



**SOUTH EAST  
OF ENGLAND  
POSITION STATEMENT  
ON VAPING 2024**



**South East**  
Tobacco Control Network





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**How to use this document**

This position statement has been produced to help with developing organisation policies and individual practice. Some sections will be more relevant than others.

Follow the links to references and other content that has been signposted for more information. The contents icon ≡ at the top left-hand side of each page will bring you back to the contents page wherever you are in the document.



**Our organisations work together to prevent the harm that smoking causes in our communities. We are pleased to champion this updated position statement for the region. We hope it will help everyone to take an evidence-based approach to the advice given about vaping to quit smoking across the South East.**

Smoking has an enormous impact on individual and population health and on health and social care service pressures. These harms disproportionately affect people who are disadvantaged as smoking is still the single greatest cause in the gap in healthy life expectancy in England. In the South East region, between 2017 and 2019 there were 27,823 deaths attributed to smoking each year.<sup>1</sup> The annual healthcare cost in the region has been estimated at £279 million. The estimated cost to local authorities in the region is £165.8 million every year for social care that is needed because of smoking related illnesses.<sup>2</sup>

We want to help people to quit smoking. We know that almost half of smokers in England (47.6%) want to quit.<sup>3</sup> The evidence shows that vapes are an effective aid that help people to quit smoking. For people who smoke, vaping is safer than smoking. Vaping has minimal serious side-effects when used for a short time to stop smoking.

People who do not smoke should not vape. We must prevent children from using vapes due to the unknown longer-term harms of vaping and the risk of nicotine addiction.

This statement signposts to trusted sources for guidance about vapes and vaping. It summarises the current evidence about the risks involved and about how effective vapes are for people who use them to quit smoking.

We want to thank the South East Tobacco Control Network that has produced this report on behalf of the South East Association of Directors of Public Health. We hope that colleagues who are developing policies and practice to support people to quit smoking will find it helpful.

We want to encourage a consistent and evidence-based approach across the region that helps people who want to use vapes to quit smoking.



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<sup>1</sup>Fingertips (2023) Local Tobacco Control Profiles <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/tobacco-control/data#page/3/gid/1938132887/ati/402/are/E06000044/iid/93748/age/202/sex/4/cat/-1/ctp/-1/yr/3/cid/4/tbm/1/page-options/car-do-0>  
<sup>2</sup>ASH (2023) Ready Reckoner <https://ash.org.uk/resources/view/ash-ready-reckoner>  
<sup>3</sup>ONS (2023) Adult smoking habits in the UK: 2022 <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/healthandlifeexpectancies/bulletins/adultsmokinghabitsingreatbritain/2022>

**Smoking is the single biggest preventable cause of death and ill health in England and a significant driver of health inequalities. For someone who smokes, vaping is a small fraction of the risk. People who smoke often do not understand how much lower the risk of vaping is, relative to smoking. This position statement helps to address that gap with consensus advice from organisations with a public health function across the region.**

Vaping has rapidly increased among adults who want to quit smoking. It is proven to be an effective aid. There has also been an increase in use among children, who cannot legally purchase the devices and should not be using them.

Recent innovations include single-use vapes. These devices have rapidly gained market share. Although they should be treated as waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) they are rarely recycled. There are significant concerns about the environmental impact when these devices are thrown away and not recycled.

There are stringent regulations that govern the production and sale of vapes in England. The Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) is the regulator. Trading standards is responsible for enforcement locally. Any connection with the tobacco industry would be governed by agreements that prevent commercial influence in health policy.

There is guidance about working with children. Guidance for stop smoking services. Guidance for health and care professionals and for workplaces. The statement guides readers towards the evidence. It describes how to access training. It is referenced throughout and includes trusted sources for more information. It concludes with primary and secondary messages for communications and how to access help to quit smoking locally.

**Vapes are an effective aid for adults to quit smoking.**

**If you smoke, vaping is safer than smoking. Vaping has minimal serious side-effects when used for a short time to stop smoking.**

**People who want to quit smoking using vapes should be encouraged to quit smoking and switch to vaping.**

**People who do not smoke should not vape.**

**We must prevent children from using vapes due to the unknown longer-term harms of vaping and the risk of nicotine addiction.**

**This statement reports the South East public health consensus on vaping. It is intended to help organisations develop their policies and practice. We want to encourage a consistent and evidence-based approach that helps people who want to use vapes to quit smoking.**





**Smoking is the leading cause of preventable illness and premature death in England. <sup>4</sup> Quitting smoking is one of the best things a smoker will ever do for their health.<sup>5</sup>**

People who quit smoking in England are more likely to have used e-cigarettes that contain nicotine (vapes) than nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) to quit smoking.<sup>6</sup> Research has shown that using vapes (vaping) with behavioural support is more effective for people who want to quit smoking than using NRT (patches, gum, spray and so on) and no more hazardous.<sup>7</sup> Trying to quit smoking without any aid is the least effective method.<sup>8</sup>

For adults who smoke, although there is limited evidence about the effects of vaping for more than twelve months, vaping is a small fraction of the risk of smoking.<sup>9</sup> Adults who want to quit smoking using vapes should be encouraged to quit smoking and switch to vaping. Whilst there is good evidence about the short-term effectiveness of vaping to quit smoking there is no evidence about what the long-term effects of vaping might be. Vaping is not risk free. People who do not already smoke should not start to vape.<sup>8</sup>

Children should not vape. There are regulations that govern the sale of vapes that contain nicotine. The minimum age of sale is 18. We must keep vapes out of the reach of children. And we must ensure that the vapes that are sold to adults meet the standard required by the regulations.

We want to help people who smoke to quit smoking. We do not want anyone who does not smoke to start vaping. Within a generation, the prevalence of smoking or vaping in our population should be extremely low.

**How harmful is smoking?**

Smoking is the single biggest preventable cause of death and ill health in England, leading to almost 28,000 deaths every year in the South East.<sup>1</sup> As many as 2 in 3 lifelong smokers will die of smoking related deaths.<sup>10</sup> On average, smokers die 10 years earlier than non-smokers.<sup>11</sup>

Health inequalities are avoidable differences in health outcomes between groups or populations.<sup>12</sup> Smoking is the largest driver of health inequalities in England.<sup>13</sup> The harmful effects of smoking disproportionately affect people in the most deprived areas and disadvantaged groups including people who are unemployed, people who work in routine and manual occupations and people with mental health conditions.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>4</sup> ONS (2022) Health Survey for England <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/health-survey-for-england/2021/part-1-smoking>  
<sup>5</sup> NHS (2023) Better Health <https://www.nhs.uk/better-health/quit-smoking/>  
<sup>6</sup> Buss et al (2023) Smoking Toolkit Study: Trends in electronic cigarette use in England <https://smokinginengland.info/>  
<sup>7</sup> Hartmann-Boyce, J, Lindson, N, et al (2022) Electronic Cigarettes for Smoking Cessation: Cochrane Living Systematic Review <https://www.cebm.ox.ac.uk/research/electronic-cigarettes-for-smoking-cessation-cochrane-living-systematic-review-1>  
<sup>8</sup> PHE (2018) Stop smoking options: guidance for conversations with patients <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/stop-smoking-options-guidance-for-conversations-with-patients/stop-smoking-options-guidance-for-conversations-with-patients>  
<sup>9</sup> OHID (2022) Nicotine vaping in England: 2022 evidence update <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nicotine-vaping-in-england-2022-evidence-update>  
<sup>10</sup> Banks, E., Joshy, G., Weber, M.F. et al. Tobacco smoking and all-cause mortality in a large Australian cohort study: findings from a mature epidemic with current low smoking prevalence. BMC Med 13, 38 (2015). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12916-015-0281-z>  
<sup>11</sup> Jha P, Ramasundarahettige C, Landsman V, et al. 21st Century Hazards of Smoking and Benefits of Cessation in the United States. New England Journal of Medicine 2013;368:341–50 <https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMsa1211128>  
<sup>12</sup> OHID (2022) Health disparities and health inequalities: applying All Our Health <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-disparities-and-health-inequalities-applying-all-our-health>  
<sup>13</sup> ASH (2019) Health inequalities and smoking <https://ash.org.uk/resources/view/health-inequalities-and-smoking>  
<sup>14</sup> Javed Khan (2022) The Khan review: making smoking obsolete <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-khan-review-making-smoking-obsolete>

