

A close-up, black and white photograph of a woman with long dark hair, smiling and looking down at a glass she is holding. She is holding a clear straw in the glass. The background is blurred.

Trading Insight

May 2025

Inside:

Who's taking the stage at Trade Convention?

Best Bar None winners attend national awards at The House of Lords

Earn extra revenue with CitizenCard

Refresh with The Retailer

Single-use vape ban - what to do



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nus charity TRADE CONVENTION

18 - 19 June 2025

Birmingham Guild of Students

Get ready for an unmissable event! This year's line-up opens with the brilliant 'Consumer Whisperer' Kate Hardcastle, followed by industry experts such as Sylvia Oates from Six till Six and culinary star Jenny Chandler, all bringing their expertise and talent to the stage.



Day 1

10:00 - 11:00 | Opening plenary...

Globally renowned and respected, Kate Hardcastle MBE is the ultimate authority on consumer insights—a trusted voice and leading advocate known as the “Customer Whisperer”™. With a career spanning three decades, Hardcastle has pioneered the way in which brands connect with their audiences, shaping strategies for some of the world's most iconic names, including Disney, Marks & Spencer, and American Express. Drawing on direct insights from panels of consumers every month across multiple sectors, she crafts unparalleled strategies that elevate customer engagement, building genuine respect and authenticity between consumer and business.

11:25 - 12:10...

Boost your revenue with NUS media sales, ISIC, CitizenCard and more! - Lizzie Bone, NUS

Come along to discuss ways to generate revenue outside of your commercial spaces. We'll review the learnings and next steps from the SU affiliate sales pilot, outline exciting plans for ISIC and how NUS will work with SUs to rebuild revenue in this space, and other ways to generate more significant revenue in your digital spaces including CitizenCard. As a bonus, anyone who attends this session can register to receive 25 free digital ISIC licenses for staff and officers when they sign up to partner with NUS on ISIC, along with a few small goodies!





Cocktail Masterclass - Simeon Gunn, Monster

Get ready to crank up your bar game with the Monster Energy Masterclass. We're not just serving up tips and tricks for crafting epic cocktails, we're taking it to the next level. Your crew will get the inside scoop from our expert bartenders, while we design a custom Monster menu guaranteed to impress your customers. Get ready for some serious energy as our team mixes, muddles, and shakes things up like never before.

Plant-Powered Plates: Sustainable and Surprisingly Simple!

- Jenny Chandler

Explore the possibilities of plants in your students' union food offerings with renowned chef and food writer, Jenny Chandler and Humane World for Animals. Participants will be inspired by easy, cost-effective plant-based menu ideas, and gain insights into the environmental and health benefits of plant-based options. Jenny will demonstrate how to prepare an air-fryer friendly Asian tempeh dish, boosted with protein from edamame; and a seasonal pasta salad packed full of so much umami depth your customers will be clamouring for more!



Understanding Retro Payments - Emma Rowlands, Central Billing Manager

Join this session to better understand retros and how Licensed Trade plus and Retail plus impact what a students' union is paid. (re-run on day 2 at 14:15 - 15:00)

The four hospitality horsemen of the apocalypse - Tom Mountain, YUSU

How our students' union created franchise can help you fix profitability, sustainability, employability and affordability. (re-run at 12:15 - 13:00)

12:15 - 13:00...

What's new for 2025? - Cheryl Knight, Trading Support Manager

The Trading Support buying team will give an overview of the tenders, findings and new products for 2025.

Members will be talked through the products / categories and shown and offered samples of the products that are new in each category for the next academic year.

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12:15 - 13:00...

Menu Magic: Boost Your Plant-Based Food Sales with Smart Strategies

- Imogen Clemett and Joanna Randall, Forward Food at Humane World for Animals

Students' Union commercial operators and food service providers are under pressure to deliver more plant-based menu options than ever before. But how can you respond to this demand without also driving away your meat-loving diners?

