

Youth Vaping – Position Statement

This statement has been agreed by experts in public health in London and is aimed at strategic partners working with children and young people across the capital.

Aim

To outline the position of the [London Association of Directors of Public Health](#) (ADPH London) and the [London Tobacco Alliance](#) (LTA) and their partners regarding the use of vapes by people under the age of 18.

Introduction

Vaping is the use of devices that work by heating a liquid solution, which typically contains nicotine, flavourings, propylene glycol, and/or vegetable glycerine, and other chemicals. They are recommended as a method to support adults to stop smoking as they are significantly less harmful compared to the health risks that are associated with cigarettes ([OHID 2022](#), [Royal College of Physicians 2024](#)). Vaping doesn't involve burning tobacco (which produces many of the harmful chemicals found in cigarette smoke) and therefore reduces exposure to toxins that can cause cancer, lung disease and cardiovascular conditions such as heart attacks and strokes. Vaping is a useful quit aid for adults to help them to quit smoking tobacco.

Vapes are not risk-free and their use amongst children and young people has been causing concern around the nicotine addiction, mental health and other long term unknown health impacts. Young people under the age of 18 should not be using vapes. Young people who vape are more likely to be involved in other risk-taking behaviour and should be a priority group for health promotion. Further longitudinal research is underway to understand more about the long-term health effects of youth vaping.

Overarching themes

1. Prevention

- **Children and young people should not vape or smoke**
 - Use clear public health messages to explain why it is not appropriate, stressing that nicotine, is highly addictive and poses greater risks for young people as their developing brain is more sensitive to its effects and evidence indicates it can have negative physical and mental health impacts.
 - Emphasise that vapes are not risk-free, especially for children and young people whose development is still not complete, and for whom the long-term health effects are unknown.
 - Explore possibilities of a pan-London approach for a youth vaping campaign.
- **Take a whole-person approach to health promotion**
 - Use age-appropriate materials to help CYP understand risks in a relatable way.
 - Integrate messaging on vaping with other wellbeing topics like alcohol, drugs and addiction.

2. Advertising and regulation

- **Support the implementation and enforcement of the Tobacco and Vapes Bill to protect CYP from the harms of vaping and tobacco**
 - Back stronger enforcement and policies to limit the appeal of vapes to children and young people, including reducing their access to vapes and regulating the marketing that targets them.
 - Strongly support proposed regulations for vapes to be in plain packaging and kept 'out-of-sight and out-of-reach' of children and young people.
 - Advocate for regulation of non-nicotine vapes and alternative nicotine products to be aligned with the regulation of nicotine vapes.
- **Mandatory age-of-sale**
 - It is illegal to sell vapes to anyone under 18. Support effective monitoring of the sale of vapes in store and online to ensure age restrictions are observed.

3. Advocacy

- **Champion national regulation and empower local implementation**
 - Advocate for proportionate vape policies that safeguard CYP while supporting adult smoking cessation.
 - Equip local authorities with the tools and resources needed to deliver the Tobacco and Vapes Bill effectively and consistently.

4. Support

- **Smoking and vaping cessation**
 - Promote adoption of the NCSCT guidance on youth vaping cessation
 - Address nicotine addiction holistically, looking at root causes of vape use and prevent relapse.
 - Refer children and young people to substance misuse services where they may be using an illicit substance inside the vape e.g. Spice or tetrahydrocannabinol (THC).

5. Research

- **Invest in robust data and research**
 - Support further studies into the long-term health effects of vaping on children and young people, prevalence of use across London and the effectiveness of interventions.

Our call on partners

1. Champion prevention

- Emphasise that children and young people should not vape or smoke (reflecting that the legal age of sale is 18).
- Use clear, consistent public health messaging to explain the risks of vaping, especially on mental health, addiction and the unknown long-term impacts.

2. Tackle the use of vaping among children and young people

- Vaping is a useful quit aid for adults to help them to quit smoking tobacco.
- Integrate vaping prevention into wider wellbeing education, including drugs, alcohol and mental health.

3. Strengthen regulation and enforcement

- Respond supportively to consultations around proposed regulations as set out in the Tobacco and Vapes Bill that reduce the appeal of vapes by restrict flavours, packaging and marketing that target children and young people.
- Ensure effective enforcement of age-of-sale laws

4. Provide support for children and young people

- Supporting the development of initiatives and materials to educate CYP on the impact and risks of vaping.
- Promote adoption of the NCSCT guidance on youth vaping cessation

5. Invest in research, data and policy development

- Collaborate to build a stronger evidence base on youth vaping trends, health impact and what works in prevention and cessation.
- Consideration of policy development in relevant areas including whole school approaches, peer led work and youth engagement

Policy and evidence context

- Current and proposed legal framework through Tobacco and Vapes Bill [Tobacco and Vapes Bill - Parliamentary Bills - UK Parliament](#)
- Action on Smoking and Health (ASH) Youth vaping briefing [Youth vaping: the facts - ASH](#)
- ASH [Use of vapes \(e-cigarettes\) among young people in Great Britain - ASH](#)
- Study into effects of vaping – Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) 10-year study to shed light on youth vaping [10-year study to shed light on youth vaping - GOV.UK](#)
- First of these reviews published through DHSC Aug 2025 [Vaping and harm in young people: umbrella review](#)
- [Overview | Tobacco: preventing uptake, promoting quitting and treating dependence | Guidance | NICE](#)
- National Centre for Smoking Cessation and Training (NCSCT). Supporting clients who want to stop vaping. [NCSCT - stopping vaping](#)
- NCSCT guidance on supporting young people to quit vaping <https://www.ncsct.co.uk/publications/category/young-people-stopping-vaping>

Existing Position statements

- [Primary Care Respiratory Society](#)
- [Telford and Wrekin Council](#)
- [ADPH East of England - Nicotine Vaping Position Statement \(not specifically CYP\)](#)
- [ADPH-NE - Position Statement on Nicotine Vaping](#)
- [London Tobacco Alliance - Position Statement on Vaping \(adults\)](#)

The LTA and partners will review this position statement as appropriate, in response to emerging evidence on relative harms and to ensure it continues to align with national policy and regulatory frameworks.

Further resources

- [Frank: Nicotine](#)
- [Honest information about drugs | FRANK](#)
- National Centre for Smoking Cessation and Training [Young people and stopping vaping](#)
- National Centre for Smoking Cessation and Training [Young people and stopping smoking](#)
- [Young people and vaping - Better Health - NHS](#)
- [Vaping to quit smoking](#)
- [Vaping: The Facts | Smokefree Sheffield](#) which includes resources for schools
- Share intelligence of retailers selling illicit vape products through the [Reporter Consumer Crime Tool](#).
- London Trading Standards has a new online reporting tool, [Say Something Save Someone](#), aimed at tackling underage vape sales by giving children and teenagers a safe and anonymous way to flag concerns about how vapes are being obtained in their communities.

Authors' declaration

The authors of this statement declare that they do not work for, have any business relationship with and/or knowingly receive payment or other support from any tobacco product manufacturer or wholesaler (including any parent, affiliate or subsidiary, or foundation or organisation with majority support from a manufacturer or wholesaler) or any person, interest group, advocacy organisation or other business or organisation representing the interests of the tobacco industry.

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