Chartered Trading Standards Institute

Department of Health & Social Care

TOBACCO AND VAPES ACT 2026 - GUIDANCE FOR RETAILERS

Vending Machine Ban for Tobacco, Vapes and Nicotine Products

What is changing?

From **29 October 2026,** it will be illegal for a person who manages or controls premises to have a vending machine that sells or dispenses:

- Tobacco products
- Herbal smoking products
- Cigarette papers
- Vaping products
- Nicotine products (including nicotine pouches)

The ban applies across **England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.**

What types of vending machine are banned?

The ban covers:

- ✔ Traditional vending machines where customers buy products directly
- ✔ Machines that dispense products to customers as part of a sale, even if payment is made somewhere else (for example, at a till)

In simple terms:

If a customer can obtain a tobacco, vape or nicotine product directly from a machine, the machine is likely to be prohibited.

Which products are covered?

Tobacco products

Including:

- Cigarettes
- Hand rolling tobacco
- Cigars and cigarillos
- Pipe tobacco
- Shisha products
- Heated tobacco
- Chewing tobacco
- Snuff

Herbal smoking products

Including:

- Herbal cigarettes
- Herbal blunts
- Herbal shisha

Vaping products

Including:

- Vape devices
- E-liquids
- Vape pods and coils

Nicotine products

- Including:
- Nicotine pouches
- Nicotine strips
- Nicotine pearls

The ban applies to products containing **natural or synthetic nicotine.**

For further information go to
https://www.gov.uk/guidance/selling-tobacco-herbal-smoking-products-and-cigarette-papers

What is still allowed?

A vending machine may still be used as **secure storage** if customers cannot access products directly.

For example:

- ✔ A machine located behind the counter that dispenses products only to staff members, who then complete the sale to the customer
- ✔ Storage systems that customers cannot operate themselves

Are there any exemptions?

England and Wales only

Vending machines selling **vaping products** may continue to be used in:

- Adult mental health inpatient settings
- Areas used mainly or wholly by inpatients

This exemption does **not** apply to:

- Scotland
- Northern Ireland
- Other healthcare settings
- Tobacco or nicotine products

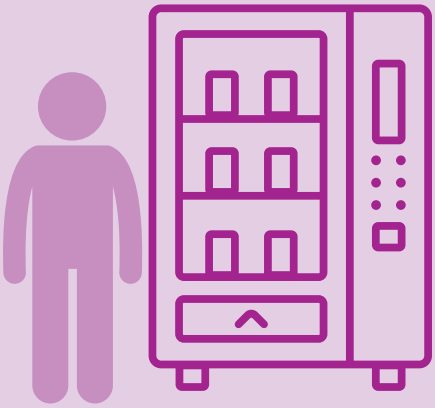
Who is responsible?

The responsibility lies with:

The person with management or control of the premises.

This could include:

- Retailers
- Shop owners
- Pub operators
- Club managers
- Business owners



The owner of the vending machine is **not automatically responsible,** unless they also control the premises.

Penalties for non-compliance

England, Wales and Scotland

A court can impose a fine of up to:

£2,500

Northern Ireland

A court can impose a fine of up to:

£5,000

What should businesses do now?

If you have a vending machine that stocks any of these products:

- ✔ Remove it before **29 October 2026**
- ✔ Contact the machine owner/operator to arrange removal if it is leased
- ✔ Move the machine to an area inaccessible to customers if it is only being used for secure storage
- ✔ Review any automated sales systems involving tobacco, vape or nicotine products

Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs)

In addition to prosecution:

Scotland

- **£200** Fixed Penalty Notice may be issued

Northern Ireland

- **£250** Fixed Penalty Notice may be issued (subject to legislative approval)