At this interactive workshop we'll explore subtle yet powerful changes that can drive uptake of plant-based options. Through engaging discussions, real-world case studies, and actionable insights, you'll leave with practical, low-cost strategies to boost sales.

With increasing demand from students for more plant-based options, SUs need practical, effective strategies to meet this expectation without compromising sales or engagement. This session will provide proven, evidence-based approaches to successfully expanding plant based food provision— helping you drive positive change while ensuring offerings remain appealing, budget-friendly, and commercially viable.



14:00 - 14:45...

Beyond Survival: How SUs can thrive through diversified income -

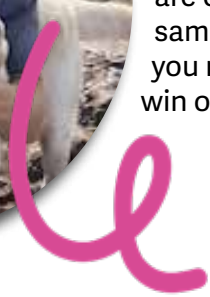
Robert Pegg, Imperial College SU

In an era of rising costs and evolving student needs, Student Unions must work together to diversify income streams, optimize net contribution, and maximize commercial success. This session will explore how SUs can leverage collective power to grow revenues, develop sustainable new income sources, and make the most of existing commercial operations.



Introduction to TRIP - The leading 'Better For You' beverage - Ed McCrorie, TRIP Drinks

Adaptogens are a new category that GenZs are obsessed with. In this session, you can sample the TRIP range, ask Ed any questions you may have about this growing market, and win on the spot prizes!



Salad saviours! Simple, easy to create on-trend flavour profiles - Danny Silcock and Gemma Watkins, Brakes

Join Brakes for a demonstration with their wonderful chef Danny of their new range of salad products. Learn how to create a range of on-trend hot and cold dishes, with exciting flavour profiles, simple to do for the lowest of skill sets, and Danny will show you how. There'll be sample pots for everyone to try the dishes created.

We have a new innovative range of prepped frozen products that will make it easy for all skill sets in the smallest of kitchens. Refresh your menu for the lighter nights with exciting new flavour profiles from around the globe. We are seeing a rise in the popularity of healthier takeaway options, with brands like the Salad Project thriving, recently opening the doors to their 7th store in central London. A big social media presence means they are sure to be a big hit with the students.



Creating and maintaining safe environments within students' unions - Sylvia Oates, CEO at Six Till Six

Sylvia is the CEO of Six Till Six, a leading organisation dedicated to promoting safety and best practices within the hospitality and nightlife sectors. As a director of the 'Ask for Angela' scheme, Sylvia has worked extensively to ensure venues remain safe spaces for individuals to seek support. With over 26 years of experience in the hospitality industry, she has played a key role in the success and expansion of initiatives such as Best Bar None. Sylvia is a passionate advocate for supporting venues to uphold the highest standards of safety, inclusivity and responsibility.

In this session, Sylvia Oates will discuss the importance of creating and maintaining safe environments within students' union venues. This session will provide practical tools, strategies and best practices that students' union staff can implement to safeguard students and staff.



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14:00 - 14:45...

Franklin and Sons: Drinking Habit Changes - Ryan Arnold and Ceara Toon, Global Brands

Changing drinking habits are having a large impact on the commercial side of the industry and students' unions are seeing these changes.

This insightful presentation will highlight student habit changes with a look into how these new habits integrate into each part of the student's daily journey from cafe and daytime studying to early evening socialising and late night partying.

Ryan and Ceara will also explain where Franklin & Sons can fit into each part of the journey and how Global Brands can support this.



15:00 - 15:45...

From posters to profits - Building a winning media sales strategy - Paul Parkes, University of Manchester SU

Learn how the University of Manchester Students' Union built Thirteen Media into a thriving media agency. This session breaks down the key strategies, challenges, and wins behind our success, giving you practical insights to boost media sales and revenue in your own SU.



The student staff experience. Working for SUs in 2025 - Jo Lowe, Nottingham SU

This session will share the insight gained on the student staff experience in SU's following a benchmarking activity looking into various metrics such as payrate, contracted hours, training delivery, perks and roles/responsibilities of student staff. We'll look at what commonalities, best practice and innovation has been successful and enhanced the student staff experience in SUs.

