



Department of Health & Social Care

Youth vaping: call for evidence

Please review your answers before submitting your response



About you

In what capacity are you responding to this survey?

An individual sharing my professional views

[Change](#)

What sector do you work in?

Public sector

[Change](#)

What is the main focus of your work?

Academic

[Change](#)

Where does your organisation operate services?

Not applicable

[Change](#)

Contacting you

Are you happy to share your email address with the Department of Health and Social Care?

yes

[Change](#)

What is your email address?

c.notley@uea.ac.uk

[Change](#)

Tobacco industry declaration

Do you have any direct or indirect links to, or receive funding from, the tobacco industry?

No

[Change](#)

Building regulatory compliance

Do you have any evidence to provide on building regulatory compliance?

No

[Change](#)

The appeal of vape products

Do you have any evidence to provide on the appeal of vapes to children?

Yes

[Change](#)

The appeal of vape products

The Addiction Research Group at the University of East Anglia are currently running a study investigating the usage patterns, practises and appeal of disposable e-cigarettes in young people. This is a qualitative study where we are asking dyads of young people (aged 16-21) to hold semi-structured conversations in order that we may collect quasi-naturalistic conversational data from young people themselves. The aim is to better understand young peoples views and experiences of disposable vape use in particular. This study is in its infancy, and so we only have tentative early data to share, but will aim to share more formal findings in the summer of 2023. So far in PPI informant interviews, in terms of appeal, we have heard that young people view disposables vapes as transitional. Two young people we talked to both talked about not using disposables forever. One young person talked about transitioning to a tank style vape when they are older. They expressed feeling silly using a coloured pen. One young person talked about giving up using disposables at some point. In discussion, cost was mentioned as a disincentive to buying disposable vapes – the young people talked about their cost and how these vary, especially in London. These young people had limited disposable incomes, and so were preoccupied with cost being a barrier, and also a reason for using them less and making vapes last. They said that cost would be a reason to give up using altogether.

What evidence is there about the appeal of vapes to children?

[Change](#)

What evidence is there about the appeal of vape flavours to children?

The young people we spoke to described the attraction of flavours is about flavours being “sweet”, or like sweets. There is a novelty aspect to the appeal of flavours - they described how a new flavour coming out will prompt them to buy a new vape. There was also a social element. Vape flavours were described as a conversation starter with other young people. One young person gave an example of going outside to vape and having a chat about flavours with a stranger who was also vaping.

[Change](#)

What evidence is there of effective measures to limit the appeal of vapes to children?

Price was described as a barrier, thus more expensive brands were seen as less appealing (out of reach) to this limited sample of young people.

[Change](#)

The appeal of vape products continued

Are there any potential unintended consequences to the measure(s) you have suggested?

Higher pricing of disposables may make them less appealing, but a key unintended consequence could be that this might drive black market sales. Young people frequently bought vape devices online. There were instances described of sharing with friends, as one young person might buy multiple vapes and sell them on at a price lower than in the shops. One concerning, anecdotal, piece of evidence linked to price is the actions of young people in their attempts to make disposable vapes last longer. One young person described how the battery on a disposable device would often fail before the e-liquid had run out. This led to him taking devices apart to 'recharge' the battery. This tampering could conceivably cause inadvertent inhalation of toxicants that might be created through the tampering process as these devices are not designed to be taken apart or recharged.

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Is there any other evidence on the appeal of vapes to children that the government should be aware of?

The young people we have spoken to so far in this study do not feel that they are influenced by social media. Their influences are much more proximal, i.e. close friends in their social circles.

[Change](#)

You may upload a document as supporting evidence.

Unanswered

[Change](#)

Marketing and promotion of vape products

Do you have any evidence to provide on the marketing and promotion of vape products?

No

[Change](#)

The role of social media

Do you have any evidence to provide on the role of social media?

No

[Change](#)

Effective educational approaches to prevent child use of vapes

Do you have any evidence to provide on effective educational approaches?

Yes

[Change](#)

Effective educational approaches to prevent child use of vapes

What evidence is there (either directly or by inference from other topic areas) of effective interventions in educational settings that could reduce vaping among children?

In our study to date, the young people we have spoken to did not hold education in schools in high regard. They talked about education about vaping at school being misinformed. They had been warned about the harms of vaping, but think that most young people know that vaping is less harmful than smoking. There is a danger then that messages about vaping harms are not taken seriously because they are not accurately framed. The young people also mentioned that there is a lot of misinformation on the internet about harms. In a related field of smoking prevention, to my knowledge, educational programmes working with influential peers have had some limited success (The ASSIST trial). As the experience of vaping disposables described by young people in our study to date seems inherently social, a peer based approach, or working with social networks, may be more effective than educational messages delivered by teachers or other adults.

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Are there any potential unintended consequences to the intervention(s) you have suggested?

[Change](#)

What evidence is there of children receiving misinformation about vapes?

The young people we spoke to so far told us that the messages of harm they had received from school were inaccurate. They had a good knowledge of relative harm compared to tobacco smoking themselves. The school based messages lacked credibility.

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Effective educational approaches to prevent child use of vapes continued

What evidence is there of schools developing behaviour policies that have been effective in reducing children's use of vapes?

No evidence to add on this point

[Change](#)

Is there any other evidence on educational approaches to prevent children using vapes that the Government should be aware of?

[Change](#)

You may upload a document as supporting evidence.

Unanswered

[Change](#)

The environment

Do you have any evidence of the environmental impact of disposable vapes? No

[Change](#)

Understanding the vape market

Do you have any evidence of vaping's wider economic impact? No

[Change](#)

Further evidence on vaping

Do you wish to provide further evidence? Yes

[Change](#)

Further evidence on vaping

A number of preliminary themes arose through our early conversations with two young people that we will explore with further dyad interviews with young people:

- **Strength:** One young person noted that it is possible to buy illegal 50mg vapes on Amazon. They mentioned the high strength of disposables and how it was problematic for young people with no former nicotine addiction.
- **Level of use:** the young people we engaged with talked about people who vaped heavily versus those who didn't and how they tried to limit their use.
- **Both YP aware of the harms of tobacco in relation to vaping and used vaping as a means to stay away from tobacco use – e.g. buying a vape before they went out clubbing because they knew they would be around people smoking. They saw vaping as completely different to smoking and one young person thinks it (smoking) should be banned. Both the young people we talked to don't think that vaping leads to or causes smoking, and vaping hasn't triggered them to smoke regularly.**
- **Purchasing:** One young person aged under 18 has no problem with purchasing vapes and will simply go to the next shop if not served – a local independent newsagent mentioned as willing to serve those under 18.
- **Locations:** The young people talked about how they would vape anywhere (including sneaky illicit vaping e.g. on the bus) and it was acceptable to vape with other older vaping family members. They also discussed considerate vaping practices.
- **Environmental issues:** People in general may not be aware that the disposable vapes contain batteries which need to be disposed of correctly. This is reportedly not on the packaging (or at least not prominent). It is possible that young people who are more eco conscious may be deterred from using disposable vapes for this reason – the young people we spoke to sought out environment friendlier ways to dispose of disposables.

Is there any further evidence on themes not included above that the government should consider when developing policies around children and vapes?

[Change](#)

You may upload a document as supporting evidence.

Unanswered

[Change](#)

Before you submit your response

How satisfied are you with the call for evidence process?

Satisfied

[Change](#)

How did you hear about the call for evidence?

Word of mouth (family, friend or colleague)

[Change](#)

Do you think we could improve this process?

[Change](#)

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