

Trading standards officials in Edinburgh lack funds to tackle vape ban

Trading standards officials in Edinburgh have warned that they lack extra funding to tackle enforcement of the upcoming single use vapes ban.

In a report to councillors, they say that any efforts to combat sales of disposable vapes will have to be drawn from existing resources, pulling staff from other tasks.

And they said there would be a need to enforce the new rules, with test purchases of tobacco and vapes over the last year seeing 42% of venues tested illegally selling products to under-18s.

From 1 June 2025, single-use vapes will become illegal across the UK as part of an effort to help reduce littering and other environmental issues.

The legislation places the responsibility for enforcement with council trading standards teams, but officers say that no new funding has come from the Scottish Government to help with enforcement.

And, they say the council is not technically legally required to enforce the ban – however, they say the health and environmental impacts of vaping make it a priority.

Enforcing the single use vape ban will incur extra costs for

the trading standards team due to the cost of disposing of seized goods.

Officers said that some of the cost of running enforcement activities could be met through income from fixed penalty notices – but that it would be ‘unlikely’ to cover the full costs of enforcing the legislation.

COSLA, the trade group representing councils to the Scottish government, also believes more funding should be made available to councils to enforce the ban.

Officers also provided an update on their current enforcement activities around tobacco and vaping products.

The trading standards team said that it had undertaken 99 test purchases across the city this year.

They found that in 42 cases, vapes had been sold to under-18s, leading to 24 fixed penalty notices being issued.

And, they said that for the first time ever, the council had applied to the Sheriff Court for a banning order, preventing a premise which had failed three separate test purchases from selling tobacco or vapes.

A second application for a banning order is in progress for another premises.

Officers noted that the enforcement teams specifically targeted premises where high numbers of complaints had been received.

According to the report, the council’s efforts to enforce the single use vape ban will start later in 2025.

They also said that enforcing the expected lifetime ban on purchasing nicotine products for those born on or after 1 January 2009 will also cause additional pressure on the city’s trading standards team.

By Joseph Sullivan Local Democracy Reporter