



Department of Health

Public Health Directorate
Department of Health
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www.gov.uk/dh

11 March 2015

Dear Sir/Madam,

The Department has received a number of queries concerning the recent BBC interview that Dame Sally Davies, Chief Medical Officer for England (CMO), gave on 'smoking in cars'.

In the interview the CMO truncated information with regard to a withdrawal of a butterscotch flavoured e-liquid. Responsible e-liquid manufacturers, such as VIP, who voluntarily withdrew their product, recognise the chemical diacetyl should not be present in e-liquids. This is because it has been strongly associated with the lung disease bronchiolitis obliterans when inhaled over time by workers in the food industry.

It is right, because of the potential of this chemical to cause disease, that a precautionary approach should be taken and that steps should be taken to remove this chemical from e-liquids. The Department is aware of the evidence that tobacco cigarette smoke can also contain diacetyl at significantly higher levels than the amounts found in e-cigarettes, but that does not mean that the safety of e-cigarettes cannot be improved by removing this chemical, which is why the CMO supports strong regulation of this sector to ensure that smokers can properly benefit from their potential to help them quit smoking.

There is evidence of variable quality and the lack of data on the long term safety of e-cigarettes that concerns the CMO and is the basis for her conclusion that, without authorisation under the medicinal licensing regime they cannot be recommended for use.

The Government is working towards a regulated e-cigarette market where only products that meet requirements set out in the new European Tobacco Products Directive (Directive 2014/40/EU) are made available. In addition, the Government will continue to monitor all the emerging evidence on the safety of these products.

Yours sincerely,

The Tobacco Control Team