Toast Brewing & UCL: Sustainable beer, innovation & launching world's first living beer fount

- Rob Wilson, Toast Brewing Chief Toaster and Chris Hill, UCL Bar Manager

Toast brews all their delicious beer using surplus bread that would otherwise go to waste and donate all their profits to charity. This session will share how the UCL bar team have championed sustainability, how they've maximised the opportunity Toast presents with the world's first living beer fount, and how they've marketed and engaged their customers for Toast to become the best selling beer on the bar.

We'll have beer to taste during the session, and Toast are proudly supporting the pre-dinner drinks on the evening of day 1 to continue the conversations over a pint. Come join us and let's Raise a Toast to sustainability and NUS Charity.



On average, 70% of drink menus are not coffee - how much attention do you give them? - Julian Hollis, Beyond the Bean

This session will provide drinks insight, focus on market trends, and give you some great ideas on how you can offer the right coffee menu for your customers.



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Driving equality in our clothing supply chain: NUS' clothing levy project in Tamil Nadu, India - Jamie Agombar, SOS UK and Andy Ashcroft, Koolskools

This session will showcase a wonderful project that we have collectively funded in our clothing supply chain, and demonstrate how working with our suppliers really can change peoples lives for the better.

The session will be delivered by Jamie Agombar from SOS-UK and Andy Ashcroft from Koolskools, with a live link-up to the factory that manufactures apparel for us in India to meet some of the beneficiary of our clothing levy projects.



Day 2

10:00 - 11:00...

Adapting and thriving in late night - Global Brands and guests

A panel of Industry professionals who will answer questions to deliver insight and discussion into the late night climate and economy and how they have adapted to survive. The panel will include Micheal Kill (NTIA), SU late night operators and an external late night operator who can offer outside insights. The panel will be hosted by Rebecca Mottershaw.

11:30 - 12:15...

Train me to the moon...Diageo Bar Academy - Alex Kammerling - Diageo Bar Academy

Watch your sales fly as we demonstrate the power of staff training to build strong bar teams who understand the power of hospitality and can execute exceptional 'perfect serve' standards to help attract loyal customers.



Clothing made to be remade with Teemill - Laura Carter, Teemill

Fast fashion is broken—100 billion garments are made each year, and most end up in landfills within 12 months. But what if clothing never became waste? We'll dive into the fashion industry's biggest problem—and share how Teemill is leading the way with the world's first open access circular fashion system. You'll get hands-on with our 100% organic clothing, discover how waste-free fashion is possible, and ask us anything in a live Q&A.

13:30 - 14:15...



Turning Up the Heat: Revolutionising Student Food with West Cornwall Pasty Co. & Hot Towers - George Hammond, Samworth Brothers Food for Now

Join us for a flavour-packed session as we bring the heat with West Cornwall Pasty Co. And our innovative Hot Towers range. Discover how hot food can drive sales and footfall in your SU, explore our latest NPD's and sample student-approved favourites. We'll delve into how easy it is to delivery quality, hot, grab-and-go food that works for your space - and your budget.



Sustainability & Innovation - Amy Blackwell, Molson Coors

Hear how one of the worlds largest brewers is delivering on their sustainability agenda through innovation in technology and products.

The World of Competitive Socialising with Hooch

A talk focusing on the rising trend of Competitive Socialising – where fun and interactive games meet social drinking experiences. Our session will explore everything members need to know about competitive socialising; what it is, why it's in such high demand (particularly amongst students) and how members can capitalise on this trend in venue with the support of Hooch.



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²Nielsen IQ data to 07.09.24

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14:15 - 15:00...

Market and LWC update - Adam Alexander, LWC

An update on LWCs new depots and infrastructure investments offering the best service in the industry as well as an overview of LWC account management at site level, NPDs and new Signature Brand products, followed by an open forum for Q&A.



Sustainable SUs Charter

Join SU Charter members to discuss the barriers to sustainability and power of working together. This session will provide an overview of the Sustainable SU Charter, how it can help guide an SUs road to sustainability, the key challenges facing SUs, and solutions to these problems.

