

GINN Briefing Paper: Tobacco and Vapes Bill- Summary of Public Bill Committee Proceedings

Overview

The Tobacco and Vapes Bill aims to establish a comprehensive regulatory framework for nicotine pouches. The primary goal is to protect public health, curb nicotine addiction, and ensure consumer safety.

Definition and Usage of Nicotine Pouches

- *Nicotine Pouches*: Similar to snus, these are consumed by placing a small bag of powdered nicotine, often mixed with salt and flavourings, under the lip. This method delivers a rapid dose of nicotine.
- *Nicotine Strength and Flavors*: The nicotine strength in these pouches ranges from as low as 2 mg to over 150 mg per pouch. They often come in various flavours and colourful packaging.

Key Points Raised by MPs

- **Andrew Gwynne** emphasized the need for regulatory measures, stating that "nicotine is a highly addictive drug, particularly for adolescents whose brains are still developing." He noted the lack of age restrictions and advertising controls for nicotine pouches, unlike other nicotine products like vapes. The varying nicotine strengths and appealing packaging attract children, with usage notably rising among young men. Gwynne advocates for action to control these products to prevent adolescent addiction.

Health Risks

- **Dr. Carolyn Johnson** addressed the health implications of nicotine pouch use, highlighting their addictive nature and associated health risks, including oral and pharyngeal cancers and gum disease. Dr. Johnson expressed concerns about these products serving as a new avenue for nicotine addiction among youth. Citing Sweden as an example where such products are prevalent, she alerted the committee to their expanding presence in the UK market.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The discussions during the Public Bill Committee proceedings underscored the urgency of establishing age limits, advertising restrictions, and nicotine content regulations for nicotine pouches. These measures aim to:

- Protect young individuals from nicotine addiction.
- Mitigate health risks associated with long-term use.
- Ensure consumer awareness and safety.

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The committee's dialogue reflects a commitment to safeguarding public health while adapting to emerging trends in nicotine product consumption. Regulatory intervention is highlighted as crucial to addressing the evolving landscape of nicotine usage.