



Department
of Health

From Steve Brine MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Public Health and Primary Care

39 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0EU

020 7210 4850

Your Ref: Council - Suffrage - 20180328

PO-1128234

Dr Carolyn Wilkins OBE
Chief Executive, Oldham Council
Level 3 Civic Centre
West Street
Oldham OL1 1UG

10 MAY 2019

Thank you for your letter of 10 April to Steve Barclay about electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes).

I appreciate the Council's concerns.

While it is essential that we do not encourage smoking and that we continue to protect children from the dangers of nicotine, we recognise that e-cigarettes help smokers quit and the evidence indicates that they are considerably less harmful to health than cigarettes. The quality of products on the market remains highly variable. It is therefore important that proportionate regulation is introduced to ensure minimum safety requirements and that information is provided to consumers so that they can make informed choices. This is the aim of the regulatory framework set out in the Tobacco Products Directive (TPD), which came into force on 20 May 2016, with a period of 12 months grace for implementing some changes.

The TPD introduced minimum standards for safety and quality for all e-cigarette products and e-liquids, introduced a reporting regime so that we know what products are on the market and what is in them, introduced age restrictions so that they do not introduce children to vaping or smoking, specified a range of information that must be made available to consumers, and introduced some advertising restrictions.

The Royal College of Physicians (RCP) supports the proportionate regulation of e-cigarettes to help realise their benefit in reducing smoking rates. Whilst the RCP has urged the Government to monitor the implementation of the TPD for any unintended consequences, it issued a briefing to Parliamentarians in defence of the Tobacco and

Related Products Regulations 2016, which implement the TPD in the UK. Public Health England also reports annually to the Department regarding the evidence base on e-cigarettes to help inform policy.

As you will be aware, the UK has voted to leave the EU and the TPD will be one of the many areas the Government will want to consider carefully as part of this process. However, the UK's approach to the regulation of e-cigarettes has been and will remain pragmatic and evidence-based. The Government will continue to monitor and develop this evidence base, adapting policy accordingly, to ensure that guidance on the use of e-cigarettes best supports the protection and improvement of public health.

I hope this reply is helpful.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Steve Brine', is positioned above the printed name. The signature is fluid and cursive.

STEVE BRINE