**Vapes are an effective aid for adults to quit smoking.**

**If you smoke, vaping is safer than smoking. Vaping has minimal serious side-effects when used for a short time to stop smoking.**

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**People who do not smoke should not vape. We must prevent children from using vapes due to the unknown longer-term harms of vaping and the risk of nicotine addiction.**

**Why a South East position statement about vaping?**

Despite the evidence, we know that among adults who smoke it is the minority who accurately believe that vaping is less harmful than smoking.<sup>6</sup>

We want to share the evidence about the relative risk of vaping compared to smoking. We want to recommend trusted sources for more information. We want to encourage conversations about vapes and vaping that accurately share the evidence.

We want to help people to quit smoking.

**Vaping will help us to achieve the Government’s smoke free 2030 ambition, when adult smoking rates reach 5% or less**





### 4.1 What are vapes?

**A vape (or e-cigarette) is a battery powered device that heats a solution to produce a vapour. Most vapes contain nicotine. The vapour is inhaled.<sup>15</sup> Using a vape can be described as vaping. People who use vapes might be called vapers. For someone who smokes, vaping feels a bit like smoking. Along with nicotine the solution usually includes vegetable glycerine, propylene glycol and flavourings. Vapes do not burn tobacco. Vapes do not produce tar or carbon monoxide, two of the most harmful products of smoking tobacco.<sup>16</sup>**

Manufacturers have developed vapes and the solution they heat to get better at delivering nicotine to the user. Vapes that use nicotine salts enable nicotine to be absorbed faster. Vapers can quickly absorb more nicotine without the harsh effects on the throat that less effective vapes might produce.

This position statement is about regulated vapes and solutions that contain nicotine. The risks of using a vape that has been produced or tampered with to vape something else are unknown. Other nicotine-containing products are sold that are not described in the regulations about vapes and are not a licensed medicinal product to treat nicotine addiction. There are fewer restrictions on the sale of nicotine pouches or other products that are not captured by the regulations about vapes and health risks are unknown.



<sup>15</sup> ASH (2018) Briefing: Electronic Cigarettes [https://ash.org.uk/uploads/E-Cigarettes-Briefing\\_PDF\\_v1.pdf](https://ash.org.uk/uploads/E-Cigarettes-Briefing_PDF_v1.pdf)  
<sup>16</sup> NHS (2022) Using e-cigarettes to stop smoking <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/quit-smoking/using-e-cigarettes-to-stop-smoking/>

### 4.2 What do we know about the use of vapes among adults?

There were an estimated 3.2 million adult vapers in England in 2021, about 7 in every 100 people aged over 16.<sup>9</sup>

In 2023 ASH reported that among adults who use vapes in Great Britain about 6 out of every 10 (56%) were ex-smokers. Nearly four in 10 (37%) were 'dual users' who also smoked tobacco. About 1 in 15 were people who had never smoked (6.7%).<sup>17</sup>

The reasons that people who had quit smoking gave for vaping included help to quit and stay quit (or prevent relapse). Dual users also used vapes to smoke less.

### 3.2 million vapers in England



<sup>17</sup> ASH (2023) Use of e-cigarettes 'vapes' among adults in Great Britain <https://ash.org.uk/uploads/Use-of-e-cigarettes-among-adults-in-Great-Britain-2023.pdf>



### 4.3 Are children using vapes?

People aged less than 18 (children) should not use vapes. It is illegal to sell vapes that contain nicotine, or e-liquids (vape juice) to children. It is also an offence for adults to buy, or try to buy, vapes for children.

The proportion of children that have used vapes has increased in the last few years.<sup>18</sup> A 2023 survey for ASH found that one in five children aged 11 to 17 had ever tried vaping, an increase from 1 in 7 in 2020.<sup>18</sup> The majority of use by children was experimental, once or twice.<sup>18</sup> Fewer than one in twenty five children reported vaping more than once a week.<sup>18</sup> Among the children who had used a vape the type of device most likely to be used was a single use (non-rechargeable, disposable) product.<sup>18</sup> Vapes were commonly purchased in shops, given or bought from informal sources.<sup>18</sup>

The Tobacco and Related Products Regulations 2016 ban print and broadcast advertising of vapes as part of an extensive range of regulations.<sup>19</sup> Children's recognition of vapes has increased in shops, online and buses.<sup>18</sup> In its response to the UK Government's 2023 call for evidence about youth vaping, ASH recommended new regulations to remove child friendly brand imagery.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>18</sup>ASH (2023) Use of e-cigarettes among young people in Great Britain <https://ash.org.uk/resources/view/use-of-e-cigarettes-among-young-people-in-great-britain>

<sup>19</sup>UKG (2016) The Tobacco and Related Products Regulations <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2016/507>

<sup>20</sup>ASH (2023) ASH response to consultation: Youth vaping: call for evidence <https://ash.org.uk/uploads/ASH-response-call-for-evidence-June-2023-FINAL.pdf?v=1686216008>

<sup>21</sup>ASH (2023) Addressing common myths about vaping. Putting the evidence in context. <https://ash.org.uk/resources/view/addressing-common-myths-about-vaping-putting-the-evidence-in-context>

<sup>22</sup>National statistics (2022) Smoking, Drinking and Drug Use among Young People in England, 2021 <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/smoking-drinking-and-drug-use-among-young-people-in-england/2021>

### 4.4 Is there a gateway effect for children?

Although some children vaped before they smoked tobacco there is no strong evidence of a causal effect.<sup>21</sup> There has been an increase in vaping among children since 2015 and particularly since 2021, associated with a significant increase in the proportion using single-use vapes rather than other types of device.<sup>18</sup> In the national data reported from surveys up to 2021 the proportion of children who smoke has been falling.<sup>22</sup>

### 4.5 How effective are vapes at helping smokers to quit smoking?

Vapes are the most popular aid to quit smoking in England.<sup>6</sup> They are also effective. We can be confident that vapes containing nicotine increase quit rates compared to NRT.<sup>23</sup> Using vapes with behavioural support can be twice as effective for quitting smoking compared to using NRT one year after quitting smoking.<sup>24</sup>

