

6 in 10 adults fear they couldn't spot counterfeit nicotine products as tougher laws come into force

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One month after historic legislation passed, new research highlights major public confusion over counterfeit vapes, nicotine pouches and cigarettes

MILLIONS of UK consumers may be unable to identify counterfeit nicotine products despite sweeping new regulations coming into force under the Government's Tobacco and Vapes Bill, according to a new study released today.

Consumer research conducted by One Poll for TSL Authentic, a counterfeit nicotine awareness initiative, found that 59% of UK adults would not feel confident identifying a counterfeit vape or nicotine pouch, while almost half (46%) were unaware fake nicotine products are widely sold in the UK.

The findings come as the Government prepares to introduce tougher rules covering the sale, marketing and supply of nicotine products under the Tobacco and Vapes Bill which became law last month.

Amid fears that a growing nicotine awareness gap could undermine the impact of the new regulations, the research also highlights the role of financial pressures in purchasing decisions:

- **39%** said the cost-of-living crisis has made them more likely to buy cheaper nicotine products
- **30%** admitted they were likely to consider buying a nicotine product they suspected might be counterfeit if it was significantly cheaper?
- **23%** said they had seen suspiciously cheap nicotine products sold locally or online

Public health concerns were also significant. **68%** of respondents said they were concerned counterfeit nicotine products may contain unsafe ingredients, while a third (**33%**) of nicotine users reported experiencing negative health effects after using a product they later suspected may have been fake or illegal.

Consumer protection experts say clear information for consumers and strong enforcement of Britain's new nicotine laws are now urgently needed to tackle the criminal sellers who will continue to exploit the confusion highlighted by the research.

Ioan Kamberov, founder of counterfeit nicotine awareness initiative TSL Authentic, said: "Counterfeit nicotine products aren't just a trading standards issue — they're a consumer safety issue. The concerning reality is that many consumers don't feel confident they could spot a fake, meaning people may be unknowingly buying products that fall outside regulated manufacturing, quality and safety controls.

"Unlike legitimate products sold through regulated supply chains, counterfeit products may not meet the same standards, leaving consumers unable to be certain what they're putting into their bodies. At a time when household budgets remain under pressure, cheaper products can be tempting, but when it comes to nicotine products, a bargain isn't always a bargain.

"The research shows there is a clear awareness gap. Consumers need to understand the risks, know what warning signs to look out for and take simple steps to verify that the products they buy are genuine."

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