

# VAPING – COUNTY DURHAM CONSENSUS STATEMENT

Partners across the tobacco control system within County Durham have agreed to the following consensus in relation to vaping and the use of electronic cigarettes:

1. Vaping, based on current evidence, is a significantly less harmful alternative to smoking because it does not contain the same types and level of toxins as in tobacco smoke.
2. Vaping is not risk-free, and non-smokers should not start to vape. However, compared to smoking it carries a fraction of the risk. Public Health England and the Royal College of Physicians state that switching to vaping would be significantly less harmful than continuing to smoke.
3. Smokers switching to vaping reduce their risks to health in the short and medium term. It is too early to tell what the longer-term impact of vaping might be on health but we know clearly what the impacts to health are if they continue to smoke tobacco.
4. Vaping can be an effective aid to quitting smoking. They are particularly effective when combined with expert support from stop smoking advisors. As the products are developed and improved further, they are likely to help more people to stop smoking.
5. Vaping and continuing to smoke does not have any health benefits. It is important to stop smoking.
6. The UK has tight regulation around electronic cigarettes. Vaping products are age restricted products and must not be sold to anyone under the age of 18. Local Authority Trading Standards departments are responsible for enforcing the law on age restricted products including vapes. Trading Standards need intelligence on under age sales in order to undertake enforcement activity. If there is any intelligence on under age sales of vapes people should report this to Trading Standards on 03000 261 016.
7. Vaping and vaping products must be notified to the Medical and Healthcare Regulatory Authority (MHRA) before they can be sold. The European Tobacco Products Directive (TPD) stipulates that e-cigarettes must not include ingredients (except for nicotine) which pose a risk to human health in heated or unheated form.

## Context for our vaping statement

- Tobacco smoking is very harmful and results in the deaths of over 3,000 County Durham residents each year.
- People smoke for the nicotine but die from the tar, carbon monoxide and thousands of other toxic chemicals in tobacco smoke.
- The optimum scenario is for people not to smoke at all and to have a smokefree environment with clean lungs.
- Consumers and healthcare professionals can report side effects and safety concerns with e-cigarettes or refill containers to MHRA through the Yellow Card reporting system.



## Advice to consumers:

- **For smokers:** You should stop smoking completely. Getting expert support combined with using an e-cigarette doubles your chances of quitting successfully. For the best way to quit read our advice
- **For people who vape nicotine:** if you are still smoking, you should stop and switch completely to vaping, then come off nicotine when you are confident you won't relapse to smoking.
- **If you have never smoked:** Don't vape.
- For people who vape cannabidiol (CBD): although CBD is less tightly regulated, if you experience symptoms or are concerned you should stop.
- **For people who vape tetrahydrocannabinol (THC):** if you are vaping THC (or an unknown liquid which could contain THC) it can be hazardous. These are the products most implicated in the US outbreak. If you feel unwell or have any difficulty breathing after vaping THC, go to A&E and tell them precisely what the product was you were using.

### Links to UK evidence

PHE Evidence Update: Vaping in England

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/821179/Vaping\\_in\\_England\\_an\\_evidence\\_update\\_February\\_2019.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/821179/Vaping_in_England_an_evidence_update_February_2019.pdf)

A Randomized Trial of E-Cigarettes versus Nicotine-Replacement Therapy

<https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMoa1808779>

CRUK report: E-cigarettes and primary care

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/e-cigarettes-and-vaping-policy-regulation-and-guidance>

Royal College of Physicians: nicotine without the smoke: tobacco harm reduction

<https://www.rcplondon.ac.uk/projects/outputs/nicotine-without-smoke-tobacco-harm-reduction>

Royal College of General Practitioners: Position Statement

<https://www.rcgp.org.uk/-/media/Files/Policy/2017/RCGP-E-cig-position-statement-sept-2017.ashx?la=en>

ASH Research: E-cigarettes and Young people

<https://ash.org.uk/media-and-news/press-releases-media-and-news/in-britain-young-people-vape-just-to-give-it-a-try-not-because-they-think-its-cool/>

BMJ: Young People and vaping

<https://www.bmj.com/content/365/bmj.l2219>

Fresh position statement on e-cigs

<http://www.freshne.com/in-the-news/pr/item/2194-statement-ecigs>

NHS Vaping Standards

[http://www.freshne.com/images/stories/Vaping\\_Standard\\_for\\_NHS.pdf](http://www.freshne.com/images/stories/Vaping_Standard_for_NHS.pdf)