**Quit attempts involving a vaping product were associated with the highest success rates (64.9% compared with 58.6% for attempts not involving a vaping product)<sup>9</sup>**

<sup>23</sup> Hartmann-Boyce, J, Lindson, N, et al (2022) Electronic Cigarettes for Smoking Cessation <https://www.cochranelibrary.com/cdsr/doi/10.1002/14651858.CD010216.pub7/full>  
<sup>24</sup> Hajek, P, Phillips-Waller, A, Przulj, D, Pesola, F, Meyers-Smith, K, Bisal, N., Li, J., Parrott, S., Sasieni, P., Dawkins, L., Ross, L. and Goniewicz, L. (2019) A Randomized Trial of E-Cigarettes versus Nicotine-Replacement Therapy <https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMoa1808779>



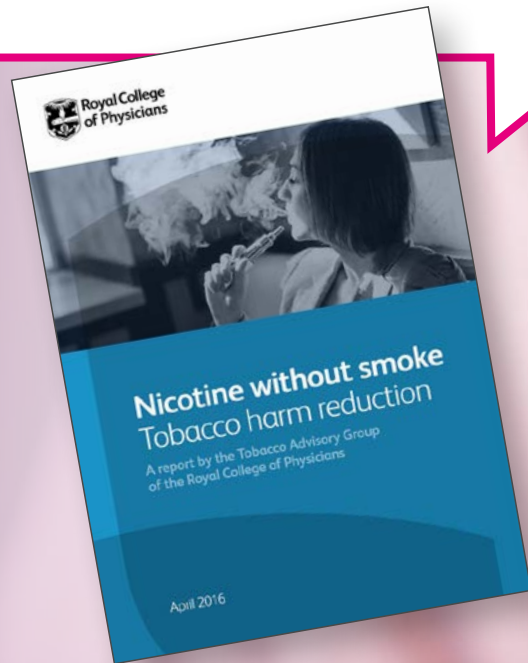
## 4.6 How safe are vapes?

Compared to smoking tobacco, vaping is a small fraction of the risk.<sup>9</sup> They are not risk free. For people who smoke, vaping is much safer. People who do not smoke should not vape.<sup>25</sup>

In its 2020 report, the Committee on Toxicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products, and the Environment (COT) reviewed the global evidence on vape products and concluded that they are significantly less harmful than smoking but are not risk free.<sup>26</sup> The report emphasised that switching completely from smoking to vaping was likely to convey substantial health benefits.

The US National Academies of Sciences Engineering and Medicine reported “Lab tests of EC (e-cigarettes) ingredients, in vitro and short-term human studies suggest that e-cigarettes are likely to be far less harmful than combustible tobacco cigarettes.”<sup>27</sup> People who switch from smoking to vaping are exposed to much lower levels of potentially harmful substances associated with cancer.<sup>9</sup> Currently, there have been no identified risks to bystanders from passive vaping.<sup>9</sup>

**The Royal College of Physicians has recognised vapes as an effective treatment for tobacco dependency and the need to improve awareness about the safety of vapes compared to cigarettes.<sup>28</sup>**



<sup>25</sup> C (2023) Chief Medical Officer for England on vaping <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/chief-medical-officer-for-england-on-vaping>

<sup>26</sup> Committee on Toxicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment (2020) Statement on the potential toxicological risks from electronic nicotine (and non-nicotine) delivery systems <https://cot.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2020-09/COT%20ENJNDS%20statement%202020-04.pdf>

<sup>27</sup> The National Academies of Sciences Engineering and Medicine (2018) Public Health Consequences of E-Cigarettes <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/29894118/>

<sup>28</sup> Royal College of Physicians (2021) Smoking and health 2021 <https://www.rcplondon.ac.uk/projects/outputs/smoking-and-health-2021-coming-age-tobacco-control>

## 4.7 What are ‘heat not burn’ devices and ‘heated tobacco products’?

‘Heat not burn’ devices or ‘heated tobacco products’ are electronic delivery devices that contain tobacco leaf. A small plug of tobacco is heated to a temperature high enough to vaporise but not burn the tobacco, below 300°C. That produces an aerosol which is inhaled.<sup>29</sup> People who switch from smoking tobacco to using these products are likely to have less exposure to the toxicants and carcinogens produced by smoking cigarettes.<sup>9</sup> There are no studies about the use of these devices to quit smoking.<sup>30</sup>

**‘Heat not burn’ devices contain tobacco and are generally manufactured by the tobacco industry. There is limited independent evidence about their safety. Their use for quitting smoking has not been studied. They should not be recommended for use to quit smoking.**



<sup>29</sup> World Health Organization (2020) Heated Tobacco Products information sheet <https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/331297/WHO-HEP-HPR-2020.2-eng.pdf>

<sup>30</sup> Hartmann-Boysse, J, Lindson, N, et al (2022) Electronic Cigarettes for Smoking Cessation <https://www.cochranelibrary.com/cdsr/doi/10.1002/14651858.CD010216.pub7/full>



## 4.8 What types of vape are there?

The three main types of vape are shown below. A 'heat not burn' product is also shown.

Table 1.

			
'Cig-a-like'	'Tank' models or vape pens	Single use (or 'disposable') vapes	Heat not Burn
<p>The first generation of vape and now less popular than other types</p> <p>Looks like a tobacco cigarette</p> <p>Might be disposable, or reusable with a rechargeable atomiser and a replaceable cartridge</p>	<p>Includes a rechargeable atomiser and a refillable e-liquid tank or pod</p> <p>Might be possible to modify, or adjust settings</p> <p>Different amounts of nicotine in refill liquids which can help to taper down nicotine use</p>	<p>Designed for single use – not for recharging or refilling</p> <p>Contains a maximum of 2ml of nicotine containing liquid, often described as up to 600 or 800 puffs</p> <p>A maximum strength of 20mg/ml (2%)</p> <p>2ml of 20mg/ml nicotine containing liquid contains the same nicotine content as approximately 18-22 cigarettes</p> <p>Devices containing more than 2ml or greater than 20mg/ml (2%) strength do not meet UK regulations</p>	<p>These devices contain tobacco</p> <p>There is limited independent evidence about their safety</p> <p>Their use for quitting smoking has not been studied</p> <p>They should not be recommended for use to quit smoking</p>

## 4.9 What are the environmental impacts of vapes?

In July 2023 the Local Government Association (LGA) called for a ban on the manufacture and sale of single-use vapes on environmental and health grounds. The concern was about the risk of fires in waste arising from inappropriate disposal rather than recycling and increased use by children.<sup>31</sup> Environmental risks have increased with more vaping and the shift to single-use products. Material focus has estimated that nearly five million vapes are thrown away every week.<sup>32</sup> About 3 in 4 adults who used single-use vapes said they threw them away.<sup>32</sup>

Vapers need to know that they should always recycle rather than bin or litter their vapes. Retailers have a legal responsibility to take back old vapes for recycling and to tell their customers that they offer this.

