cost of disposal for illicit vapes was met by the retailer

£10,730

was the total fine amount issued by Trading Standards to retailers for the sale and supply of illicit/non-compliant vaping products.

£20,340

was the total fine amount issued by Trading Standards to retailers guilty of underage vape sales (including a £92 government surcharge and £568 in costs)

£3,340,000

is the collective amount the retailers guilty of underage vape sales could have faced if the industry's vape retailer and distributor licensing scheme was in place.

A number of respondents said Trading Standards does not have the power to issue fines.

The vast majority of retailers visited on suspicion of selling/stocking illicit products or found guilty of underage vape sales were non-specialist outlets including convenience stores, post offices and newsagents.

None

of the respondents received any indication as to how much of the previous government's £30 million enforcement investment they were set to receive.

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