



Industry briefing

Vape recycling: Retailers, producers and councils briefing

January 2025



3 key take-aways

1. Vape producers, importers and trade bodies

Vape producers have a legal responsibility to finance take-back of vapes for recycling.

2. Vape retailers/distributors

Vape sellers have a legal responsibility to take back customers' old vapes for recycling and to tell their customers that they offer this.

3. Consumers

Consumers need to know that they should always recycle rather than bin or litter their vapes.

Contents

1. Material Focus Introduction
2. What is e-waste and why is it relevant to vapes?
3. Vape fact and figures
4. How do I comply with the environmental regulations **as a producer?**
5. How do I comply with environmental regulations **as a retailer?**
 - a. Approved vape recycling services
 - b. How to communicate take-back of electricals and vapes
 - c. Communication toolkit
 - d. How to communicate vape recycling to the public
6. Vape PBS
7. How do I act as a **local authority?**
8. Collection from HWRCs via the Producer Balancing System
9. Environment Agency update on incineration
10. Government update October 2024 on the ban of single-use vapes
11. Government update December 2024 on the producer responsibility consultation
 - a. A new category for vapes
 - b. New obligations for online marketplaces
12. Government update January 2025 with guidance on the single-use vapes ban

Who are Material Focus?

Material Focus is an independent, not-for-profit organisation which is funded through the UK WEEE regulations. Our role is to improve the UK e-waste system and to make it easier for everyone to reuse and recycle electricals. We do this through...

Insights

- Identifying, producing and sharing insightful, timely and impactful research to help build a better UK e-waste/ WEEE system.

Investments

- Identifying and funding projects which help make it easier for people to reuse and recycle electricals.

Inspiration

- Creating and delivering communications which help make it feel easier for people to reuse and recycle electricals through our [Recycle Your Electricals](#) campaign.



What is e-waste and why is it relevant to vapes?



What is e-waste and the legal regulations?

- e-waste (WEEE) is old and unwanted electrical and electronic equipment.
 - Most e-waste contains toxic chemicals and is classed as **hazardous waste**.
 - If not handled properly at end-of-life they pose a **major threat to the environment**, human health, society, and costs the UK economy through losing precious resources.
 - **Recovering materials** like steel, aluminium, copper, gold, silver, lithium and plastics means that we reduce demand for new materials that come from mining and drilling and therefore **protects land and sea environments**.
- e-waste is one of the **fastest-growing sources of waste in the world** – and the UK.
 - Over 100,000 tonnes of e-waste are thrown away each year by households.
 - We are holding onto over 800 million items of electricals in UK homes.
- Laws requiring producers and retailers to finance and support collection and recycling of electrical and portable battery products at end-of-life have been in place for 15 years.
- If you place **5 tonnes or more** of electricals on the market (as an original manufacturer or as the importer into the UK) you must join a producer compliance scheme (PCS).
- Producers pay the PCS to take on the **producer obligations to finance** the collection, treatment, recovery and environmentally sound disposal of household WEEE.
- **Anything with a plug, battery and cable should always be recycled** as a minimum and should never be binned.

Why are discarded vapes such an issue?

- **Vapes = toxic, dangerous waste.** There are safety issues with the lithium batteries inside them prone to causing fires if damaged when binned in general waste or recycling.
- **Sales have rocketed** over the last couple of years - many new products and market entrants.
 - Range of vape types - single use (disposable), rechargeable with single use chamber (pod) and rechargeable (tank) as well as 'Big Puff'.
- Made of some of the most **valuable resources** on the planet - steel, aluminium, copper, lithium.
- **Environmental damage** caused through widespread littering can endanger wildlife.
- Single-use vapes as well as other models like pod and Big Puff are **often marketed as 'disposable', rather than 'recyclable'**
- Lack of comms on recycling - 77% of UK vapers feel there is not enough information on how to recycle vapes
- An average of 13.5 million vapes are being sold every week in the UK - and at least Estimated **8.2 million a week are being binned or recycled incorrectly - 13 per second.**
- These need to be **recycled separately** from general waste and recycling.
- Producers, importers, distributors and retailers of single-use vapes MUST **meet their legal and financial responsibilities** under UK waste electrical (WEEE) and portable battery regulations.



Vapes facts and figures 2024

We are throwing away millions of vapes

The UK public are now **buying 13.5 million vapes/ week** - a 37% increase from 9.9 million/ week in 2023

And **binning, or incorrectly recycling***, approximately **8.2 million vapes, 13 per second**

Vapes are actually 'recyclable'

- Vapes dismantled into parts: battery, casing, electronics and nicotine pads (which are treated separately)
- **Up to 80% of materials within vapes can be recycled**

There's hidden treasure inside vapes

- **Vape batteries contain lithium** (vital component inside electric vehicle (EV) and energy storage batteries), aluminium, steel, copper, plastics which could be recycled
- **If not thrown away, lithium inside the vapes** could have powered **10,127 electric car batteries** per annum

**Despite best intentions, many people are inadvertently recycling their vapes in the wrong places eg. kerbside or household recycling bins. Vapes must be recycled separately at designated recycling drop off points.*

Vapes - the facts and figures

The lithium inside vapes that are thrown away could be powering the green economy

If they weren't binned the **lithium inside the vapes** could instead be **powering 10,127 electric car batteries** per annum.

