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## Ban on disposable vapes to stop children becoming addicted

Health ministers preparing to act after concerns companies are marketing the colourful products at under-18s

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Disposable vapes will be banned to stop children becoming addicted to the devices under government proposals to be unveiled as early as next week.

The Telegraph can reveal that health ministers are preparing to act, having decided that single-use vapes are overwhelmingly targeted at those aged under 18.

Disposable vapes are often sold in bright colours and with flavours such as “bubble gum”. In some shops they are positioned by front counters near sweets.

The decision will be revealed in a consultation issued by the Health Department shortly. It has been pencilled in for next week, though timings could yet slip.

Ministers are understood to have decided not to go a step further and copy Australia by banning all vaping without a prescription, because they have accepted the benefits of e-cigarettes to help smokers to quit.

A senior Whitehall insider told The Telegraph: “Disposable vapes are almost entirely aimed at kids and they are environmentally damaging. There is a wide consensus emerging on the need to act.”

### Sunak raised alarm

Ministers from Rishi Sunak down have voiced alarm at the scale with which nicotine e-cigarettes have been taken up by children in the UK in recent years.

Back in May the Prime Minister, who has two young daughters, Krishna, and Anoushka, who were aged 12, and 10 at the time, voiced concerns that vape companies were focusing on children.

Mr Sunak said on ITV's This Morning: "I have two young girls. I'm also worried about that. It looks like they are targeted at kids, which is ridiculous. I don't want my kids to be seduced by any of these things."

The Government has a nuanced position on vaping, seeing it as a good alternative for adults who smoke but a habit that has health downsides for those who do not.

Prof Sir Chris Whitty, England's Chief Medical Officer, has said: "If you smoke, vaping is much safer; if you don't smoke, don't vape, and marketing to children is utterly unacceptable."

A call to evidence was issued last April, with the aim of clamping down on youth vaping.

A new consultation, honing in on specific proposals, will put forward the disposable vape ban.

The ban would apply in England, with other devolved administrations having to set policy for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

A law change would likely be needed, but it remains to be seen if time could be found in Parliament before the next general election, expected in autumn 2024.

Earlier this week it was estimated that 11.6 per cent of 11 to 17-year-olds in Britain had tried vaping, up from 7.7 per cent last year.

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