



Department
of Health &
Social Care

Department of Health and Social Care minutes: 20 May 2026

Smoke-free generation implementation meeting group

This meeting was held on 20 May 2026 from 11am to 12pm on Microsoft Teams.

The chair was Natasha Burgon, Director, Health Improvement Directorate.

Minutes were taken by a Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) official.

Attendees

The attendees were:

- DHSC Deputy Director (Tobacco and Vapes)
- DHSC official (Tobacco and Vapes)
- DHSC official (Tobacco and Vapes)
- DHSC official (Tobacco and Vapes)
- DHSC official (Strategic Communications)
- DHSC official (Marketing)
- DHSC official (Marketing Partnerships)
- DHSC Deputy Director (Regional representative)
- Department for Business and Trade official (Retail and Consumer Goods)
- Chartered Trading Standards Institute representative

- Local Government Association representative
- British Retail Consortium representative
- Association of Convenience Stores representative
- Action on Smoking and Health representative
- Cancer Research UK representative
- Scottish Government official (Tobacco Control)
- Welsh Government official
- Northern Ireland Executive official

Apologies

None

1. Welcome, terms of reference and Article 5.3

1.1 The chair welcomed all members to the first meeting of the Smoke-free generation implementation group and set out its objectives.

1.2 The chair highlighted the terms of reference and the Department of Health and Social Care's obligations under Article 5.3 of the World Health Organization's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, to protect public health policy from the commercial and other vested interests of tobacco companies.

2. Overview of the Tobacco and Vapes Act

2.1 DHSC provided an overview of the Tobacco and Vapes Act.

3. Supporting secondary legislation and guidance

3.1 DHSC gave an overview of the supporting secondary legislation that would enable the implementation of measures on the face of the act, including:

- age verification
- age of sale warning notices
- aligning display exemptions with the new age of sale
- test purchasing powers

3.2 DHSC proceeded to set out the planned guidance for stakeholders on areas where the law is changing and would require action from stakeholders. It was confirmed that the 4 nations are working together to ensure a co-ordinated approach across the UK.

3.3 Stakeholders welcomed the upcoming guidance and reiterated the importance of preparing businesses, enforcement bodies and other relevant stakeholders for the incoming changes, through guidance and communications.

4. Communications and campaigns

4.1 DHSC Marketing provided an overview of the planned communications activity ahead of the changes in law to the age of sale. Plans are also underway to support a partner led Stoptober campaign in October and a smoking cessation campaign in early 2027.

4.2 DHSC Communications and the group agreed on the need for a comprehensive strategic communications plan - operating at a national, regional and local level - to support messaging for both stakeholders and the general public of the incoming changes relating to tobacco and vaping legislation.

4.3 Stakeholders then set out their own plans around communications, including the Association of Convenience Stores' 'Decline09' campaign for retailers.

5. Any other business

5.1 The chair asked attendees if there were any other points to raise or questions. The next meeting will be held in early July.

6. Close

6.1 The chair thanked attendees for their collaborative approach and contributions to the meeting.