

Information for parents and carers about vapes

January 2024

This leaflet contains guidance and information around the use of vapes, especially by young people. We know that the use of vapes is on the rise. Marketing makes vaping attractive to younger people, enticing them to use vapes, particularly disposable vapes which are offered in a variety of colours and flavours.



What should you know as a parent or carer?

- There is clear advice that vapes should not be used by children and young people.
- Vaping products should not be sold or given to anyone under the age of 18. The Tobacco and Related Products Regulations 2016 prohibits vapes and e-cigarettes to be sold or given to anyone under the age of 18.
- The use of any type of vape can increase young people's exposure to harmful chemicals. Reported side effects of using any vape include:
 - vomiting
 - nausea
 - coughing
 - shortness of breath
 - mouth irritation
 - asthma
- Defective products may catch fire or explode, leading to burns and injuries.
- Nicotine can be found in most vapes. Nicotine is a highly addictive chemical and it can affect brain development in young people. This may impact 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 quicker than adults.

- The long-term effects of vapes are still unknown. Therefore, it is difficult to know the outcomes and risks of using vapes over the long term.

What you can do as a parent or carer

If you know or suspect your child is using a vape, talk to them about the risks and that they are not designed for general use, only as a tool to quit smoking or as a less harmful alternative to smoking for adults.

If your child is using the vape as a way of managing their anxiety or stress, there are other ways they can destress without relying on vapes, such as physical and creative activities, relaxation techniques and talking therapies. There are many local services to support young people (listed at the end of this leaflet).

What are the risks of illegal vapes?

Illegal vapes can contain a number of harmful chemicals that are controlled under the Misuse of Drugs Act (1971), including tetrahydrocannabinol (THC).

THC is a psychoactive compound in cannabis and can make people feel a range of effects.

These may include:

- Paranoia
- Nausea
- Hyperactivity
- Hallucinations
- Panic attacks
- Impaired mobility
- Elevated heart rate
- Cough or shortness of breath
- Chest pains

The quantity and strength of THC found in these illegal vape products varies greatly. Any product containing THC is illegal in the UK.

It is important to note that THC is different to cannabidiol (CBD), which is the non-psychoactive chemical compound and does not have the same effect.

If a young person is known to have used a vape containing THC or another illegal substance, monitor for these symptoms. Seek immediate medical attention if you have concerns about their health: use **111 online** or call **999** in an emergency.

There are several options available if you find a vape which you suspect contains an illegal substance or if a retailer is selling vapes to young people under the age of 18:

- contact [trading standards](#)
- visit www.stop-illegal-tobacco.co.uk/share-information
- call **0300 999 6999**

Local support and information

Bracknell Forest Thrive!

This website provides information and guidance on children and young people's health and wellbeing.

Youthline Bracknell Forest

Free, confidential and client-centred counselling for young people attending secondary school and adults who care for and support young people in Bracknell Forest. Youthline offers in person, online and telephone counselling. Phone: **01344 311200**.

Kooth

Free digital emotional wellbeing and counselling service available to young people aged 10 to 25 across east Berkshire.

Smoke Free Teen

Useful advice on vaping for young people including tips to deal with cravings, understanding triggers and managing anxiety, stress and the cost of vaping.

New Hope

A substance misuse service for young people and adults. They can support young people to understand the risks and harm of taking drugs or drinking alcohol. They also offer advice and information to parents and carers and hold a family and friends group which young people can access. Email: new.hope@bracknell-forest.co.uk
Phone: **01344 312360**.

ChatHealth

Free and confidential text messaging service for parents and young people, putting you in contact with a local school nurse for advice and information.

- If you are a parent of carer of a five to 19 year old and need advice, you can text a school nurse: **07312 263194**.
- If you are aged 11 to 19 and need advice, you can text a school nurse: **07312 263266**.

The Bracknell Forest Youth Service

Provides preventative teaching and support to enhance and compliment substance misuse curriculum already delivered in schools.

General information and support

Information about drugs on the Talk to Frank website:

- **vapes:** www.talktofrank.com/drug/vapes
- **cannabis:** www.talktofrank.com/drug/cannabis
- **synthetic cannabinoids:** www.talktofrank.com/drug/synthetic-cannabinoids
- **general overview:** www.talktofrank.com/news/cannabisvapes