Material Focus has published advice for vape retailers and producers about compliance with environmental regulations.<sup>33</sup> Vapes are waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) and should always be recycled.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>31</sup> LGA (2023) Disposable vapes FAQs <https://www.local.gov.uk/disposable-vapes-faqs>

<sup>32</sup> Material Focus (2023) Number of disposable single-use vapes thrown away have in a year quadrupled to 5 million per week <https://www.materialfocus.org.uk/press-releases/>

<sup>33</sup> Material Focus (2023) Vapes recycling: An industry briefing for retailers and producers <https://www.materialfocus.org.uk/report-and-research/vapes-recycling-an-industry-briefing-for-retailers-and-producers/>

<sup>34</sup> Material Focus (2020) Recycle your electricals <https://www.recycleyourelectricals.org.uk/how-to-recycle-electronics/what-electronics-can-be-recycled/recycle-vapes/>



#### 4.10 Are vapes a fire or explosion risk?

There have been reported cases of vapes causing household fires but far fewer than the number caused by cigarettes and very little evidence about the type of vapes that result in fires and explosions in the UK.<sup>9</sup> In its position statement about smoking, vaping and tobacco the National Fire Chiefs Council reported that “...fires caused by smoking materials result in more deaths than any other type of fire...despite the overall number of cigarette smokers falling”.<sup>35</sup>

#### Rechargeable vapes

As with any rechargeable device, such as mobile phones and laptops, it is important to charge a vape with the right charger and not to leave it unattended while charging. Devices should be bought from reputable suppliers. Users should avoid generic charging equipment.

The Office for Product Safety and Standards and the Chartered Trading Standards Institute have campaigned to raise awareness about vape battery safety.<sup>36</sup> The campaign materials include simple safety rules:

- only use the charger that came with your vape
- protect your vape from extreme temperatures
- regularly inspect the batteries in your vape
- replace your batteries if they get damaged, wet or leak
- unplug the charger once its fully charged
- store spare batteries in a plastic case
- keep spare batteries away from other metal objects like coins or keys in a pocket or bag

#### Single use vapes

Single use vapes should not be disposed of in domestic rubbish. The lithium ion batteries they contain can cause fires. In 2022 there were more than 700 battery fires in the UK waste and recycling system.<sup>37</sup> As with all electrical equipment, retailers should participate in WEEE take back schemes to ensure the correct disposal and recycling of electronic items.<sup>33</sup>

Although a single use vape is not rechargeable there is still a small risk of failure of its lithium-ion battery. Like any electrical product the device should be stored safely and recycled when no longer needed.



<sup>35</sup> National Fire Chiefs Council (2017) Smoking, Vaping and Tobacco Position Statement <https://www.nationalfirechiefs.org.uk/Vaping-tobacco-position-statement>

<sup>36</sup> Chartered Trading Standards Institute (2021) Consumer safety awareness campaigns materials <https://www.tradingstandards.uk/news-policy/campaigns/vaping-battery-safety/>

<sup>37</sup> Material Focus (2022) Stop Battery Fires public safety film launched to raise awareness of fires caused by batteries in the waste stream <https://www.materialfocus.org.uk/press-releases/>

## 5. REGULATION

#### 5.1 How are vapes regulated in the UK?

**The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) is the competent authority for a notification scheme for vapes and refill containers in Great Britain and Northern Ireland. MHRA provides advice for consumers who want to check whether a vape is legally compliant.**<sup>38</sup>

MHRA is responsible for implementing the majority of provisions under Part 6 of the TRPR and the Tobacco Products and Nicotine Inhaling Products (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2020.<sup>19,39</sup> The TRPR does not cover nicotine-containing products that are authorised as medicines.

**The TRPR introduced rules which ensure:**

- minimum standards for the safety and quality of all vapes and refill containers (otherwise known as e-liquids)
- that information is provided to consumers so that they can make informed choices
- an environment that protects children from starting to use these products

**The requirements are:**

- restrict vape tanks to a capacity of no more than 2ml
- restrict the maximum volume of nicotine-containing e-liquid for sale in one refill container to 10ml
- restrict e-liquids to a nicotine strength of no more than 20mg/ml
- require nicotine-containing products or their packaging to be child-resistant and tamper evident
- ban certain ingredients including colourings, caffeine and taurine
- include new labelling requirements and warnings
- require all vapes and e-liquids be notified and published by the MHRA before they can be sold

<sup>38</sup> MHRA (2022) E-cigarettes: regulations for consumer products <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/e-cigarettes-regulations-for-consumer-products>

<sup>39</sup> UKG (2020) Tobacco Products and Nicotine Inhaling Products (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2019/41/>



## 5.2 Why is the role of Trading Standards important?

Trading Standards teams in local authorities have an important role in consumer safety. Their work is informed by the TRPR which covers labelling, size and nicotine content of the liquids.<sup>19</sup> Other legislation relevant to vapes are the Restriction of Hazardous Substances in Electrical and Electronic Equipment (Amendment) Regulations 2019.<sup>40</sup> These regulations are enforced by local authorities' trading standards teams. This work includes supporting any notification reports made in relation to the safety of vapes.

Trading Standards enforce the age of sale legislation and will provide advice to business on measures to prevent unauthorised sales. Business compliance is checked through test purchasing exercises informed by complaints received by their local authority.

Regulations govern the products that can be imported into the UK and age of sale. Trading Standards checks that vape retailers comply. These controls provide a degree of assurance about the products that are available to smokers who want to quit using vapes and how rigorously local shops are preventing the sale of vapes to children. Effective controls help local stop smoking services and health and social care professionals to recommend vaping to quit smoking.

## 5.3 How to report concerns about side-effects or safety

Consumers and health and social care professionals should report side effects and safety concerns about vapes or refill containers to MHRA through the Yellow Card reporting site.<sup>41</sup> Products that are suspected to be defective or non-compliant can be reported to the local authority trading standards team or [TPDsafety@mhra.gov.uk](mailto:TPDsafety@mhra.gov.uk).



## 5.4 What is the law for sale of vapes to children?

The Nicotine Inhaling Products (Age of Sale and Proxy Purchasing) Regulations 2015 introduced a minimum age of sale of 18 years for nicotine inhaling products such as vapes.<sup>42</sup> The age of sale restrictions apply to nicotine inhaling products (defined as any device which is intended to enable nicotine to be inhaled through a mouthpiece) and certain component parts such as nicotine refill cartridges and nicotine refill substances, often called 'e-liquids'. It does not cover component parts such as batteries or charging devices and it does not apply to tobacco products because age of sale laws already exists for such products.

These Regulations include exemptions for products that are licensed as medicines, however no such products are currently available.

Concerns about children purchasing vapes can be reported to the Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline (call 0808 223 1133) or directly to a local authority Trading Standards team.

**The Regulations extend the proxy purchasing offence in the Children and Families Act 2014 to cover vapes. Enforcement officers may issue a fixed penalty notice to someone committing a proxy purchasing offence and the Proxy Purchasing of Tobacco, Nicotine Products etc. (Fixed Penalty Amount) Regulations 2015 set the amount of the fine at £90. These enforcement arrangements for vapes mirror legislation already in place to stop the sale of tobacco to children.**

<sup>42</sup> UKG (2015) The Nicotine Inhaling Products (Age of Sale and Proxy Purchasing) Regulations 2015 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2015/895>



### 6.1 What is Article 5.3?

In 2003 governments adopted the world's first global health treaty, the WHO framework convention on tobacco control (FCTC)<sup>43</sup>. The treaty protects people from the harm caused by tobacco. Article 5.3 is a key element of the treaty. It describes actions that should be taken to protect the public from the influence of the tobacco industry. The industry manufactures cigarettes and other tobacco products, 'heat not burn' products, some vapes and other products that contain nicotine.

