Scottish Grocers Federation is the national trade association for the independent convenience store sector in Scotland. There are 5,286 convenience stores in Scotland. These stores provide 41,000 jobs and contribute some £530 million per annum to Scotland's economy in Gross Value Added.

Tobacco and E-cigarettes currently account for about 15% of the total sales turnover in convenience stores.

The view of SGF is that there are already robust measures in place to protect consumers and that to fully realise the potential benefits of these products the consumer market must be allowed to fully develop. A such it would be unwise to introduce restrictions on advertising, marketing and promotions of E-cigarettes.

E-Cigarettes and Current Legislation

There have been a number of regulatory changes to e-cigarettes in the last few years that have impacted retailers, most notably the introduction of a mandatory age of sale, which ACS supported; and the introduction of the EU Tobacco Products Directive. The introduction of the EU Tobacco Products Directive included a number of operational changes for convenience retailers who sell e-cigarettes. Retailers must ensure that they only sell e-cigarettes with a health warning, e-cigarettes with no more than 20mg/ml of nicotine (unless licensed as medicines), and e-cigarette refills with no more than 10ml.

In Scotland the Health (Tobacco, Nicotine etc. and Care (Scotland) Act of 2016 has established a very robust framework for the responsible retailing of E-cigarettes. The key measures are:

1. The sale of E-cigarettes to under-18s prohibited.
2. Proxy purchase of E-cigarettes on behalf of under-18s prohibited
3. Retailers must operate an age verification policy
4. Shop staff under the age of 18 prohibited from selling E-cigarettes unless authorised to do so by a responsible person
5. New E-cigarette retail register created

The Health Context

There has also been a debate regarding whether e-cigarettes provide a gateway for young people to smoking, however, this has been unfounded. Public Health England published an independent evidence review on e-cigarettes in 2015, which suggested that there is no evidence so far that e-cigarettes are acting as a route into smoking for children or non-smokers. More recently, a study has been published by UK Centre for Tobacco and Alcohol Studies, Public Health

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1 PHE: E-cigarettes around 95% less harmful than tobacco estimates landmark review
England, Action on Smoking and Health (ASH) and the DECIPHer Centre at the University of Cardiff in August 2017 which suggests that most e-cigarette experimentation among young people does not lead to regular use, and levels of regular e-cigarette use in young people who have never smokers remains low\(^2\). This is reinforced by figures by NHS Digital which suggest young people who are e-cigarette users are typically regular or ex-smokers, with 27\% of regular smokers reporting that they regularly use e-cigarettes.

*December 2017*

\(^2\) [ASH: UK’s largest ever analysis of data shows no evidence that e-cigarettes are leading young people into smoking](#)