Hidden batteries inside can cause fires if crushed or damaged

Batteries hidden inside vapes can cause fires if crushed or damaged in general recycling or waste streams. Vapes must be recycled separately.

Adding to the problem of e-waste

Binning vapes adds to e-waste which is the **fastest growing waste stream in the world**. In the UK alone we bin over 100,000 tonnes of electrical waste a year.



How to comply



Who are the key players?

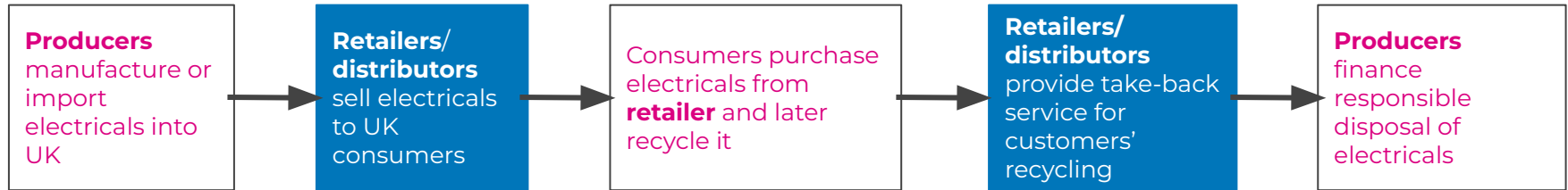
Enforcement bodies across the UK

- Environment Agency (EA) - England
- Natural Resources Wales - Wales
- Northern Ireland Environment Agency - Northern Ireland
- Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) - Scotland
- Office for Product Safety & Standards (OPSS)

Other agencies

- **MHRA** - producers must submit information about their products
- **The Chartered Trading Standards Institute** - product safety and compliance

Producer vs retailer/ distributor responsibilities



- If you **sell vapes** you are defined as a **retailer/ distributor**
- If you **manufacture or import vapes** into the UK you are defined as a **producer**
- If you do both, then you have producer and retailer/ distributor responsibilities



How do I comply with environmental regulations as a producer?



What is a producer?

You're a producer of EEE in the UK if you

- manufacture and sell EEE under your own brand in the UK
- resell equipment made by someone else under your own brand
 - if the maker's brand appears on the equipment they are the producer
- import EEE on a commercial basis into the UK
- are established outside of the UK and supply EEE directly to the UK market by distance selling (eg. online, mail order, by phone)

Waste electricals producer responsibilities

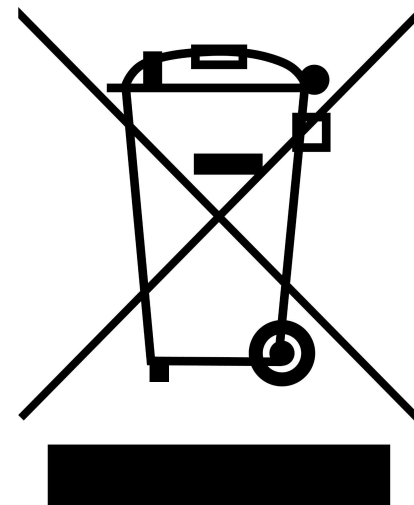
- The first UK registered company who places electrical and electronic equipment (EEE) on the market is the “**producer**”.
- This can be the manufacturer, importer or distributor.
- You must [register](#) as a producer annually, dependent on how much EEE you sell
 - **less than 5 tonnes/ year** - register as a small producer through the [WEEE Online service](#).
 - **5 tonnes or more/ year** - pay to join a [Producer Compliance Scheme \(PCS\)](#) who will take on your obligations to finance the collection, treatment, recovering and disposal of WEEE.

You must also take on [distributor responsibilities](#) if you sell EEE direct to householders in the UK.

For more information on how to comply with environmental regulations as a producer please refer to our industry briefing paper - [Waste electricals producer responsibilities briefing paper](#).

Waste electricals producer responsibilities

- As a producer you must also:
 - mark electrical products with the **crossed out wheelie bin** symbol and a date mark.
 - provide information on **reuse and environmentally sound treatment** of the products and components (includes materials, dangerous substances and preparations) within one year of putting them on the market.
 - provide your distributors with your producer registration number.
 - keep records for at **least 4 years** of the amount of EEE put on the market by category.



Full producer responsibilities can be found [here](#).