Anyone who plays a role in protecting and promoting public health and wellbeing or involved in supplying tobacco or nicotine products should familiarise themselves with Article 5.3.

#### Article 5.3 Resources:

- An Action on Smoking and Health (ASH) toolkit includes templates to help with communication, mapping and policy development<sup>44</sup>
- Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) guidance sets out how the UK government limits interactions with the tobacco industry<sup>45</sup>

**Organisations should encourage their staff to familiarise themselves with WHO Article 5.3. They should be alert to action by the tobacco industry that seeks to influence local decision makers, encourage public health resources to be spent on a narrow range of activities or attempt to frame itself as a legitimate partner in addressing smoking related issues. Action might be indirect – for example from a media organisation that the tobacco industry has funded, seeking to frame news articles in a particular way. If you require further help or advice about this contact your local authority public health team.**

Protect the public from the influence of the tobacco industry

<sup>43</sup> World Health Organization (2003) Framework Convention on Tobacco Control <https://fctc.who.int/>

<sup>44</sup> ASH (2018) Article 5.3 Toolkit <https://ash.org.uk/resources/local-toolkit/toolkit-article-5-3-of-the-who-framework-convention-on-tobacco-control>

<sup>45</sup> DHSC (2023) Guidance for government engagement with the tobacco industry <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protocol-for-engagement-with-stakeholders-with-links-to-the-tobacco-industry>





### 7.1 What policies should apply in schools and other children’s settings?

Schools and colleges should have a policy on vapes, which could be included in the existing school policy on drugs, alcohol and tobacco. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) has advised that school-based interventions can discourage vaping use among children and noted the need to not inadvertently make them desirable.<sup>46</sup> Schools are encouraged to prohibit vapes, recognising that the sale of these products is prohibited for children. Schools should consider supporting students with nicotine withdrawal, through NRT. This can also be included in the school’s policy. Schools can contact the local authority public health team for further guidance.

Adults in child and youth settings should avoid using vapes in front of children.<sup>47</sup> Local authorities may wish to consider protecting children by promoting play areas that are vape free, as well as smokefree. Any policy about vapes or vaping should take account of those parents or guardians who are using vapes to quit smoking. Careful consideration needs to be given to the communication messages to avoid alienating any parents or guardians who are trying to quit smoking tobacco.

Smoking may be more likely among vulnerable children including looked after children, children not in education or training, excluded children and young offenders.<sup>46</sup> Any child wishing to quit smoking tobacco should be encouraged to seek support from the local stop smoking service and use licensed NRT.



<sup>46</sup> NICE (2021) Tobacco: preventing uptake, promoting quitting and treating dependence <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng209>  
<sup>47</sup> PHE (2016) Use of e-cigarettes in public places and workplaces <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/use-of-e-cigarettes-in-public-places-and-workplaces>

### 7.2 Local stop smoking services

Compared to trying to quit alone, people who smoke are up to three times more likely to quit with expert behavioural support combined with stop smoking aids.<sup>8</sup> Local stop smoking services typically offer behavioural support delivered by trained stop smoking advisers for between four and twelve weeks. That support should be combined with an offer of a vape with medicinally licenced stop smoking products to adults who want to quit smoking.<sup>48,46</sup>

All local stop smoking services should include vaping with behavioural support as one of the options more likely to result in successfully stopping smoking.<sup>46</sup>

The National Centre for Smoking Cessation and Training (NCSCT) offers training for advisers and advice about supply and disposal of vapes.<sup>48,49,50</sup>

### Offering vape starter packs

The UK Government announced its plans for a ‘swap to stop’ scheme for England in April 2023. One million smokers across England will be offered a free vaping starter kit. A choice of products, strengths and flavours will enable quitters to find the product that works best for them. These packs will be provided to local areas through a procurement portal for local authority and NHS customers offering stop smoking service interventions.

There may be other local schemes where local vape retailers offer vouchers or starter packs to promote vapes to help smokers quit.

### Advice for local stop smoking services about working with vape retailers

Shops that sell vapes can be a source of information about new products, regulation, cost and technical support. Organisations that commission or provide stop smoking services may have questions about working with local retailers. People who want to quit smoking using vapes might have questions about purchasing vapes locally. The NCSCT has produced a guide for commissioners and providers of local stop smoking services about working with vape shops.

Questions about compliance with regulations can be put to local authority Trading Standards teams.

<sup>48</sup> NCSCT (2023) Incorporating nicotine vaping products (e-cigarettes) into Stop Smoking Services: Making the case and addressing concerns <https://www.ncsct.co.uk/library/view/pdf/NCSC%20OHID%20e-cig%20v7.pdf>  
<sup>49</sup> NCSCT (2023) Vaping: a guide for health and social care professionals [https://www.ncsct.co.uk/publication\\_Vaping\\_Briefing.php](https://www.ncsct.co.uk/publication_Vaping_Briefing.php)  
<sup>50</sup> NCSCT (2023) NCSCT online training <https://elearning.ncsct.co.uk/england>  
<sup>51</sup> UKG (2023) Achieving a smokefree 2030: cutting smoking and stopping kids vaping <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/minister-neil-obrien-speech-on-achieving-smokefree-2030-cutting-smoking-and-stopping-kids-vaping>  
<sup>52</sup> NCSCT (2019) Working with vape shops: A guide for commissioners and stop smoking services [https://www.ncsct.co.uk/publications/working\\_with\\_vape\\_shops](https://www.ncsct.co.uk/publications/working_with_vape_shops)



## 7.3 Primary care and secondary care

### Primary care

NICE guidelines provide advice for health and social care professionals in primary care and community settings about advising people who want to stop smoking.<sup>46</sup> Whether the intervention is provided directly or by referral to another service, the patient should be able to access vapes along with other interventions including behavioural support.

Patients should be offered behavioural support regardless of which option they choose to help them stop smoking. Combining vapes with behavioural support is more likely to result in them successfully stopping smoking.<sup>46</sup>

Vape are not licensed medicines, but they are used by people who want to quit smoking and there are regulations which govern the devices that can be sold.<sup>38</sup>

Vapes are an effective aid for adults to quit smoking. They are a small fraction of the risk of smoking and no more hazardous than nicotine-containing patches, gum and sprays.<sup>9</sup> There is not enough evidence to know whether there are long-term harms from vaping.<sup>9,46</sup>

People who want to quit smoking using vapes should quit smoking completely and switch to vaping.<sup>46</sup>

Discussions about vaping to quit smoking should include how long the device will be used for and how to quit vaping without returning to smoking.<sup>46</sup> The NCSCT has provided guidance about advising people who want to quit vaping.<sup>53</sup>

### Secondary care

In its 2021 smoking cessation audit the British Thoracic Society found that 1 in 5 adult inpatients in acute hospital settings were smokers.<sup>54</sup> The NHS is committed to help people to quit whilst admitted to hospital.<sup>55</sup> From April 2024, all people admitted to hospital who smoke will be offered NHS-funded tobacco treatment services while they are in hospital.

