



Borough of Telford and Wrekin

Health & Wellbeing Board

Thursday 28 September 2023

Children and Young People's and Vaping Statement

Cabinet Member:	Cllr Kelly Middleton - Cabinet Member: Healthy, Safer & Stronger Communities & Partnerships
Lead Director:	Liz Noakes - Director: Health & Wellbeing
Service Area:	Health & Wellbeing
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Wards Affected:	All Wards
Key Decision:	Not Key Decision
Forward Plan:	Not Applicable
Report considered by:	Health & Wellbeing Board – 28 September 2023

1.0 Recommendations for decision/noting:

The Health & Wellbeing Board are asked to:

- 1.1 review and approve the Telford & Wrekin vaping statement for children & young people for dissemination among partners.

2.0 Purpose of Report

- 2.1 This report proposes a position statement on the topic of children and young people and vaping in Telford & Wrekin, based on the most recent evidence and best practice.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 There is growing concern regarding the level of children and young people who are vaping, and the national [Smokefree Youth GB survey 2023](#) showed a significant increase with 11.6% of 11-17 year olds reporting experimenting with vapes in 2023, compared to 7.7% in 2022.

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- 3.2 There is a gap in the evidence to support a full understanding of the risks and the longer-term effects of vaping in children and young people. However, the current professional view is that the safest and healthiest option is for children and young people not to vape.
- 3.3 It is important to highlight that vaping has been proven to be an effective tool to aid quitting smoking in those who currently or have previously smoked. Research shows that the vast majority of young people who vape are also current or ex-smokers. There needs to be a careful balance between the promotion of vaping as a tool to help quitting and promotion of vaping in those who do not smoke.
- 3.4 It is illegal to sell nicotine containing vapes to anyone under the age of 18. It is also illegal to purchase nicotine containing vapes on behalf of anyone under the age of 18 (known as 'proxy purchasing'). Despite this, the most common ways young people report accessing vapes is by buying them from a shop or being given them by others. There is concern that e-cigarette marketing is being targeted at teenagers who do not smoke rather than smokers trying to quit. Vapes are commonly marketed with packaging designs and fruity flavours which appeal to children and young people.
- 3.5 For those who don't smoke, the message is simple, don't vape. Vapes are not risk free and their long-term impacts are not known. There is concern from child health experts that vaping products could be a gateway to nicotine addiction, and there is some evidence emerging that young non-smokers who use vapes are more likely than non-users to take up smoking.

4.0 Summary of main proposals

- 4.1 It is estimated, based on the figures published by the Action on Smoking and Health (ASH), that over 1,900 11-17-year-olds in Telford & Wrekin experimented with vaping in 2023. In terms of regular vapers, the estimate is 600 11-17 year olds in Telford & Wrekin vape every day, a worrying rise from less than 100 regular vapers in 2014.
- 4.2 The Telford & Wrekin position statement on vaping in children and young people, has been produced based on the current evidence and best practice and it describes key areas for action going forward. The aim of the statement is to widely share the evidence and helpful resources with young people, their parents and carers, and professionals to help educate and guide discussions around vaping and the risk it poses.

Alternative Options

- 5.1 No alternative options

5.0 Key Risks

- 6.1 The current evidence on vaping is mostly limited to short and medium term effects and studies to assess the long term risks are needed. This highlights the need to share advice widely as the picture evolves, keeping the evidence under regular review as further research become available.

7.0 Council Priorities

- 7.1 The Telford & Wrekin vaping statement for children and young people contributes to the delivery of the Council Plan - Protect, Care and Invest, particularly the priorities – every child and adult lives well in their communities, and also neighbourhoods are a great place to live and our natural environment is protected.

8.0 Financial Implications

- 8.1 The implementation of key areas for action can be met from within existing staffing resources, working with Education settings and lobbying government. Additional one off Public Health monies have been earmarked to support any additional training resources needed. TS 19/09/2023

9.0 Legal and HR Implications

- 9.1 Local Authorities have been responsible for commissioning Stop Smoking Services and delivering tobacco as part of their public health remit since 2013. By setting out its Vaping Position Statement, the Council is demonstrating the ways in which it is seeking to meet its statutory duties.

10.0 Ward Implications

- 10.1 All Wards.

11.0 Health, Social and Economic Implications

- 11.1 The UK's vaping sector is growing rapidly, supporting the creation of new jobs. There are considerable cost savings to the NHS of adult smokers switching to vaping and there is evidence of economic productivity associated with smokers switching to using vaping products.

12.0 Equality and Diversity Implications

- 12.1 There is evidence that certain groups of young people are more likely to smoke and this includes people with protected characteristics under the Equality Act, such as: those from certain ethnic groups and those who are LGBTQ+

13.0 Climate Change and Environmental Implications

- 13.1 The not-for-profit organisation [Material Focus has recently reported](#) that 1.3 million single use vapes are thrown away every week in the UK.

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- 13.2 Vaping devices contain different components including plastic casings, lithium batteries, metal, rubber and glass. Some parts, like the battery, can be widely recycled, whereas others, such as any rubber parts, may not be. Understandably this generates issues as vaping device companies have not designed products that can be easily dismantled.
- 13.3 Nationally, Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) regulations are in place. These regulations place the obligation on the companies who produce the vapes to finance the collection and treatment of those products when they become waste.
- 13.4 There is real concern amongst Telford and Wrekin's Neighbourhood and Enforcement team about the danger that disposable vapes pose. Single use vapes are high-risk waste disposal items due to the lithium batteries contained within them which have the potential to combust and start fires.
- 13.5 Telford and Wrekin council work closely with Veolia, who are currently exploring whether encouraging people to dispose of vapes in a separate bag would help to reduce the risk of fire. Consumers should be disposing of their vapes either at a household recycling centre or at the shop where they bought the device. It has been questioned whether members of the public are aware of the necessity to recycle their single use vapes. Communication around this is a potential avenue to explore moving forward.
- 13.6 Whilst we want to continue to promote correct disposal methods, communications need to be appropriately targeted to reduce the risk of promoting vaping in children and young people as well as adults who do not smoke or vape. When developing communications, a joint approach between Telford and Wrekin's Neighbourhood and Enforcement and Health and Wellbeing teams could help to develop resources that positively impact both population and environmental health.

14.0 Background Papers

- 14.1 No background papers

15.0 Appendices

A Telford & Wrekin Children & Young People's Vaping Statement 2023

16.0 Report Sign Off

Signed off by	Date sent	Date signed off	Initials
Director	12/09/2023	13/09/2023	LN
Finance	12/09/2023	19/09/2023	TS
Legal	12/09/2023	20/09/2023	RP