Enforcement and compliance

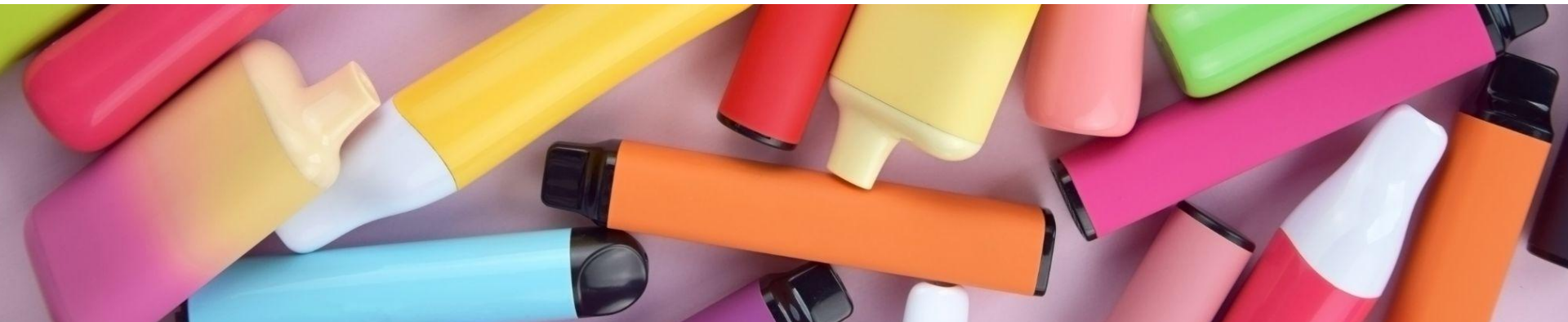
If you do not register as a small producer or join a PCS you are committing an offence and may face enforcement action.

Find out more about legislation and regulations here:

- [WEEE Regulations 2013](#)
- [Producer Responsibility Regulations](#)



How do I comply with environmental regulations as a retailer?



Retailers selling vapes to UK public (instore or online)

1. MUST offer to take back waste vapes in store for free
2. MUST have a record of this - and keep for a minimum of 4 years
3. MUST clearly communicate take-back to customers at point of purchase

Takeback is **regardless of make, model or brand and must take back vapes of all types**

Retailer take-back - you must offer free in-store recycling

If a retailer sells vapes, they must offer to take-back waste vapes in-store.

- **In-store take-back**

- Must be free (but can charge for collecting items from customers' homes)
 - Be clearly communicated to customers
 - Give customers at least 28 days to bring back their waste item.
 - Take back all types of electrical and electronic equipment that you sell - you can choose to extend your service to cover all kinds of electrical and electronic waste.
- Brands with multi-site stores selling a variety of different products may need to communicate differently in different stores, and should ensure that store staff advise consumers, that larger goods can only be returned to specific stores.
- If your **electrical and electronic equipment sales area is > 400m²** including aisle, display and shelf space, you must accept any very small electricals* at any store, regardless of whether someone buys a new electrical item there.

*items <25cm on their longest side

Retailer responsibilities - for all retailers selling vapes

- **All retailers selling electricals** (including vapes) need to provide a way for customers buying new electricals to dispose of their old electricals **on a like-for-like basis**
 - regardless of how you sell the products, whether direct or by internet, mail order or telephone
- You must take back items for recycling that have **the same function, regardless of brand**. Eg.
 - take back any brand of vape/ e-cig when they buy a new vape or e-cig
- You have 2 options to offer this take-back service to your customers
 - provide a free, in store recycling service
 - set up an alternative recycling service

If you fail to comply with the waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) regulations, you **can be prosecuted and get an unlimited fine** from a magistrates' court or a Crown Court.

HOW TO ORGANISE in-store take-back of electricals and vapes

- To dispose of the electricals you've collected you can do one of the following:
 - Speak to a Producer Compliance Scheme (PCS)
 - [Contact](#) the PCS and agree arrangements and fees
 - PCS will arrange for the waste to be recycled at an Approved Authorised Treatment Facility (AATF).
 - You may be charged for collection and transportation of the waste to the AATF or the PCS collection point.
 - Transport the waste yourself.
 - Register as a waste carrier.
 - Follow the rules on transporting hazardous waste as 'vapes' are considered hazardous.
 - Transport and drop off the waste at an AATF or PCS collection point yourself.
- Vapes should be collected and stored separately from other small electricals and batteries.
 - If you sell separate batteries for vapes you must also offer free take-back for batteries.
- Keep records of all electrical and electronic waste that you collect and dispose of including the number of units you've received through take back and say how many of these were returned to a PCS. [You can use a template.](#)
 - Include documentation you make, or are given by the PCS or the AATF, when you dispose of electrical and electronic waste.
 - Please see the full lists of approved recyclers, producer compliance schemes (PCS) and approved authorised treatment facilities (AATFs) [on the gov.uk website.](#)
- You also need to keep records of how you tell customers about your take back scheme.
- Keep all your records for 4 years.

Overview - setting up free in-store take-back of vapes

1. Collect and **store vapes separately** from other small electricals and batteries.
2. Clearly **communicate vape take-back** options to the public.
3. Contact waste management company, specialist vapes recycler or PCS via vapes Producer Balancing System (PBS).
4. **Keep a record** of collections and recycling of vapes via PCS/ AATF - for minimum of 4 years.

Approved vape recycling services

These waste management companies can organise collection and recycling of vapes at Approved Authorised Approved Facilities (AATFs).

