**Briefing note:** Update on implementation timelines of the Tobacco and Vapes Act 2026
**Date:** Tuesday 12 May 2026

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**Overview:**

The Tobacco and Vapes Act received Royal Assent on 29 April 2025, marking an important step in the British Government's ambition to prevent and discourage smoking, while also achieving their 'smoke-free generation' ambition.

While the generational ban itself will come into force from 1 January 2027, making it illegal to sell tobacco and smoking products to anyone born after 1 January 2009, there has been recent speculation within the industry as regards the timeline for the additional measures set out in the Act.

**Recent developments:**

The UKVIA has previously engaged with MPs from the APPG for Responsible Vaping, who explained that at present, the Government intends to phase in many of the wider product and retail restrictions, following consultations ran by the Department for Health and Social Care, rather than commencing them all immediately at the start of 2027. Recent statements by the tobacco company, Imperial Brands, have since confirmed this.

Recent trade reporting, including statements made by the tobacco company Imperial Brands, has suggested that at present, the government intends to phase in many of the wider product and retail restrictions, following consultations ran by the Department for Health and Social Care, rather than commencing them all immediately at the start of 2027. Additionally, some implementation milestones have already been established, such as the restrictions on free distribution and discounting which are expected to come into force from 29 October 2026.

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Mary and euan said it would be phased, ansd this has been confirmed by recent statements by .....

In practice, this means that while these regulations and the headline generational ban has a fixed start date, the remaining measures targeting vaping and advertising methods are likely to follow later on in the year, through consultation-led secondary legislation methods.

These restrictions are most likely to be on measures like flavour descriptors, packaging, branding and retail displays, as well as the design of any future licensing or registration regime for retailers and products. For the vaping industry more broadly, this phased approach matters as it creates a live policy window in which the Department of Health and Social Care can still shape the regulations in relation to feedback from the industry and other healthcare professionals.

**What this means for the UKVIA and its members:**

This makes the consultation period particularly important for the UKVIA, as it gives both the association and its members the opportunity to influence the implementation of policy. Although the Act is now on the statute book, much of its practical effect will therefore depend on the content and timing of secondary legislation.

In light of this context, the UKVIA will continue to monitor announcements from the Department of Health and Social Care to ensure that announcements regarding the publication of timelines and announcements of secondary legislation can be circulated. We have already begun to engage with officials from both the Department for Health and Social Care and HM Treasury to share findings from our VApril Surveys, as well as requesting further engagement throughout these proposed timelines.

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The time following the announcement of additional secondary legislation will therefore be an important period for members and the association to engage with consultations, in order to ensure that the views of the industry shape the forms and focuses of secondary legislation.