



# Media Centre .

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## IBVTA writes to Business and Public Health Ministers

The IBVTA recognises that these are uncertain times for many businesses. We have listened to the concerns of our members about the effects of the coronavirus outbreak on our sector, and we have taken action.

Today, we have written to the Public Health Minister, Jo Churchill MP. Copies of the letter have been sent to relevant government office holders, as well as politicians and public health and vaping stakeholders in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

In addition, we have also written to the Secretary of State and Ministers at BEIS, and as well as relevant Ministers in the devolved parliaments and assemblies. We have drawn their attention to the impacts which this unprecedented situation is having on vape businesses.

The letter the Public Health Minister reads as follows:


*Dear Secretary of State,*

*Subsequent to the spread of coronavirus in the UK, there is clearly a potential that "non-essential" retail establishments may be asked to close for a period. The IBVTA is concerned about the status of vape businesses should such closures be mandated.*

*Almost all of the UK's 3.6 million vapers are ex-smokers or current smokers. These vapers have replaced entirely or are reducing their combustible tobacco dependence with a much safer (and less addictive) alternative. However, the vast majority of those vapers are still addicted to nicotine at least to some degree, and in many cases are reliant on their local vape shop to ensure continuity of supply.*

*Should e-cigarettes, e-liquids and associated accessories not be readily available, a proportion of those vapers will be very tempted to buy a packet of cigarettes to tide them over, and the proportion that are currently using*

*both e-cigarettes and cigarettes will revert entirely to smoking rather than vaping. Despite plain packaging for combustible cigarettes, and the display restrictions imposed on the product set, cigarettes are still available in a*

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*The IBVTA therefore calls on the UK Government to ensure that dedicated vape stores can remain open during any potential “lockdown” of non-essential retail establishments while the spread of coronavirus and associated illness is brought under control. The IBVTA notes that the Italian Government has considered vape shops in the same way as pharmacies and food shops for the purposes of its own efforts to bring the epidemic under control, and believe this to be the only reasonable course of action under the circumstances.*

*Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact us.*

*Yours sincerely,  
Gillian Golden  
CEO*



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