The vapes will be dismantled into parts: battery, casing, electronics and nicotine pads which are then treated separately. **Up to 80% of materials within vapes can be recycled.**

Biffa - contact: services@biffa.co.uk

Environcom - contact: Alison.mitchell@environcom.co.uk

GAP Group - contact: waste@gapgroupuk.com

Reconomy - contact: enquiries@reconomy.com

SWEEEP - contact: recycle@sweeep.co.uk

Veolia - contact: <https://www.veolia.co.uk/contact-us>

Waste Care - contact: recycling@wastecare.co.uk

Waste Experts - contact: info@wasteexperts.co.uk

CCL (North) - contact: hello@cclnorth.com



Minimum requirement for Retailer Take-back communications

Retailers must accept consumers' old electricals in store for recycling - and **tell customers about this service**. We worked with OPSS/Dept for Business and Trade (DBT) to help **ensure consistency** across all consumer communications. Our toolkit contains **ready-made and editable assets** and key messaging to enable you to meet your obligations. There are **like-for-like, recycle all, and recycle vapes** options.

Mandatory

- Strut card and poster - for use at the checkout/till in-store
- Point of sale comms - for use at the points in the store where you sell electricals
- Website copy - on how customers can reuse and recycle electrical and electronic equipment
- QR code or web address - directing people to your website or Recycle Your Electricals

Optional

- Recycle Your Electricals Recycling Locator link or widget - most comprehensive and accurate locator
- 'Proud supporter'/'recycle here' - available as window decal or stand-alone logo
- Receipt or till prompt
- On-packaging options
- Online point of sale messaging
- 'How to delete data' guide
- Staff training support

Supporting docs

- Recycle Your Electricals brand guidelines

How we can help

Communications support

- **OPSS/Dept for Business & Trade approved retailer take-back comms toolkit** (in-store & website templates, internal comms templates).
 - Take 2 minutes to create account [here](#) to access this toolkit and others.
 - [‘How to delete data’ guide](#)
 - Industry stats, infographics and assets on reusing and recycling electricals to use in your campaigns.

Operational support

- [List of approved recyclers](#)
- Best practice case studies with insights of what works/ doesn't work so well.
- Industry leading Recycling Locator (22,000+ drop off points) + widget for your website - add your stores to help consumers easily locate their nearest electrical recycling drop off points.

The Office for Product Safety and Standards enforces these regulations. You can contact them if you have any questions on compliance or suspected non-compliance.

Office for Product Safety and Standards - [**opss.enquiries@businessandtrade.gov.uk**](mailto:opss.enquiries@businessandtrade.gov.uk)

Communications toolkit - download from our [website here](#)

Recycle your electricals here

Buying a new electrical item?
Recycle the one you're
replacing in-store, for free



Anything with a plug, battery or cable can be
recycled and turned into something new.

**Simply hand your electricals to a staff member,
and they'll do the rest.**



To find out more,
scan here or search
recycleyourelectricals.org.uk/recycleinstore



Please bring in the old electrical item within 28 days, with the receipt for its replacement.
We reserve the right to refuse an item that's too heavy to be picked up by one person or for health and hygiene reasons.

Recycle your electricals here

If you have old unwanted
electricals you can recycle
them in-store for free



Anything with a plug, battery or cable can be
recycled and turned into something new.

**Simply hand your electricals to a staff member,
and they'll do the rest.**



To find out more,
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We reserve the right to refuse an item that's too heavy to be picked up by one person or for health and hygiene reasons.



recycle
your
electricals

PROUD SUPPORTER



recycle
your
electricals

RECYCLE HERE

Communications toolkit - download from our [website here](#)

Recycle your vapes here

If you have old vapes,
you can recycle them
in-store for free



Vapes, and anything else with a plug, battery or cable,
can be recycled and turned into something new.

Simply drop off your old vapes for recycling here.



To find out more,
scan here or search
recycleyourelectricals.org.uk/#recycleinstore



We reserve the right to refuse an item that's too heavy to be picked up by one person or for health and hygiene reasons.

Ailgylchwch eich fêps yma

Prynu fêp newydd? Ailgylchwch
yr hen rai yn y siop – am ddim



Gall fêpiau ac unrhyw beth arall sydd â phlwg, batri neu
gebyl gael eu hailgylchu a'u troi'n rywbeth newydd.

**Gadewch eich fêpiau yma i'w hailgylchu ac mi
wnawn ni bob dim arall.**



Am ragor o wybodaeth,
ewch at ein gwefan
recycleyourelectricals.org.uk/#recycleinstore



Rydym yn cadw'r hawl i wrthod eitem s'n rhy drwm i gael ei chodi gan un person neu am resymau iechyd a hyllendit.

HOW TO COMMUNICATE vape recycling to the public

NEVER BIN THEM - RECYCLE ALL YOUR VAPES

Batteries in vapes can cause fires when binned

Rechargeable vapes

Recycle the battery separately if it is removable.

- If you can remove the battery, drop it in a **battery recycling bin**.
- Put the rest of the vape in a **vape recycling bin**.
- If there isn't a separate bin for vapes, recycle yours with other small electricals.

