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Vaping:

The WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) is an international treaty developed to combat the global tobacco epidemic. The Conference of the Parties (COP) to the FCTC is the governing body of the treaty. It meets every two years and COP10 – the tenth meeting – is scheduled to take place in Panama in November 2023.

Smoking remains the leading cause of preventable illness and death. E-cigarettes can be valuable as an aid to help smokers quit. They are part of the drive towards a smoke-free society and evidence shows a positive association with quit success.

Vaping is not completely risk-free, however, particularly for people who have never smoked, and evidence is mostly limited to short- and medium-term effects. I am particularly concerned about the rising prevalence of e-cigarette use among children.

It is important that we strike a delicate balance between supporting smokers in their journey towards a smoke-free future while safeguarding the health and wellbeing of our youth. E-cigarettes are one measure that should sit within a broader public health strategy to help people live well for longer. But I fully support a ban on vapes being branded and advertised in a way that appeals to children. And I believe we should work collaboratively with local councils and the NHS to ensure e-cigarettes are being used as a stop smoking aide, rather than a new form of smoking.

I hope that ministers, via their role in the WHO, will push harder for stronger and clearer messages, based on the latest data and evidence, and seek to regulate this market in a way that promotes quality and safety, while protecting young people.

If we want to build a healthier and fairer future, we need bold measures to tackle smoking and improve public health. I am committed to a long-term plan for reform of our health service, shifting the focus of care into the community, and putting prevention and early intervention at its heart.

Under the plan, all hospital trusts will integrate opt-out smoking cessation interventions and have a named lead on smoking cessation. Legislation to require all tobacco companies to dispel the myth that smoking reduces stress and anxiety will be introduced. And public health services will be supported with the resources they need to improve population health and tackle inequalities.

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