All NHS hospital sites should be smokefree. NICE describes the advice and interventions that a smoker should be offered throughout their contact with acute, maternity and mental health services.<sup>46</sup>

It is important to make a clear distinction between smoking tobacco and using a vape.<sup>46</sup> Vaping is not smoking. Allowing vapes in all or part of the hospital grounds can support patients, staff and visitors to quit smoking and not smoke tobacco on site.

NHS Trusts should decide what works best for their staff and all users of their sites. NHS Trusts will need to develop their own policies about smokefree sites, nicotine management and vapes to provide guidance across the organisation. NHS Trusts may wish to contact their Integrated Care Board (ICB) prevention leads or the public health team within the local authority for help and advice in developing a policy and approach.

It is important to strike a balance that works for everyone, including staff, patients, or visitors. NHS Trusts should protect against large scale visible vaping on sites. This is so NHS Trusts do not promote vaping to people who do not smoke. NHS Trusts should pay particular attention to protecting children. Policies should consider how to minimise visible vaping by main entrances, at NHS Trust sites near schools or any other place where there might be children.

Policies should consider how to assist patients, staff and visitors to safely dispose of single use vapes. For NHS Trusts that provide vapes to patients, suppliers will be able to assist in waste disposal schemes.<sup>33,48</sup>



<sup>53</sup> NCSCT (2022) Supporting clients who want to stop vaping [https://www.ncsct.co.uk/publications/Support\\_stop\\_vaping](https://www.ncsct.co.uk/publications/Support_stop_vaping)

<sup>54</sup> BTS (2022) National Smoking Cessation Audit 2021 <https://www.brit-thoracic.org.uk/quality-improvement/clinical-audit/national-smoking-cessation-audit-2021/>

<sup>55</sup> NHS (2019) Long Term Plan <https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-term-plan/>



## Useful resources for primary care and secondary care

- British Medical Association (2020) E-cigarettes: balancing risks and opportunities, which discusses the regulation of vapes and argues for an approach that seeks to minimise their risks while maximising their potential to reduce the health burden associated with smoking.<sup>56</sup>
- British Thoracic Society position statement on tobacco and smoking<sup>57</sup>
- National Fire Chiefs Council guidance note: e-cigarette use in smokefree NHS settings<sup>58</sup>
- NICE Guideline [NG209] Tobacco: preventing uptake, promoting quitting and treating dependence, which includes advice for primary care and community settings, and secondary care acute, maternity and mental health services<sup>45</sup>
- Royal Pharmaceutical Society (2022) e-cigarette policy<sup>59</sup>

<sup>56</sup> BMA (2020) <https://www.bma.org.uk/what-we-do/population-health/supporting-people-to-live-healthier-lives/tobacco>

<sup>57</sup> BTS (2021) Position Statement Tobacco And Smoking <https://www.brit-thoracic.org.uk/document-library/governance-and-policy-documents/position-statements/tobacco-and-smoking-march-2020/>

<sup>58</sup> National Fire Chiefs Council (2018) E-cigarette use in smokefree NHS Settings [https://nfcc.org.uk/our-services/position-statements/prevention-committee/973\\_guidance\\_note\\_-\\_e-cigarettes\\_use\\_in\\_smokefree\\_nhs\\_settings/](https://nfcc.org.uk/our-services/position-statements/prevention-committee/973_guidance_note_-_e-cigarettes_use_in_smokefree_nhs_settings/)

<sup>59</sup> Royal Pharmaceutical Society (2022) E-cigarettes policy <https://www.rpharms.com/recognition/all-our-campaigns/policy-a-z/e-cigarettes>

## 7.4 Mental health

### Primary care

The rate of smoking among people with a mental health condition is significantly higher than in the general population.<sup>60</sup> People with a mental health condition have a 10 to 20 year reduced life expectancy and smoking is the single largest contributor to that difference.<sup>60</sup> From April 2024 a universal smoking cessation offer will be available as part of specialist mental health inpatient services.<sup>55</sup>

Health professionals in mental health services can prevent ill health and premature death by helping patients to quit smoking. Stopping smoking does not worsen mental health conditions and there is evidence, although not strong, that mental health symptoms including anxiety and depression may improve.<sup>61</sup>

The Royal College of Psychiatrists has recommended that psychiatrists should advise their patients that vapes are an effective option for some people to give up smoking and are substantially safer than continued tobacco use.<sup>62</sup> All mental health providers should have policies in place that facilitate the safe and effective use of vapes.<sup>62</sup>

Vaping should not routinely be treated in the same way as smoking.<sup>63</sup> NHS mental health organisations have been advised to base policies about vaping on the evidence of relative risk compared to smoking and the effectiveness of vaping in supporting people who smoke to quit or stop smoking during inpatient care.<sup>64</sup> Policies should enable patients to use vapes to quit smoking, alongside other NRT if being used, and remain smokefree during their admission.<sup>64</sup>

**Useful Primary Care Resource**  
ASH (2022) E-cigarettes and mental health <sup>65</sup>

<sup>60</sup> ASH (2022) Use of electronic cigarettes by people with mental health problems: A guide for health professionals <https://ash.org.uk/uploads/MHSP-ecig-briefing-2020-v2.pdf>

<sup>61</sup> Taylor, Gemma MJ et al (2021) Smoking cessation for improving mental health <https://doi.org/10.1002/14651858.CD013522.pub2>

<sup>62</sup> Royal College of Psychiatrists (2018) The prescribing of varenicline and vaping (electronic cigarettes) to patients with severe mental illness [https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/docs/default-source/improving-care/better-mh-policy/position-statements/ps05\\_18.pdf?sfvrsn=2bb7fdfe\\_4](https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/docs/default-source/improving-care/better-mh-policy/position-statements/ps05_18.pdf?sfvrsn=2bb7fdfe_4)

<sup>63</sup> CQC (2019) Brief guide: Smokefree policies in mental health inpatient services [https://www.cqc.org.uk/sites/default/files/900766\\_Brief\\_guide\\_Smoke\\_free\\_policies\\_in\\_mental\\_health\\_inpatient\\_services.pdf](https://www.cqc.org.uk/sites/default/files/900766_Brief_guide_Smoke_free_policies_in_mental_health_inpatient_services.pdf)

<sup>64</sup> Public Health England (2020) Using electronic cigarettes in NHS mental health organisations <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/e-cigarettes-use-by-patients-in-nhs-mental-health-organisations/using-electronic-cigarettes-in-nhs-mental-health-organisations>

<sup>65</sup> ASH (2022) E-cigarettes and mental health <https://ash.org.uk/resources/smokefree-nhs/mental-health-and-smoking-partnership/e-cigarettes-and-mental-health>



## 7.5 Maternity

Smoking during pregnancy significantly increases the risk of miscarriage, stillbirth, sudden infant death and birth abnormalities.<sup>66</sup> In the South East, about one in twelve pregnant people were known to be smokers at the time of delivery in 2022.<sup>67</sup> The evidence about the harm caused by exposure to second-hand tobacco smoke during pregnancy is well established. Stopping smoking early in a pregnancy can prevent adverse effects.<sup>67</sup>

From April 2024, all people admitted to hospital who smoke will be offered NHS-funded tobacco treatment services. This model will be adapted for pregnant people, and their partners, with a new smoke-free pregnancy pathway including focused sessions and opt-out treatments from a trained stop smoking specialist for the duration of the pregnancy.<sup>55</sup> Stopping smoking tobacco is one of the best things a pregnant person, and their partner, can do to protect the health of their baby throughout pregnancy and following birth.<sup>66</sup>