If the battery is not removable, recycle the whole thing with vapes or other small electricals.

Single-use vapes

Leave the battery inside and recycle the whole thing.

- Drop the vape in a vape recycling bin.
- If there isn't a separate bin for vapes, recycle yours with other small electricals.

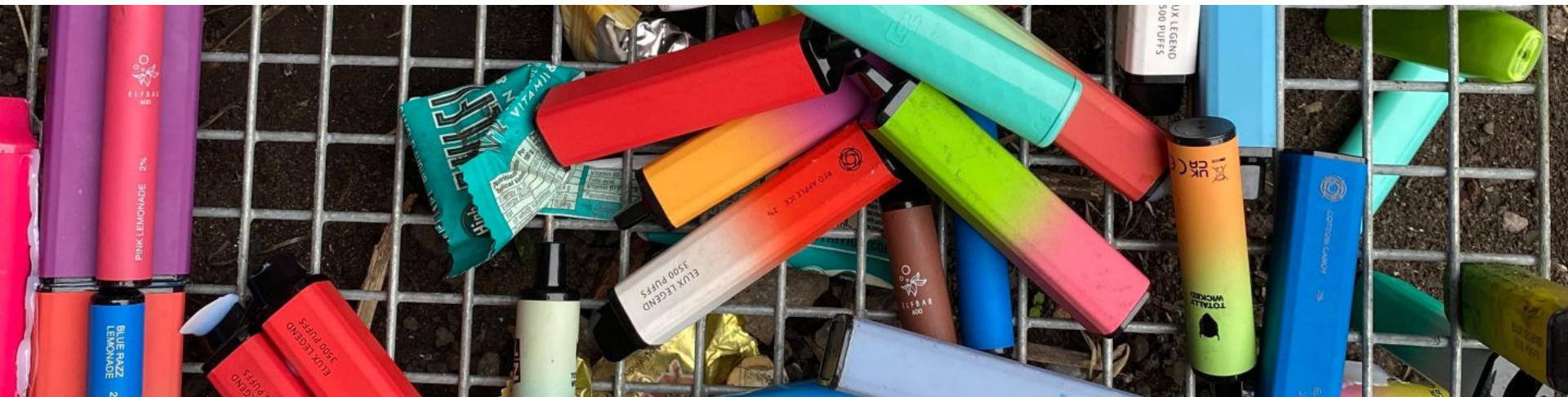
E-liquid/ vape juice pods

These may contain metals or electrical components.

- Put pods in the vape recycling bin.
- If there isn't a separate bin for vapes, recycle yours with other small electricals.



Vape PBS



Vape Distributor Take-back Obligations

What is a distributor?

Under the WEEE regulations, “**Distributor**” means any person in the supply chain who makes **an item of EEE available on the market** but a distributor may also be a **producer**. This is usually the retailer who makes the vapes available for purchase by the end user.

Take-back Obligations

Distributors of vapes who supply new vapes to a person will ensure that end of life vapes can be returned to them free of charge and on a one-to-one basis by that person, provided that any such WEEE:

- (a) is of an equivalent type to, and
- (b) has fulfilled the same function as the product sold.

The distributor should provide its customers with written notice that it takes back end of life vapes for recycling. We can help support with this communication by using [our online comms toolkits](#).

Key information

A distributor who supplies new vapes will make information available in writing to users of vapes on:

- End of life vapes should not be thrown away in general waste or littered.
- The collection and take-back systems that are available to them.
- Their role in contributing to the reuse, recycling and other forms of recovery of WEEE under the WEEE Regulations.
- The potential effects on the environment and human health as a result of the presence of hazardous substances in vapes.
- The meaning of the crossed out wheeled bin symbol.

Record Keeping

- A distributor which offers in store take-back will keep a record of the number of units of vapes that are returned to them.
- A distributor who returns vapes under **regulation 43** will keep a record of the number of units of vapes returned by them under that regulation.
- Each distributor will keep a record of the information.
- The records referred to will be kept for a **period of at least four years** commencing from the date on which any such record is made and will be made available to the Secretary of State on demand.

Record keeping:

- As a distributor you must record and keep copies for 4 years of all vapes you collect.
- For more information on record keeping please refer to <https://www.vapespbs.org.uk/record-keeping>
- A template for your records is available to download at GOV UK from the following link <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wEEE-regulations-distributor-templates>

Vape Distributor Take-back Obligations

Returns:

Distributors have two options for ensuring waste vapes returned to them are managed correctly:

1. **Vapes collection services** - a number of waste management companies now offer vape collection and recycling services which include advice, containers, collections and recycling in an easy-to-use service. Contact your existing **waste management company** - or search on the internet for vape recycling.
2. A **distributor may return collected vapes at their own expense** to the WEEE system and receive free of charge treatment where set up by an operator of a Producer Compliance Scheme (PCS) by issuing a **regulation 43 request** to the PCS. This allows the distributor to arrange delivery of returned vapes into an approved authorised treatment facility (AATF) for free treatment.

The **distributor** will be required to **pay for any delivery costs** to get the vapes from their premises to the facility and must follow all **relevant waste management requirements** in arranging delivery.

