

UK lawmakers urge government to relax rules on e-cigarettes

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A man breathes vape from an e-cigarette at a vape shop in London, Friday, Aug. 17, 2018. A report by the British science and technology MPs committee suggest that rules around e-cigarettes should be relaxed to help accelerate already declining smoking rates. (AP Photo/Frank Augstein)

A committee of British lawmakers is urging the government to loosen restrictions on e-cigarettes as a way of cutting the smoking rate.

Parliament's Science and technology Committee said Friday that e-cigarettes, or vapes, should be available on prescription and should not automatically be banned in public places. It also says the industry should be able to advertise the devices as a less harmful option for smokers.

Committee chairman Norman Lewis says e-cigarettes can be "a key weapon" in the fight against smoking.

Some medical experts caution that the risks from e-cigarettes are not fully understood. University of Birmingham professor David Thickett led research suggesting e-cigarettes may damage the immune system, and says the public "must be aware that these devices are not harmless."

The government says it will consider the [committee](#)'s recommendations.

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