15:00 - 15:45...

The Cocktail Programme: Crafting fast, premium cocktails - Andy Hall, Global Brands ABM Senior Commercial Manager

Interactive Q&A, insights and a cocktail making session, as well as an overview and intro to the membership Cocktail Programme and how Global Brands can support SUs with ABM (Finest Call and Re'al) with training, POS and menu writing support.



Sustainability Beyond Recycling: The Transformative Power of Green Impact - Lauren Walia (SOS)

This workshop will explore how Green Impact Students' Unions (GISU) can transform your SU or SA into a hub for sustainability and social justice. We will showcase how SUs and SAs across the country are using the GISU framework to build impactful projects and campaigns that go beyond traditional "green" initiatives—tackling climate justice, equality, student wellbeing, and more. Whether you're new to sustainability or looking to elevate your existing efforts, leave with actionable strategies to amplify the student voice and create lasting change.



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rebecca.mottershaw@globalbrands.co.uk
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* How Gen Z Consumer Behavior is Reshaping Retail - NielsenIQ 2024

The Drinks Business 2024 *NUS Drinks Tracker 2024

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Best Bar None winners national awards ceremony

After a successful 2024 Best Bar None our two NUS national winners were invited to the annual Best Bar None National Awards at the House of Lords in March.

Our winning SUs were presented with awards to recognise the hard work and commitment to ensure their students have safe and responsibly operated venues and bars to visit.

Joining winners from across the country, Sam Hollier and Meg O' Dell collected the award for the Students' Union at UWE and Adam Parton (from the Trading Support Team) collected the award on behalf of Leeds University Union.

"Being invited to the House of Lords is not something I've heard of for someone in my line of work. I was so thrilled to be able to dress to impress for a trip to London, and mingle with other winners.

"Everyone I told was so amazed to hear I had an invite and said it's not something everyone can say they've done. I never thought I would be treated like a celebrity for "just doing my job".

"The Best Bar None scheme itself is really important to us, and it was exciting enough to get gold every year, but joint first AND an invited to collect an award was something I will always be proud of.

"The evening itself was lovely. I loved seeing how excited everyone else was and also looking their best. The best bit for me, was a photographer asking if they could take my picture. Me, of all people! That truly made me feel like a VIP.

ers attend emony

"The hosts themselves were amazing. They were very friendly and so funny while presenting the awards. And the staff were so attentive and polite, I wonder if they also partake with BBN, surely they would win. I would be honoured to be invited again, I've just got to make sure I'm the best, bar none!"
Sam Hollier, UWE

Adam Parton who collected the award on behalf of Leeds said: "I felt very privileged to represent NUS Charity and member students' unions at the Best Bar None Annual Conference and evening awards ceremony hosted by the Chair of Best Bar None, Lord Smith.

"The conference was a great opportunity to network with the operators of other schemes and learn about what is new and upcoming for the scheme. It was a pretty exciting start to my second week on the job in the NUS Charity Trading Support team".



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By partnering with CitizenCard, students' unions can provide an affordable, reliable form of identification while earning extra income in the process.

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Help them access a trusted and affordable ID.

No upfront costs

Registration is simple, and totally free!

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For over 15 years now, The Retailer Group has supported students' unions in the design and build of convenience and clothing shops, food outlets, reception areas, and general student spaces. Our work also includes reviewing and improving operations, boosting both sales and margins. In addition, we offer creative services such as web design and graphic creation, helping SUs strengthen their branding, communicate more effectively, and enhance the digital side of the student experience. The rapidly evolving landscape we all operate in continues to shift at pace with the expectations of today's student body dramatically shifted, driven by cultural, technological, and economic changes.

One of the most significant shifts has been the rise in student expectations. Today's students are not only more diverse but also more discerning. They've grown up in an age of digital convenience, curated brand experiences, and socially responsible consumption. They expect more from their campus facilities, more choice, higher quality, and spaces that reflect their values. Sustainability, inclusivity, and community now play essential roles in retail and hospitality design.

