
Report of Amanda Healy, Director of Public Health, Durham County Council

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

- 1 This report presents a prepared consensus statement in relation to County Durham's approach to vaping, for agreement by the Health and Wellbeing Board.

Executive summary

- 2 Smoking remains the single largest cause of preventable death and one of the largest causes of health inequalities in England as well as in County Durham. As well as dying prematurely, smokers also suffer many more years in ill-health.
- 3 Supporting smokers to stop smoking is a key strand of tobacco control and vaping is increasingly popular as a method to quit. The provision of the nicotine, to which smokers are addicted without the harmful components of tobacco smoke can prevent most of the harm from smoking.
- 4 Recently, there have been many mixed messages in relation to vaping, particularly with issues reported in the USA which has caused confusions amongst health and care professionals on the safety of vaping.
- 5 The vaping statement will provide an agreed, standardised reference for all health and social care professionals in County Durham.

Recommendation(s)

- 6 Members of the Health and Wellbeing Board are recommended to:
 - (a) Discuss the content of the consensus statement;
 - (b) Agree to the content of the vaping statement; and
 - (c) Cascade the vaping statement to relevant services.

Background

- 7 Smoking remains the single largest cause of preventable death and one of the largest causes of health inequalities in England as well as in County Durham. As well as dying prematurely, smokers also suffer many more years in ill-health.
- 8 The provision of the nicotine, to which smokers are addicted without the harmful components of tobacco smoke can prevent most of the harm from smoking. Smoking cessation, including provision of medication such as nicotine replacement therapy (NRT), is one of the most effective health interventions.
- 9 E-cigarettes are battery-powered devices that allow the user to inhale nicotine in a vapour rather than smoke. Unlike tobacco cigarettes, e-cigarettes do not contain cancer-causing tobacco or involve combustion. As a result, there is no smoke, tar or carbon monoxide. E-cigarettes are proving much more popular than NRT as a substitute and competitor for tobacco cigarettes.
- 10 The Royal College of Physicians has concluded that the hazard to health arising from long-term e-cigarette use is unlikely to exceed 5% of the harm from smoking. Switching completely from smoking to e-cigarettes conveys both substantial short-term and probable longer-term health benefits.
- 11 E-cigarettes are available commercially and are regulated under the EU Tobacco Products Directive (TPD).
- 12 There is public misunderstanding about nicotine and the risks from e-cigarettes and this has led to healthcare professionals delivering variable advice in relation to e-cigarettes.
- 13 This statement describes the proposed position of partners within the Health and Wellbeing Board.

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

Under section 2B NHS Act 2006 (inserted by Section 12 of the Health and Social Care Act 2012), local authorities have a statutory duty to take such steps as they consider appropriate for improving the health of the people in their area.

Finance

None required

Consultation

Has taken place with Fresh NE

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

No adverse implications

Human Rights

No adverse implications

Crime and Disorder

No adverse implications

Staffing

None

Accommodation

None

Risk

None identified

Procurement

No implications