**The Smoking in Pregnancy Challenge Group recommends that “...while licensed Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) products such as nicotine patches, gum and inhalers are the recommended option, if a pregnant woman chooses to use an e-cigarette and if that helps her to quit smoking and stay smokefree, she should be supported to do so.”<sup>67</sup>**

NICE guidelines do not make recommendations about nicotine-containing vapes in pregnancy.<sup>46</sup> There is insufficient evidence about the effectiveness of nicotine-containing vapes to help stop smoking in pregnancy and about pregnancy outcomes.<sup>9,46</sup>

NICE recommends using licensed NRT products such as nicotine patches, gum and inhalers with behavioural support and voucher incentives.<sup>46</sup> If a pregnant person chooses to use a vape and if that helps them to quit smoking and stay smokefree, they should be supported to do so.<sup>68</sup> Unlike tobacco smoke, the vapour produced by a vape does not include carbon monoxide, which is particularly harmful to developing babies.<sup>69</sup>

There is no current reason to believe that using a vape would compromise breastfeeding. Women who use vapes following birth should not be discouraged from doing so if it means they stay quit and maintain a smokefree home.<sup>68</sup>

### Useful maternity resources

- NHS (2023) Stop smoking in pregnancy<sup>69</sup>
- Royal College of Midwives (2019) Position Statement: Support to Quit Smoking in Pregnancy<sup>66</sup>
- The Smoking in Pregnancy Challenge Group has produced resources to inform health professionals and support conversations about vapes with pregnant people who smoke<sup>67</sup>

## 7.6 Workplaces

The Health Act 2006<sup>70</sup> prohibits smoking in enclosed public places and workplaces, on public transport and in vehicles used for work. It is based on conclusive scientific evidence of the direct health harm caused to bystanders through the inhalation of second-hand smoke. Vaping is not covered by this smokefree legislation because vapes do not burn tobacco and do not create smoke.

**Policies and practice on vaping in workplaces are evolving and need to continue to do so in the light of the emerging evidence. These five principles can be used by organisations to guide policy about the use of vapes in workplaces:<sup>47</sup>**

- **make clear the distinction between vaping and smoking**
- **ensure policies are informed by the evidence on health risks to bystanders**
- **identify and manage risks of uptake by children**
- **support smokers to stop smoking and stay smokefree**
- **support compliance with smokefree law and policies**
- **Policies should be regularly reviewed to take account of the evidence base and regulations. Employers will want to consider how they enable safe disposal of vapes**

### Useful workplace resources

- Will you permit or prohibit electronic cigarette use on your premises?<sup>71</sup>
- Use of e-cigarettes in public places and workplaces: Advice to inform evidence-based policy making<sup>47</sup>

Ensure policies are informed by the evidence that there have been no identified risks to bystanders from passive vaping<sup>9</sup>

<sup>66</sup> Royal College of Midwives (2019) Position Statement: Support to Quit Smoking in Pregnancy <https://www.rcm.org.uk/media/3394/support-to-quit-smoking-in-pregnancy.pdf>

<sup>67</sup> OHID (2023) Local Tobacco Control Profiles <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/tobacco-control/data#page/3/gid/1938132885/pat/6/par/E12000008/ati/402/are/E06000036/jid/93085/age/1/sex/2/cat/-1/ctp/-1/ym/1/cid/4/tbm/1/page-options/car-do-1>

<sup>68</sup> ASH (2023) Using e-cigarettes before, during and after pregnancy <https://ash.org.uk/resources/smokefree-nhs/smoking-in-pregnancy-challenge-group/using-e-cigarettes-before-during-and-after-pregnancy>

<sup>69</sup> NHS (2023) Stop smoking in pregnancy <https://www.nhs.uk/pregnancy/keeping-well/stop-smoking/>

<sup>70</sup> UKG (2006) Health Act <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/28/>

<sup>71</sup> ASH (2015) Will you permit or prohibit e-cigarette use on your premises? <https://ash.org.uk/resources/view/will-you-permit-or-prohibit-e-cigarette-use-on-your-premises>



### 8.1 Training

**Health and social care professionals are key motivators and a source of health information to patients. Information about vapes in the media sometimes doesn't reflect the published evidence. Research produces new knowledge. It is important that health and social care professionals can confidently give accurate advice.**

Most people who vape are using them to quit smoking. Vapes are the most popular aid used by people in England to quit smoking.<sup>6</sup> People will have different needs and preferences for the type of device, nicotine strength and flavour.

**NCSCT offers a short e-learning (Vaping: a guide for healthcare professionals) for health and social care workers. This is essential training for stop smoking practitioners and will be of interest and use to anyone who assists smokers to quit or who wants an understanding of vaping to quit smoking.<sup>49</sup>**

Health and social care professionals are expected to ask people at every opportunity if they smoke or have recently stopped.<sup>46</sup> Advice offered to patients about using nicotine-containing products should include information about vapes.<sup>46</sup> Conversations about how stop-smoking support can help might lead to more questions about vapes and stop smoking services. Combining vaping with behavioural support is more likely to result in successfully stopping smoking.<sup>46</sup>

NCSCT online training provides evidence based and effective advice for professionals along with other vaping briefings that offer comprehensive, detailed information for local stop smoking services, health and social care professionals and vapers.<sup>49</sup>



### 8.2 Guidance on usage

The producers of vapes have developed the technology to produce devices that promise an improved user experience in a variety of ways. Health and social care professionals and others who provide advice about using vapes to quit smoking might not be experts in vape use. It might be necessary to signpost smokers who wish to quit using vapes to reputable vape retailers with more detailed knowledge.<sup>52</sup>

How much nicotine a vaper needs to manage cravings and withdrawal symptoms will depend on their previous smoking habit. It will vary with the strength of the cigarettes they smoked, how many per day, their smoking style, body mass and lung capacity. The concentration of nicotine will vary between nicotine-containing devices and e-liquids. The NCSCT has suggested that "As a rough guide, most 20-a-day smokers find that 18mg/ml (1.8%) is sufficient..."<sup>72</sup> When deciding the nicotine dose for switching to vaping a suggested starting point might be:<sup>73</sup>

Amount Smoked:	Suggested nicotine dose:
4-5 cigarettes a day	6mg/ml
10 cigarettes a day	12 mg/ml
15 cigarettes a day	16 mg/ml
20 cigarettes a day	18-20 mg/ml
More than 20 a day	20mg & recommend adding a patch

Nicotine patches can be used with a vape if needed. These give ongoing support by releasing nicotine slowly. Vapers can then top up with a vape if needed, to deal with immediate cravings.<sup>5</sup>

In 2023, the majority of adults who vaped in Great Britain used nicotine strengths below 13 mg/ml.<sup>17</sup> When adult vapers were asked about any change to the strength of the e-liquid they vaped over time about one in three had reduced the strength, just over half had stayed the same and only one in twenty had increased.<sup>17</sup>

For people who want to quit smoking, including vaping with behavioural support is one of the options more likely to result in successfully stopping smoking.<sup>46</sup>



<sup>72</sup> NCSCT (2016) Electronic cigarettes: A briefing for stop smoking services [https://www.ncsct.co.uk/publications/electronic\\_cigarette\\_briefing](https://www.ncsct.co.uk/publications/electronic_cigarette_briefing)

<sup>73</sup> Jacques Le Houezec (2019) Vape shops and their role in Public Health, E-Cigarette Summit <https://www.e-cigarette-summit.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/82/2019/11/16.05-Jacques-Le-Houezec.pdf>



### 9.1 Primary Message

Vapes are an effective aid for adults to quit smoking.