The growth of technology has played a pivotal role. From the introduction of contactless payments to mobile ordering, self-service tills, and most recently cashierless shops, the digital revolution has transformed the student shopping experience. In convenience stores, the surge of students at peak times often leads to frustrating queues. The first shop we designed was in Sheffield SU, and both the look and feel, as well as our entire design approach have changed dramatically since then. Ensuring fixtures are adaptable has been critical in future-proofing shops as demographics and product ranges evolve. At Huddersfield SU, for example, installing a bank of self-service tills significantly reduced queue times, and student feedback on the new look store was overwhelmingly positive.

REFRESH?



Flexibility in space usage has become another key consideration. As the lines between studying, socialising, and shopping continue to blur, student spaces must now be multi-functional. Retail and food outlets double as social and study zones, with carefully considered layouts, lighting, and furniture that encourage both productivity and community engagement. The Retailer Group has responded by designing modular, adaptable environments that evolve in step with student needs.

Looking ahead, the next few years are likely to bring even more transformation. With continued growth in digital integration, a deeper focus on sustainability, and an ever-changing student demographic, SU retail and hospitality spaces must become even more responsive and innovative. We've recently designed the first cashierless shop in a compact 16 square metre footprint, signalling a shift toward small, well-stocked outlets in libraries or other student areas, offering 24/7 service without high overheads.

We have worked with many great teams across students' unions and look forward to adding value in shops, cafés and social spaces whether it be a low-cost refresh, a complete refurbishment or an operational review. The Retailer Group remains committed to offering value for money and working in the best interest of SUs. As a strategic partner with NUS Services, we continue to create spaces that not only meet today's challenges but are ready for tomorrow's opportunities.

For further information, contact [Gordon Macpherson](#)

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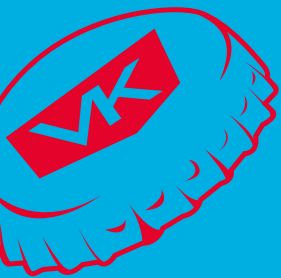


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Staff T-shirts
POS for giveaways: Sunglasses,
Bucket Hats, Cross Body Bags,
Keyrings and Spinning Fans
Cocktail Buckets
Light up Batons
Fridge Clings
+ More...

To Do List:

- ☐ Sign up for your spot on the VK Freshers 2025 Tour via NUS Connect.
- ☐ Create your screen media and social media assets to advertise your event.
- ☐ Create your cocktail menus for VK sharer serves.
- ☐ Visit us at the NUS Tradeshow for a taster of the tour.
- ☐ Order in your VK to get those fridges stocked and ready for the students!
- ☐ Order in your Hooch, Kick Energy, Corkys, Lustre & Jungfrau to help bring the party.
- ☐ Contact rebecca.mottershaw@globalbrands.co.uk for any extra information or support.
- ☐ Host your VK Freshers Event! Flavour Sorted, Party Started.



FOXPRO EVENTS

Students are showing they do want big events with plenty of experience packed in - and they're willing to pay for it.

Ticket sales are overwhelmingly positive so far for all of the end-of-year events we're supporting, with headline talent, a variety of performers, multiple stages and fun activities to boot. A recent survey asked students at one SU if they wanted a cheap night out or a full festival-style affair with big production, a stellar line-up and a high ticket price for a proper end-of-year celebration; in record numbers they overwhelmingly voted for the latter.

One Summer ball that we are entirely operationally responsible for is on track for a sell-out and we've not yet announced any of the line-up! A couple of others also sold out in record time. Against a declining late-night landscape, it's great to see that big events are very much in demand across the sector.

We can help with every part of your event planning; booking the right talent and performers, supporting with operations and delivery, and even capturing your best moments from the sky with our new in-house drone filming and photography. If you're coming up short in any area, we can support you. Please drop us a line at jason@foxproevents.com to arrange a chat.