Regulation 43 requests

- Under the WEEE regulations, vape distributors are able to issue a **regulation 43 request to a producer compliance scheme (PCS)** to get access to free treatment of end of life vapes.
- A regulation 43 request can only be issued when a **distributor has end of life vapes ready to be collected and recycled.**
- To find out what information must be included as part of the regulation 43 request please refer to <https://www.vapespbs.org.uk/regulation-43-requests>.
- The end of life vapes must be presented to the PCS in a **compliant container** at the expense of the distributor to ensure that the PCS is able to accept them into their system.
- The distributor will also have to arrange for delivery of such container to the PCS's appointed AATF at their own expense. This can usually be agreed directly with the AATF appointed for delivery.
- To find a PCS to issue a regulation 43 request, the list of approved WEEE compliance schemes can be found on the [government website here](#).

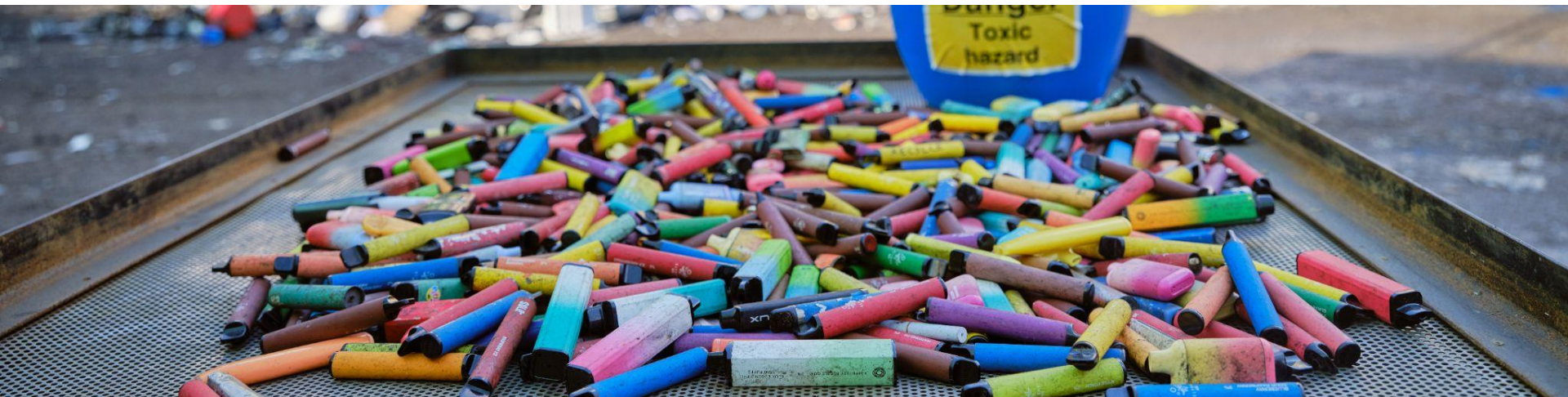
Compliant containers for vapes

Compliant containers:

- Vapes taken back under a distributor take-back obligations should be stored in a compliant container.
- This makes acceptance of the vapes by the PCS into the system easier and also ensures that the distributor will not be rejected when trying to deliver vapes into the system.
- The distributor is obliged to purchase/source a compliant container at their own expense.
- To find out more information about the type of compliant containers please refer to <https://www.vapespbs.org.uk/compliant-containers>



How do I act as a local authority?



Collection from HWRCs via the Producer Balancing System

The mandatory Producer Balancing System (PBS) which is part of the current UK WEEE Regulations has recently been modified to process **Regulation 34** requests for vapes arising at Local Authority Household Waste Recycling Centres (LA HWRCs).

This means that vapes separately collected at LA HWRCs can have their collection and recycling funded via the PBS.

LAs may not currently have signage and containers etc. in place at their HWRCs to separately collect vapes.

Any LA wishing to separately collect vapes at an HWRC should **contact the producer compliance scheme (PCS)** they currently work with to discuss next steps.

Local authorities - free collection and recycling of vapes from HWRCs

Free collection and recycling of vapes from LA HWRCs - funded by **The Producer Balancing System, regulation 34.**

1. **Contact** your producer compliance scheme (PCS) for advice to set it up
2. **Register** with Anthesis PBS system
3. **Collect** vapes in separate recycling bin at HWRC
4. Clearly **communicate** separate recycling bins to the public

Current recommendations and advice

1. **Ask your producer compliance scheme and/ or partner waste management company** for local guidance to give to residents about recycling vapes. Drop off points will differ by area.
2. **Display our vape recycling poster** at HWRCs, advising on the safe disposal and recycling of vapes. Download it [here](#) from the gated section of the Material Focus website.
3. **Create social media posts** using our vapes communication toolkit. It includes ready to use social media assets with suggested copy. Download from the gated section of our website [here](#).

If you've not yet created an account, it takes 2 minutes to do - just sign up as a local authority.

