

Selling Tobacco, Herbal Smoking Products and Cigarette Papers

Key Changes from 1 January 2027

It will be illegal to sell:

- Tobacco products
- Herbal smoking products
- Cigarette papers

to anyone **born on or after
1 January 2009.**

This applies to all retailers, including online sellers.

It will also be illegal for someone aged 18 or over to buy or try to buy these products for a person born on or after 1 January 2009. This is called **proxy purchasing.**



Age Verification

If a customer looks like they may not be eligible to buy, retailers should check their ID.

Retailers only need to check whether the customer's date of birth is **before
1 January 2009.**

Penalties for Illegal Sales

Anyone who sells these products to someone born on or after 1 January 2009 may receive:

- A Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) of:
 - **£200** in England, Wales and Scotland
 - **£250** in Northern Ireland (subject to approval)

Or they may be prosecuted and face larger fines.

Retailer Responsibilities

Retailers must:

- Check that customers were born **before 1 January 2009** before selling these products
- Ask for ID if they are unsure
- Display an updated age-of-sale notice at every tobacco sales point from **1 January 2027**



Products Covered

The rules apply to:

Tobacco products

Including:

- Cigarettes
- Rolling tobacco
- Cigars and cigarillos
- Pipe tobacco
- Shisha
- Snuff
- Chewing tobacco
- Heated tobacco products
- Tobacco blunts



Herbal smoking products

Including:

- Herbal cigarettes
- Herbal shisha
- Herbal blunts



Other products

- Cigarette papers



Age-of-Sale Notices

From 1 January 2027, shops selling tobacco products must display a notice stating:



**It is illegal to sell
tobacco products
to anyone born
on or after
1 January 2009."**

The notice must be clearly visible wherever tobacco products are sold.

Proxy Purchasing

From **1 January 2027**, it will be illegal for an adult to buy tobacco products, herbal smoking products or cigarette papers for someone born on or after **1 January 2009**.

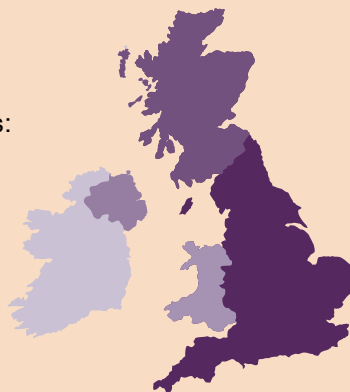
Staff should refuse a sale if they suspect someone is buying for an underage person.



Who the Rules Apply To

The rules apply across:

- England
- Wales
- Scotland
- Northern Ireland



Free Samples and Giveaways

From **29 October 2026**, businesses must not:

- Give away free samples of tobacco products, herbal smoking products or cigarette papers
- Give away these products as gifts or promotions

Large Discounts

From **29 October 2026**, businesses must not sell these products at very large discounts if the purpose is to promote them.

For example, selling cigarette papers for a token amount such as 10p as a promotion may be illegal.

Normal sale pricing, stock clearance discounts and trade discounts are still allowed.



Business-to-Business Sales

The new age-of-sale rules apply only to retail sales.

They do **not** apply to:

- Wholesale purchases
- Business-to-business transactions
- Purchases made on behalf of organisations for legitimate business or research purposes



Persistent Offenders

Retailers who repeatedly break the law may face stronger action, including temporary bans on selling tobacco-related products.



Quick Guide for Retailers

- ✓ Check customers were born before **1 January 2009**
- ✓ Ask for ID if unsure
- ✓ Display the new age-of-sale notice by **1 January 2027**
- ✓ Refuse suspected proxy sales
- ✓ Stop free giveaways from **29 October 2026**
- ✓ Avoid promotional deep-discount sales from **29 October 2026**

- ✗ Do not sell to anyone born on or after **1 January 2009**
- ✗ Do not sell on behalf of someone born on or after **1 January 2009**
- ✗ Do not offer free samples or promotional giveaways of covered products