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SINGLE-USE VAPES

what to do after 1 June

From 1 June 2025, it will be illegal for businesses to sell or supply, offer to sell or supply, or have in their possession for sale or supply all single-use or 'disposable' vapes.

For a vape to be considered reuseable, it must be both rechargeable and refillable. The major vaping bands have been developing pod systems that will be compliant after this date. These new lines are now available to order via AF Blakemore.

What to do if you have stock of single-use vapes

If you still have single-use vapes in stock, from 1 June 2025, you won't be able to sell or supply them to customers and will need to arrange for them to be recycled.

If you have a vape bin service, you should do this through the company they provide and may need to pay a fee.

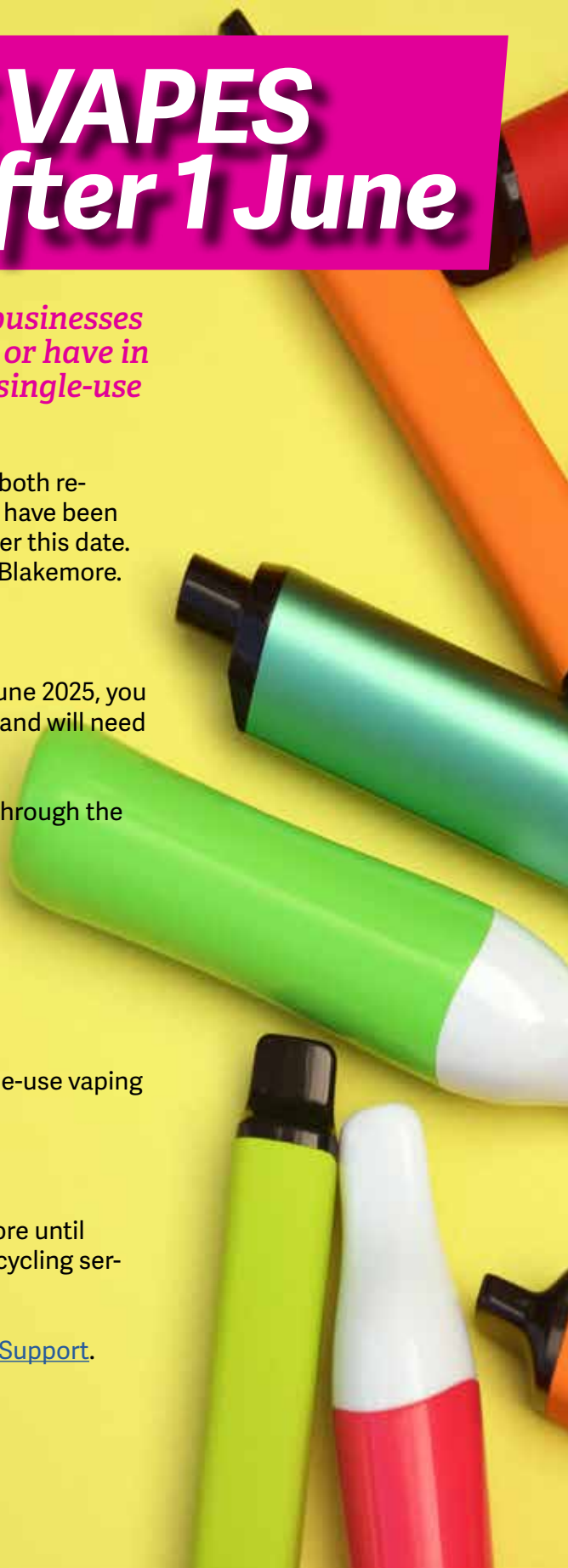
To prepare for the ban, you should:



- stop buying new stock of single-use vapes
- sell through all existing stock
- buy vapes that follow the new regulations.

From 1 June 2025, if you possess any leftover single-use vaping products, you'll need to:

- separate them from other goods
- label them as unsellable
- remove them from your shopfloor or online store until they've been collected by a registered vape recycling service.

If you have any questions, please contact [Trading Support](#).





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