

Chief Constable
T/Chief Constable Darren Martland
Police Headquarters
Carleton Hall Penrith,
Cumbria
CA10 2AU



8 August 2025

Dear

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST – FOI 727/25

I refer to your request for information which was received by Cumbria Constabulary on 16 July 2025. I note you seek access to the following information:

I am writing to request information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The main purpose of this request is to gather data concerning illegal or black-market vape sellers within your police force's jurisdiction.

Note: An illegal or unregulated vape does not comply with UK regulations, often meaning it's not registered with the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA), contains nicotine levels exceeding the legal limit (20mg/ml), or has a tank capacity larger than 2ml for single-use vapes. These products can also be dangerous because they may contain harmful substances or even illegal drugs like THC or Spice. Following the ban on disposable vapes in the UK, this definition will now also include single-use vapes.

Specifically-for each of the past 5 years (2020-2024), and partial data for 2025 if available-I am seeking anonymised data from your police force on the following:

- 1. The total number of sellers found to be in possession of illegal, unregulated or "black market" vape products***
- 2. The number of sellers who faced any form of legal action, including but not limited to warnings, fines, charges, or prosecutions***
- 3. The number of individuals formally prosecuted (i.e. individuals who were taken to court and faced criminal proceedings resulting in a conviction or ongoing trial).***

Your request for information has now been considered and I can confirm Cumbria Constabulary does hold some information relevant to your request and where this is the case I have today decided to disclose this to you.

Question 1 - The total number of sellers found to be in possession of illegal, unregulated or "black market" vape products

The below figures relate to drug offences that fall under 'supply' offences where the word 'vape' is in the MO. Please note the Constabulary does not hold data relating to 'vapes' prior to 2022.



EMPLOYER RECOGNITION SCHEME

BRONZE AWARD

Proudly supporting those who serve.



	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Grand Total
Total	0	0	0	1	4	2	7

Although the above question relates to 'distinct sellers' we have provided a distinct count of the crimes recorded. The same person may be included more than once.

Question 2 - The number of sellers who faced any form of legal action, including but not limited to warnings, fines, charges, or prosecutions

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Grand Total
Investigation still open						1	1
1 - Charged or Summoned				1	2		3
2 - Cautioned - Youth					1		1
2A - Cautioned Youth - Relates to an Alternative Offence to that Recorded					1		1
8 - Community Resolution						1	1
Grand Total	0	0	0	1	4	2	7

Please note: A keyword search may not accurately identify all information held by the Constabulary. If, for example, the keyword(s) were recorded in a different field to that which has been searched, or if another name or term was used to describe 'vape', any such records would not be identified by the keyword search which has been undertaken. For this reason, although provided in good faith, the information may not be wholly accurate.

Question 3 - The number of individuals formally prosecuted (i.e. individuals who were taken to court and faced criminal proceedings resulting in a conviction or ongoing trial)

The Constabulary does not hold information in relation to convictions as Prosecution data is held by the Criminal Prosecution Service.

Police forces in the United Kingdom are routinely required to provide statistics to government bodies and the recording criteria is set nationally. However, the systems used for recording these figures are not generic, nor are the procedures used locally in capturing the data. It should be noted that for these reasons this force's response to your questions should not be used for comparison purposes with any other response you may receive.

Whilst every care has been taken in the retrieval of the information provided, please do not hesitate to contact us for clarification, if you do have any issues or queries relating to this data.

I believe Trading Standards may record data in relation to illegal or black-market vape sellers so you may also wish to submit a request for information to them.

Complaint Rights

Your attention is drawn to the attached sheet, which details your right of complaint.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your interest in Cumbria Constabulary.



EMPLOYER RECOGNITION SCHEME
BRONZE AWARD
Proudly supporting those who serve.

