

# Vaping

## The facts about E-cigarettes

E-cigarettes are becoming a concern for many schools locally. Some designs are discreet and can be concealed easily.

It is vital that education professionals understand the risks associated with E-cigarettes. This guide provides information that will be useful in helping you when guiding young people to make informed decisions.

### E-cigarette devices vary greatly and are evolving rapidly

There are a variety of “generations” of e-cigarettes that differ according to technology and how they are designed to be used.

#### Cig-a-likes

These are disposables that have the look and feel of conventional cigarettes. This may renormalise smoking.



#### Disposables

These are the latest version of disposable e-cigarettes, often shaped like pods. These are meant to be discarded once all the e-liquid has been used (single use). These are available in a wide variety of flavours, colours and are easily concealed.



#### Vape Pens

These enable users to vary e-liquid formulations according to their preferences. Some use pre-filled cartridges while others allow users to refill them.



#### Tank systems

These enable users to adjust almost every element of the user's experience, including liquid formulations and battery power.



#### Pods

These are the newer generation of e-cigarettes. Pods use nicotine salts, that provide higher doses of nicotine without a harsh sensation. This device often looks like a USB stick allowing users (e.g., young people or students) to conceal them easily.



### What are E-cigarettes?

E-cigarettes are also known as e-cigs, vape pens, vapes, vape sticks, personal vaporisers, mods, tanks, and e-hookahs. E-cigarettes are electronic devices that heat a liquid (or vape juice), often containing nicotine, propylene glycol or vegetable glycerine, water, and flavourings into a vapour that is inhaled by the user. E-cigarettes typically consist of a mouthpiece, battery and cartridge or tank containing e-liquid solution. Using an e-cigarette is known as “vaping.”

### Data on E-cigarettes

Globally, the use of e-cigarettes has become increasingly popular in recent years among adults and young people. Around 7% of the adult population in the UK use e-cigarettes, which is around 3.1 million vapers<sup>1</sup>. Data on youth vaping in 2021 indicate that 9% of pupils aged 11-15 currently use e-cigarettes<sup>2</sup>. This is increasing year on year. Anecdotal information locally suggests this trend is similar for Berkshire.

### Risks associated with E-cigarettes

E-cigarettes are less harmful than smoking but can lead to nicotine addiction<sup>3</sup>. They can increase exposure to harmful chemicals. Reported side effects include vomiting, nausea, coughing, shortness of breath, mouth irritation and asthma. Defective products may catch fire or explode, leading to burns and injuries.

### Risk of nicotine

Nicotine is a highly addictive chemical. It can affect brain development in young people, impacting their learning, memory, concentration, and mood, causing anxiety and depression. It can also lead to addiction and physical dependence. Children and young people may become dependent on nicotine more quickly than adults.

# E-cigarettes: Useful facts for teachers

- Uptake is influenced by many factors including peer-pressure, need to fit in with friends, curiosity, influence of family members or friends who vape or smoke and the misconception that it is harmless.
- The [Tobacco and Related Products Regulations 2016](#) prohibits e-cigarettes to be sold or given to anyone under the age of 18.
- There are a number of places where children and young people can buy e-cigarettes, including shops, websites, markets, friends, or are given them by others. Trading Standards monitor underage sales of e-cigarettes and work closely with Public Health to educate the public, parents, and children on the use of these products.
- Information about retailers selling e-cigarettes to children/young people should be reported to Trading Standards at [www.stop-illegal-tobacco.co.uk/share-information](http://www.stop-illegal-tobacco.co.uk/share-information) or by calling 0300 999 6999

## Addressing the myths and risks about vaping

### Myth 1 - Vaping is harmful?

**Fact** - We can't yet be precise about the longer-term risks of vaping, but they are likely to be lower risk than smoking. This is because the levels of exposure to toxic chemicals from vaping are a tiny proportion of those from smoking.

### Myth 2 - Vaping is addictive?

**Fact** - Most young people who try vaping DO NOT get addicted to nicotine. Those who vape are much less likely to be dependent than those who smoke, even in the US where the nicotine concentration limit tends to be much higher (5% compared to the 2% maximum allowed in the UK).

### Myth 3 - Vaping is a gateway into smoking?

**Fact** - There is NOT strong evidence that vaping is a gateway into smoking. The majority of young people who frequently vape currently smoke, or have smoked cigarettes before starting to vape.

## E-cigarettes and stop smoking services

The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID), NHS guidance for smokers and the latest NICE guidance all support the use of e-cigarettes as a tool to quit smoking. E-cigarettes are the most popular stop smoking aid with an estimated 2.7 to 2.8 million adult users in 2020<sup>4</sup>. Products containing nicotine are not recommended for young people, except for nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) to support smoking cessation for those aged 12 years and over.

## Useful Resources

- ASH (Action on Smoking and Health) [guidance](#) for schools to support staff in developing evidence-based policies around vaping.
- ASH [factsheet: Use of e-cigarettes among young people in Great Britain 2022](#)
- ASH [brief for local authorities on youth vaping](#)
- South East Tobacco Control Network [Position Statement on Electronic Cigarettes 2021](#)
- [Frank](#) youth-focused information about drugs
- Free local stop smoking service [www.smokefreelifeberkshire.com](http://www.smokefreelifeberkshire.com)

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/e-cigarettes-and-heated-tobacco-products-evidence-review>  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nicotine-vaping-in-england-2022-evidence-update/nicotine-vaping-in-england-2022-evidence-update-summary#chapter-1-introduction>

<sup>2</sup> <https://digital.nhs.uk/news/2022/decrease-in-smoking-and-drug-use-among-school-children-but-increase-in-vaping-new-report-shows>

<sup>3</sup> E-cigarettes: an evidence update (publishing.service.gov.uk)

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.ncsct.co.uk/usr/pub/NCSCCT%20service%20guidance%20on%20e-cigarettes.pdf>



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