

Our position on nicotine vaping

The health advice on vaping can be easily summarised:

- **If you smoke, vaping is much safer.**
- **If you don't smoke, don't vape.**

This is because for smokers, vaping carries a small fraction of the health risks that smoking does. Vaping isn't completely risk-free, so should not be promoted or encouraged amongst anyone who is a non-smoker, including children and young people.

Anyone who does vape should use legal products from a reputable retailer to make sure they comply with safety standards.



Health risks

- **Smoking tobacco is still the single biggest cause of preventable illness and death.** It kills up to 2 out of 3 long term users. Between 2017 and 2019, over 3,000 deaths were caused by smoking in the county of Dorset.
- **Tobacco, and the smoke it produces, contains a toxic mix of over 6,000 chemicals.** Many of these are known to cause diseases like cancer, stroke, heart disease, dementia and lung disease, not just in those who smoke, but also in people who are exposed to second hand smoke.
- **The vast majority of these chemicals are not present in licensed vapes.** Vapes do contain nicotine, which is an addictive substance. Nicotine has been used safely for many years in nicotine replacement therapy.
- **Vaping isn't risk-free and can be addictive.** It must be presented as an alternative to smoking and a tool for quitting because of the reduced health risk, rather than an appealing activity for the wider population, particularly young people.



Quitting smoking

- Smokers are addicted to nicotine, not tobacco. But **it's the chemicals produced in tobacco smoke that kills smokers, not exposure to nicotine**. Given the immense health risks from smoking tobacco, switching from smoking to vaping is a positive health move. Vapes deliver the nicotine they are addicted to without the tar and toxic chemicals from smoking.
- **People who switch to vaping should ultimately aim to quit vaping as well**, once they are sure they won't return to smoking. The health risks of vaping are much smaller than smoking, but the healthiest option is to neither smoke nor vape.
- Nicotine vaping is now one of the most popular aids for quitting smoking. Studies show that when used alongside coaching support, it's also a **very effective way of quitting smoking**. [LiveWell Dorset](#) offers this alongside a range of other support for quitting smoking.
- It is important that smokers understand how much safer e-cigarettes are for their health compared to smoking. In 2021, only 34% of adults who smoked accurately believed that vaping was less harmful than smoking.



Wider impacts

- Smoking is also a **major contributor to widening health inequalities**. Higher smoking prevalence is associated with almost every indicator of deprivation or marginalisation.
- **Smoking has a significant cost to society**. According to Action on Smoking and Health, the societal cost of smoking in the South West stands at approximately £1.7bn each year, including lost productivity, healthcare, social care and fires.
- **Anyone who is vaping should purchase products from a reputable retailer**. Illegal vapes may be a safety risk as they may not have been subject to the same rigorous testing as approved products. You can report the supply of illegal vapes or sale of nicotine-containing products to children to your local council's trading standards service.
- **We will support national plans to tackle vaping amongst children**, including a ban on disposable vapes, which also have a significant impact on the environment and pose a fire risk.



Useful resources

- [Vaping to quit smoking - Better Health - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk/better-health/vaping-to-quit-smoking)
- [Chief Medical Officer for England on vaping - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/chief-medical-officer-for-england-on-vaping)
- [Nicotine vaping in England: 2022 evidence update - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/nicotine-vaping-in-england-2022-evidence-update)
- [Electronic Cigarettes - ASH](https://ash-society.org/e-cigarettes)