HOW TO COMMUNICATE vape recycling to the public

NEVER BIN THEM - RECYCLE ALL YOUR VAPES

Batteries in vapes can cause fires when binned.

Rechargeable vapes

Recycle the battery separately if it is removable.

- If you can remove the battery, drop it in a **battery recycling bin**.
- Put the rest of the vape in a **vape recycling bin**.
- If there isn't a separate bin for vapes, recycle yours with other small electricals.

If the battery is not removable, recycle the whole thing with vapes or other small electricals.

Single-use vapes

Leave the battery inside and recycle the whole thing.

- Drop the vape in a vape recycling bin.
- If there isn't a separate bin for vapes, recycle yours with other small electricals.

E-liquid/ vape juice pods

These may contain metals or electrical components.

- Put pods in the vape recycling bin.
- If there isn't a separate bin for vapes, recycle yours with other small electricals.

HWRC vape posters - for separate collection or with other small mixed WEEE





Environment Agency update March 2023:

Ban on incineration of vapes



Producer Responsibility Regulatory Service - WEEE

weee@environment-agency.gov.uk

16 March 2023

Dear Scheme / AATF

Incineration of Vapes

The Environment Agency is aware of current concerns being expressed surrounding the incineration of disposable vapes. Our position on this matter is as follows.

Regulation 31 of the WEEE Regulations requires Producer Compliance Schemes (PCS) to set up systems that provide for the separate collection and treatment of WEEE using best available collection, treatment, recovery, and recycling techniques, for any WEEE for which they are responsible. It also requires that PCSs make sure the WEEE is treated at an ATF (Authorised Treatment Facility). As vapes are in scope of the WEEE regulations, this regulation applies to vapes.

All ATFs must operate in compliance with their permit, which includes a condition that BATRRRT (Best Available Treatment Recovery and Recycling Techniques) is used to treat the WEEE they accept. In the case of vapes this will include the removal of batteries and liquids. If such a recycling technique for vapes is reasonably available (e.g. manual dismantling) then an ATF must use it.

Whole vapes should not be incinerated.

Any fractions from the treatment of vapes that contain POPs need to be managed in a way that ensures the POPs are destroyed or irreversibly transformed.

Queries?

If you have any queries please contact us via weee@environment-agency.gov.uk

Environment Agency - ban on incineration of vapes

1. Regulation 31 of the WEEE Regulations requires producer compliance schemes (PCS) to set up systems that provide for the separate collection and treatment of WEEE using best available collection, treatment, recovery, and recycling techniques, for any WEEE for which they are responsible. It also requires that PCSs make sure the WEEE is treated at an ATF (Authorised Treatment Facility).

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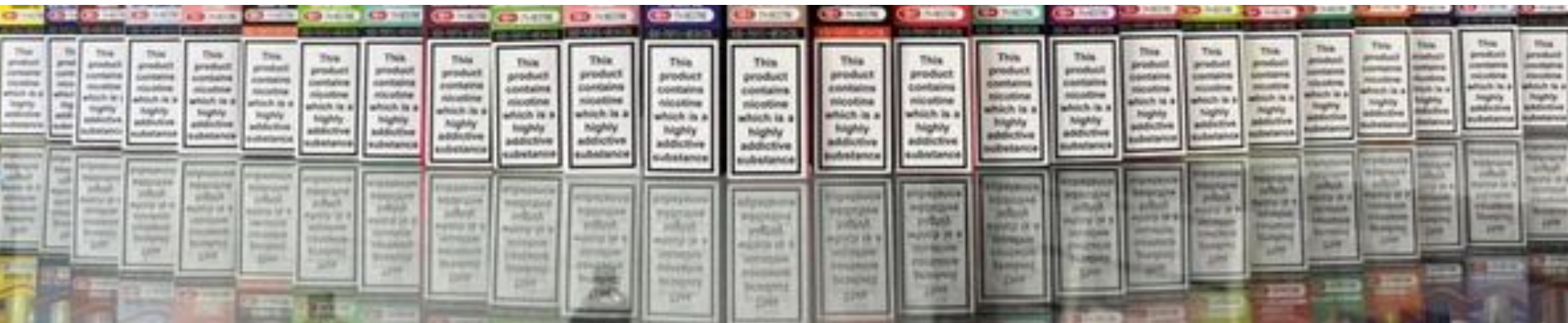
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3. **Whole vapes should not be incinerated.**
4. Any fractions from the treatment of vapes that contain POPs need to be managed in a way that ensures the POPs are destroyed or irreversibly transformed.

If you have any queries please contact weee@environment-agency.gov.uk



Government update October 2024:

Ban on the sale of single-use vapes



Government update - ban on the sale of single-use vapes

A ban on the sale of disposable single-use vapes is expected to be applied in the UK from **1 June 2025**

- The ban will include all single-use vapes.
- The Government has laid legislation to introduce the ban.
- Subject to parliamentary approval, businesses will have until **1 June 2025** to sell any remaining stock and prepare for the ban coming into force.
- The UK Government and Devolved Governments have worked closely and will align coming into force dates.

