

Press release

Minister Smyth launches public consultation on disposable vapes

From [Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications](#)
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Minister of State at the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications with special responsibility for Communications and the Circular Economy, Ossian Smyth, today launched a [public consultation](https://www.gov.ie/en/consultation/826a1-public-consultation-on-disposable-vaping-devices/) (<https://www.gov.ie/en/consultation/826a1-public-consultation-on-disposable-vaping-devices/>) to help inform Ireland's response to disposable vaping devices.

Disposable vaping devices, also known as 'vapes', are electronic cigarettes that are not rechargeable. Vaping products contain electronic components, including a battery, and require safe disposal when they become waste. They contain a complex mixture of materials, some of which may be hazardous and are not easily recyclable. As with other modern electronics, they also contain rare and expensive materials, which can be re-used as part of the circular economy.

Disposable vaping devices present several challenges to our current waste collection and recycling system, for example:

- where lithium-ion batteries are contained in waste devices, these can present a risk to the health and safety of waste collection workers and others. When damaged, short-circuited, or overheated, these batteries can catch fire
- the use of critical raw materials and plastic in a disposable product is wasteful
- these devices have a negative impact on the environment, especially when they are not disposed of in a responsible manner

Potential policy options include:

- a ban on the manufacture, sale, distribution, or free offer of disposable vaping devices under the Waste Management Act, 1996, Section 28(4)(i). (<https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/1996/act/10/section/28/enacted/en/html>)
- the establishment of a deposit and return system for disposable vaping devices
- no legislative change but improve the producer responsibility scheme to ensure all producers placing devices on the market are registered with the Producer Register Limited, ensure enforcement of the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) requirements is adequate, and improve education and awareness around returning devices into the WEEE and battery collection schemes for responsible recycling

Commenting on the launch of the consultation, Minister Smyth said:

"Today's consultation will help the government learn how people feel about disposable vapes. By asking people to tell us what they think, we want to inform and strengthen the government's response to disposable vaping products. To help Ireland transition to a circular economy, I am committed to leading the development of our environmental response. I strongly support the move by The Minister for Health to introduce a new law to restrict the sale and advertising of nicotine inhaling products."

The public consultation is now open for submissions for an eight-week period until 27 July 2023. Please visit [the department's website \(/en/consultation/826a1-public-consultation-on-disposable-vaping-devices/\)](/en/consultation/826a1-public-consultation-on-disposable-vaping-devices/) for further information on how to participate in this consultation.

ENDS

Notes to the Editor

Earlier this week, the Cabinet agreed to introduce legislation which would ban the sale of e-cigarettes to people under 18. See the [Department of Health website \(https://www.gov.ie/en/press-release/5ceb8-ministers-for-health-receive-government-approval-to-introduce-legislation-to-ban-the-sale-of-vaping-products-to-under-18s/\)](https://www.gov.ie/en/press-release/5ceb8-ministers-for-health-receive-government-approval-to-introduce-legislation-to-ban-the-sale-of-vaping-products-to-under-18s/) for further details.

Circular Economy - Background

Delivering a circular economy will have positive environmental, economic and social impacts. A well-designed circular policy framework can identify co-benefits, so that environmental improvements also provide economic and social opportunities, and vice versa. Across Europe, countries are moving towards and adopting circular economy practices. The EU is pursuing its 'European Green Deal' strategy, which has the circular economy at its heart. In March 2020, the EU launched its Second Circular Economy Action Plan. At the national level, Ireland published its first whole-of-government [Circular Economy Strategy \(/en/publication/b542d-whole-of-government-circular-economy-strategy-2022-2023-living-more-using-less/\)](https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/b542d-whole-of-government-circular-economy-strategy-2022-2023-living-more-using-less/) in December 2021 to ensure policy coherence across the public sector and to outline the government's overall approach to the circular economy for stakeholders and the public.

The Circular Economy Act 2022 goes further – by translating this policy approach into a statutory requirement. It will also provide the necessary statutory underpinning to a range of actions that will strengthen waste enforcement in relation to illegal dumping and littering, such as through allowing for the GDPR-compliant use of CCTV and other technologies in enforcement actions. The Circular Economy Strategy provides a national policy framework for Ireland's transition to a circular economy. This Act places that Strategy, and the commitment to a circular economy, on a clear statutory footing. The National Circular Economy Programme (operated by the EPA) will be placed on the same statutory basis.

The circular economy is not a new idea; in fact many circular activities are already commonplace. However, achieving the full benefits requires more than action at individual level; it requires the right mix of government policy and regulation, new business models and new systems of production. It also requires education and awareness.

Find out more on the [Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications website. \(/en/campaigns/a7976-circular-economy/\)](#).

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