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Rt Hon. Lord Markham
House of Lords
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Subject: Smoking Harm Reduction: support safer alternatives – save lives

Dear Lord Markham,

— I am sure you are aware that vaping has been a great success in reducing smoking, the NHS finding that with support 2/3 smokers successfully stop smoking with e-cigs. This is vastly more effective than NRT products that at best where 6% successful. Sweden has had longer with Snus as a harm reduction product, thus are looking at becoming effectively smoke free (< 5% smokers) this year or next.

I see worrying signs in the media, and with the WHO both seem to be extremely hostile to vaping, when in fact it is doing immense good, not to mention saving the NHS vast sums (smoking is the leading cause of cancer) in preventing cancer and smoking related disease. A cancer prevented will require no detection, diagnosis or treatment; a triple saving in cost to the NHS and public.

I would like to make my view known and hope you would support it, that the UK must hold it's nerve, it must stay true to the scientific evidence from the Royal Collage Physicians, NHS Smokefree, Cochrane etc as detailed in the reports commissioned by PHE/OHID. We must also be aware of the situation in Australia where effective prohibition (the recommendation of the WHO) has been tried, and as predicted by myself and many others, seems to have resulted in an illicit market, with worse figures for youth uptake of smoking. Youth smoking in the UK, NZ and USA where vaping is available have all fallen (in the USA youth vaping became popular as a result youth smoking became all but non existent (<1% regular smokers).

While youth vaping is not desirable, it remains more desirable than youth smoking, an important point to remember. Vaping is unlikely to result in deaths, open system vaping provides and off ramp in lowering nicotine and stopping (not so for smoking). If youth take up smoking and continue, then it is known at least half will die early because of it. This is also complicated by the fact that nicotine provides therapeutic benefits, thus I would like you to see this single link https://safernicotine.wiki/mediawiki/index.php/Nicotine_therapeutic_benefits it contains a lot of information, but it is important I feel to consider the benefits of safer sources of nicotine, without the harms of smoking.



The following is my personal story, I do not insist you read it beyond knowing vaping saved my life.

I am primarily a user of Electronic Cigarettes, and of Snus, as well as tobacco free nicotine pouches. I am also a consumer advocate for Tobacco Harm Reduction products (hereafter referred to as THR) for the simple reason that I firmly believe these products saved my life, and have a desire to pass that opportunity on to other smokers, many of whom will not be aware.

I started vaping in 2008, primarily to vape where I could not smoke, I had no intention of giving up smoking, I had already tried every available method, some several times to no effect, and had given up any hope of stopping. However by early 2009 I discovered by happy accident, that I had not bought any tobacco for several weeks (at least 4) and thus had gained some funds budgeted for, but not spent. Unlike most folks who give up smoking I have no firm quit date, and don't recall any difficulty in slowly switching from a vastly harmful product to a vastly safer one. The exact opposite of previous quit attempts. I learned on internet forums that this is not uncommon with vaping, but never happens to my knowledge with NRT.

As part of my advocacy work I run the site <https://safernicotine.wiki> the intention to provide a repository of information on THR and links to science, resources for advocates, policy makers, doctors and indeed anyone interested in reducing the harm caused by smoking.

I am not paid in any way for my advocacy, and in fact pay for the bandwidth and time required to maintain the site. Much of the content is provided by volunteers around the world.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like any further information, including the vast database of knowledge contained in the wiki site, or any assistance using the site.

Sincerely

Richard Pruen