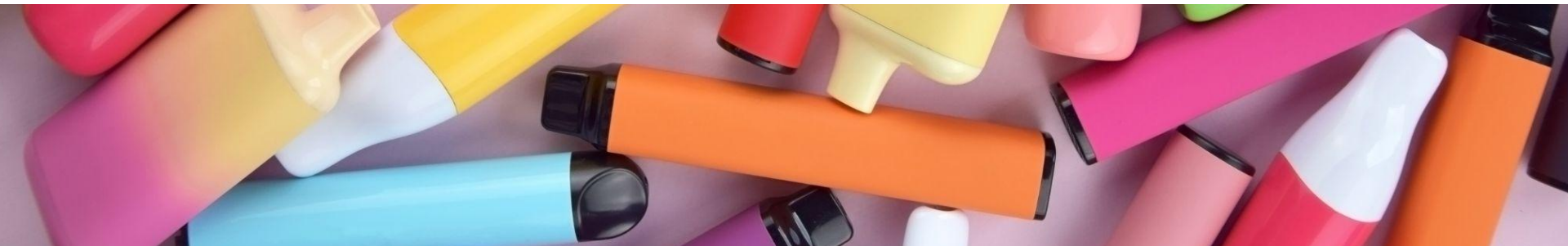
Ban on single-use vapes - what does this mean?

- Retailers have a responsibility to **take-back any single-use vapes** purchased before and after the ban that are brought into store for recycling.
- **In terms of producer and retailer recycling obligations, it doesn't change anything.**



Government update December 2024:

Response to the producer responsibility consultation



Government update - producer responsibility consultation

Consultation on reforming the producer responsibility system for waste electricals held between December 2023 and March 2024.

Update to the regulations to be introduced in the UK from **2025** onwards.

1. A new category for vapes

Separate data reporting and collection targets to be established for vapes.

2. New obligations for online marketplaces

Online marketplaces will be required to take on producer obligations.

A new category for vapes

- Vapes are currently reported under category 7 of the regulations which covers toys, leisure, and sports equipment.
- A new category for vapes and vape-related products means that separate collection targets for these products will be set under the WEEE reporting obligations.
- **Vape producers will need to report the weight of products placed on the UK market under this new category.**

New obligations for online marketplaces

- **Online marketplaces will take on obligations that currently apply to companies defined as producers within the existing regulations.**
- The new requirements will apply to online marketplaces only in respect of equipment placed on the UK market by their overseas based sellers.
- This means that they will contribute to the cost of collection, treatment, re-use, and recycling of waste electricals.



Government update January 2025:

Guidance on single-use vapes ban



DEFRA issues guidance on the single-use vapes ban

This guidance is for businesses in the UK vaping industry, including:

- importers
- retail outlets
- vaping product manufacturers
- wholesalers

This includes any shop or business that sells single-use vapes, such as a:

- convenience store
- market stall
- petrol station
- specialist vape shop
- supermarket

DEFRA issues guidance on the single-use vapes ban

DEFRA has issued further guidance on the definition of both single-use and reusable vapes as part of the wider legislation for the upcoming ban.

To find out more visit <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/single-use-vapes-ban>

The restrictions of the ban are consistent across all 4 nations, However, what happens if you break the ban is specific to the nation your business is located in.

Check [**'if you get caught supplying a single-use vape from 1 June 2025'**](#) for further information.

The guidance also covers:

- How to tell if you can sell a vape
- Devices you must not sell
- How to check if a vape is reusable
- Other restrictions on vaping products
- Recycling vapes
- What to do if you have stock of single-use vapes

FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions:

Q: How are Material Focus funded?

A: Our funding comes from UK WEEE Regulations Compliance Fees. These are paid by electrical producers if they don't meet annual recycling targets set by the government. The fees are set higher than the average costs of collections to encourage collections to take place. We manage spending of the fees to support reuse and recycling of electricals in the UK.

Q: Are Material Focus a regulator?

A: We are not a government body nor a regulator, and work separately to the regulators across the UK. But we will regularly share information with them to help improve the e-waste system - to make it as easy as possible for the public to reuse and recycle their electricals.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Q: Is your work across the UK?

A: We work across the UK. We are a not-for-profit organisation with expertise in the electrical waste sector. Our role is to help improve the UK e-waste system through improving the reuse and recycling rates of waste electricals - this includes working with organisations across the UK sector to increase awareness of obligations and how to meet them.

Q: Who are the regulators in the UK?

A: Your relevant regulator is dependent on your company registered address location:

- **Environment Agency (England)**
- **Natural Resources Wales (Wales)**
- **Northern Ireland Environment Agency (Northern Ireland)**
- **Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (Scotland)**

Material Focus is an independent, not-for-profit organisation on a mission to save valuable, critical and finite materials inside electricals from going to waste. We do this through...

Insights

We identify, produce and share insights to improve the UK e-waste system and inform policy decisions.

Investments

We identify and fund projects that make it easier to reuse and recycle; or that encourage circular design.

Inspiration

We inspire, educate and encourage the UK public to fix, donate, sell and recycle their unwanted electricals through our Recycle Your Electricals campaign.

www.materialfocus.org.uk