

Dear education colleagues

New resources on vaping to support schools, colleges, parents and carers

We're pleased to share with you a suite of new resources to support schools, colleges, parents and carers across the North East on the facts around vaping within the context of reducing the harms from tobacco. The resources were originally developed by Smokefree Sheffield, in collaboration with Action on Smoking and Health, to provide evidence based advice and guidance around youth vaping. With many thanks to Sheffield for enabling us to provide North East versions of these.

In line with national public health advice, we encourage any adult who smokes tobacco to switch to vaping instead, to significantly reduce the risks of smoking. You will be aware how tobacco smoking places a massive burden on our communities: up to two thirds of long term smokers will die early from a smoking-related disease and cigarettes are the only legal consumer product available that will kill when used as intended. Local data on the impact of tobacco can be found on the [ASH Ready Reckoner](#).

The Association of Directors of Public Health North East and Fresh, the regional tobacco control programme funded by North East local authorities and the North East and North Cumbria NHS Integrated Care Board, are jointly working towards a shared ambition of reducing tobacco smoking rates across the general population to 5% or less by 2030. Current North East adult smoking prevalence is just under 15%, halving since Fresh was launched in 2005.

While vapes don't contain tobacco or the other chemicals that cause smoking-related diseases, vaping is not risk-free and non-smokers and children are encouraged not to vape. However, vaping poses only a small fraction of the risks of smoking (see the 8th comprehensive [evidence review](#) from the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities) and is an effective and popular quitting aid for adult smokers. You may be aware of pupils whose own parents vape and it is likely this is part of a quit attempt.

We want to ensure that smokers who want to quit tobacco feel reassured that vaping is a less harmful alternative but at the same time that children are protected from taking up both vaping and smoking. Around 7% of young people nationally, aged 11-17, are current users of e-cigarettes and this figure is reflected in local schools based surveys – your local public health team will be able to provide you with local data. Among the same age group, national smoking rates are around 2.2%. The proportion of children who have ever smoked continues to decline nationally as well. In 2018, 16% of 11-15 year olds (23% in 2012) had smoked at least once; the lowest proportion since the survey began in 1982, when 53% had tried smoking. In the past decade, the proportion of children who have ever smoked has halved from 32% in 2008 to 16% in 2018. It is important that we remain vigilant though and that there is ongoing monitoring around both youth vaping and youth smoking.

The most effective way of preventing young people from starting to smoke is to change the adult world in which children grow up including helping parents and carers to stop smoking as this has a vital role modelling impact. We do this by taking a broad, population-based approach which reaches the whole community though we recognise that there is a need for school-based resources on vaping. As such, the new materials are designed to support carers and educators, including PSHE and safeguarding leads, to have conversations based on the evidence and to enable children and young people to make informed decisions about smoking and vaping.

Included in the suite of resources are:

1. Two posters which can be displayed where students will see them, such as school toilets, classrooms, canteens, and noticeboards.
2. An electronic leaflet designed for parents and carers giving more information about smoking and vaping. This can be shared with parents, for example via newsletters or emails.
3. A short, animated film which can be used in PSHE lessons, form times and assemblies, to start discussions.
4. PowerPoint slides ready for use by teachers in the classroom alongside the animated film to guide discussions.
5. To back up the slides for classroom use is a more detailed slideset for teachers, providing additional information to support educators, answering questions and signposting to additional support.

More information on stop smoking support in the North East and the use of vapes can be found at www.freshquit.co.uk.

These are the latest addition to a suite of materials already available to help local partners have evidence based discussions on vaping as part of local tobacco control approaches:

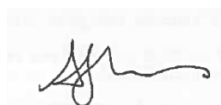
- Association of Directors of Public Health North East (ADPHNE) [position statement on vaping](#)
- ADPHNE [fact sheet on youth vaping](#) for schools and colleges

Nationally, ASH also have a range of evidence based briefings for local authorities and for schools and colleges – these can be found here: [ASH resources on youth vaping - ASH](#)

If you know that there are shops selling vapes to children, this can be reported to Trading Standards through the [Citizens Advice online portal](#) (note that it is illegal for a retailer to sell tobacco or vapes to an under 18, but it is not against the law for an under 18 to smoke or vape).

We hope you find these resources useful. For more information, please contact info@fresh-balance.co.uk and we can put you in touch with your local tobacco control lead.

Best wishes,



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