If you smoke, vaping is safer than smoking. Vaping has minimal serious side-effects when used for a short time to stop smoking.

People who want to quit smoking using vapes should be encouraged to quit smoking and switch to vaping.

People who do not smoke should not vape.

We must prevent children from using vapes due to the unknown longer-term harms of vaping and the risk of nicotine addiction.

### 9.2 Secondary messages

#### Long term use

There is limited evidence about the effects of vaping for more than 12 months.<sup>9</sup>

Unlike smoking, vaping does not contain the tar or carbon monoxide found in tobacco smoke that cause lung and heart disease and cancer.<sup>5</sup>

#### Regulation

The MHRA regulates nicotine-containing vapes and e-liquids in the UK.<sup>19,39</sup>

Although these products are not licensed medicines, they are regulated.

Only buy vapes and e-liquids from a reputable retailer.

Only use regulated e-liquids. Do not use a vape that has been produced or tampered with to vape something else. The risks are unknown.

Regulations vary in other places. Evidence from countries with a different regulatory context should be interpreted carefully.

Adverse side effects from vapes should be reported using the MHRA Yellow Card site.<sup>41</sup>

#### Harms to bystanders

Vaping releases negligible amounts of nicotine into the air and there is no evidence of harm to health for bystanders.<sup>9</sup>

Organisations that control workplaces and other environments should consider that people with asthma and other respiratory conditions can be sensitive to a range of environmental irritants.<sup>47</sup>

#### Children

There is no evidence that use of vapes is leading to an increase of smoking in children.<sup>21</sup>

Among children aged 11 to 17 who have never smoked, fewer than 1 in 10 report using a vape more than once a week.<sup>18</sup>

Vapes should always be stored safely out of the reach of children.

#### Pregnant people

There is very little research about the safety of vaping during pregnancy. Vaping is likely to be significantly less harmful to a pregnant person and their baby than continuing to smoke.<sup>66</sup>

Nicotine Replacement Therapy products including nicotine patches, gum and inhalers are the recommended option. If a pregnant person chooses to use a vape and if that helps them to quit smoking and stay smokefree, they should be supported to do so.<sup>66</sup>

#### Fire risk

Vapes have caused fires but far fewer than the number of fires caused by smoking materials, which result in more deaths than any other type of fire.<sup>35</sup> Just like any other rechargeable device, always use the correct charger and never leave unattended while charging.<sup>36</sup>

Vapes are WEEE. Always recycle vapes.<sup>34</sup>





**ASH (2023) Addressing common myths about vaping. Putting the evidence in context.** <https://ash.org.uk/uploads/Addressing-common-myths-about-vaping-ASH-brief.pdf>

**Hartmann-Boyce, J, Lindson, N, et al (2022) Electronic Cigarettes for Smoking Cessation: Cochrane Living Systematic Review** <https://www.cebm.ox.ac.uk/research/electronic-cigarettes-for-smoking-cessation-cochrane-living-systematic-review-1>

**NCSCT (2023) Vaping: a guide for health and social care professionals** [https://www.ncsct.co.uk/publications/Vaping\\_briefing](https://www.ncsct.co.uk/publications/Vaping_briefing)

**NHS (2023) Vaping to quit smoking** <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/quit-smoking/using-e-cigarettes-to-stop-smoking/>

**Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (2022) Nicotine vaping in England: 2022 evidence update** <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nicotine-vaping-in-england-2022-evidence-update>

Find your local stop smoking service with the NHS Better Health service finder. <https://www.nhs.uk/better-health/quit-smoking/find-your-local-stop-smoking-service/>

### Local Stop Smoking Services

<b>Bracknell Forest</b>	<a href="https://www.smokefreelifeberkshire.com">https://www.smokefreelifeberkshire.com</a>
<b>Brighton and Hove</b>	<a href="https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/healthylifestyles">https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/healthylifestyles</a>
<b>Buckinghamshire</b>	<a href="https://bhb.maximusuk.co.uk/">https://bhb.maximusuk.co.uk/</a>
Report illegal tobacco	<a href="https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/campaign/illegal-tobacco/">https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/campaign/illegal-tobacco/</a>
<b>East Sussex</b>	<a href="https://oneyoueastsussex.org.uk/services/quit-smoking/">https://oneyoueastsussex.org.uk/services/quit-smoking/</a>
<b>Hampshire</b>	<a href="https://www.smokefreehampshire.co.uk/">https://www.smokefreehampshire.co.uk/</a>
<b>Isle of Wight</b>	<a href="https://www.smokefreeisland.co.uk/">https://www.smokefreeisland.co.uk/</a>
<b>Kent</b>	<a href="https://www.kentcht.nhs.uk/service/one-you-kent/one-you-smokefree/">https://www.kentcht.nhs.uk/service/one-you-kent/one-you-smokefree/</a>
<b>Medway</b>	<a href="https://www.medway.gov.uk/stopsmoking">https://www.medway.gov.uk/stopsmoking</a>
Report illegal tobacco	<a href="https://www.medway.gov.uk/info/200233/stop-smoking-support/1472/illegal-tobacco">https://www.medway.gov.uk/info/200233/stop-smoking-support/1472/illegal-tobacco</a>
<b>Oxfordshire</b>	<a href="https://www.stopforlifeoxon.org/">https://www.stopforlifeoxon.org/</a>
<b>Portsmouth</b>	<a href="https://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/services/health-and-care/health/quit-smoking/">https://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/services/health-and-care/health/quit-smoking/</a>
<b>Reading</b>	<a href="https://www.smokefreelifeberkshire.com/">https://www.smokefreelifeberkshire.com/</a>
<b>Slough</b>	<a href="https://healthandwellbeingslough.co.uk/services/stop-smoking/">https://healthandwellbeingslough.co.uk/services/stop-smoking/</a>
<b>Southampton</b>	<a href="https://www.southampton.gov.uk/health-social-care/health/stopping-smoking/">https://www.southampton.gov.uk/health-social-care/health/stopping-smoking/</a>
<b>Surrey</b>	<a href="https://oneyousurrey.org.uk/">https://oneyousurrey.org.uk/</a>
<b>West Berkshire</b>	<a href="https://www.smokefreelifeberkshire.com/">https://www.smokefreelifeberkshire.com/</a>
<b>Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead</b>	<a href="https://www.smokefreelifeberkshire.com/">https://www.smokefreelifeberkshire.com/</a>
<b>West Sussex</b>	<a href="http://www.westsussexwellbeing.org.uk/smokingservices">http://www.westsussexwellbeing.org.uk/smokingservices</a>
<b>Wokingham</b>	<a href="https://www.smokefreelifeberkshire.com/">https://www.smokefreelifeberkshire.com/</a>





# South East Tobacco Control Network

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