

Cigarette vending machines banned in England

October 1 2011

Cigarette vending machines were banned in England on Saturday, a move the government hopes will cut the numbers of children smoking.

Anyone caught selling cigarettes from the machines, usually found in pubs and clubs, could face a fine of £2,500 (\$3,900, 2,900 euros). Pubs will still be able to sell cigarettes from behind the bar.

Health Secretary Andrew Lansley said: "Smoking is one of the biggest and most stubborn challenges in public health. Over eight million people (around 15 percent) in England still smoke and it causes more than 80,000 deaths each year.

"Cigarette vending machines are often unsupervised, making it easy for children to purchase cigarettes from them.

"The ban on cigarette sales from vending machines will protect children by making cigarettes less accessible to them -- we want to do everything we can to encourage young people not to start smoking in the first place."

The British Heart Foundation charity said that around 200,000 youngsters start smoking regularly in England each year, with around 11 percent of regular smokers aged 11 to 15 getting their cigarettes from vending machines.

It is illegal to sell tobacco in Britain to anyone under the age of 18.

Elsewhere in the United Kingdom, cigarette [vending machines](#) are to be banned in Northern Ireland in February, while Scotland and Wales are committed to introducing a ban.

Meanwhile, in April 2012, all large retailers in England and Scotland will have to take all tobacco off display, with small shops having until April 2015 to comply.

The government is due to launch a public consultation on whether [cigarettes](#) should be sold in plain packaging with no logos or branding.

[Smoking](#) in enclosed public places was banned in [England](#) in July 2007.

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