



SHROPSHIRE HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD Report

Meeting Date	15 th June 2023			
Title of report	Vaping and Children & Young People			
This report is for (You will have been advised which applies)	Discussion and agreement of recommendations		Approval of recommendations (With discussion by exception)	x Information only (No recommendations)
Reporting Officer & email	Gordon Kochane, Public Health Consultant, Gordon.kochane@shropshire.gov.uk			
Which Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy priorities does this report address? Please tick all that apply	Children & Young People	X	Joined up working	X
	Mental Health		Improving Population Health	X
	Healthy Weight & Physical Activity		Working with and building strong and vibrant communities	
	Workforce		Reduce inequalities (see below)	
What inequalities does this report address?	Health inequalities related to smoking and the use of vapes			
Report content - Please expand content under these headings or attach your report ensuring the three headings are included.				
1. Executive Summary				
<p>A Position Statement on vaping amongst children and young people has been produced by the recently formed Task & Finish Group on Underage Vaping. This is aimed at those working in education, professionals and others who work with children and young people who vape to address concerns, present current evidence, summarise legality of underage vaping and highlight potential links with exploitation.</p> <p>The Shropshire stance is that vaping is not for children and the safest, healthiest option is not to vape or smoke.</p> <p>The Position Statement has been finalised and shared with networks connecting to the target audience. The intention will be to create a series of further communications as additional evidence and updates (both national and local) become available. A copy of the Position Statement is attached to this report.</p> <p>Further work on designing communications aimed at children and young people and parents/carers is also being progressed, with input from the voice of the young person and referencing national available resources.</p> <p>An initial review of current intelligence on underage vaping in Shropshire has identified there is currently no single systematic method of capturing this information. The Task & Finish group has sought to address this through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A plan to capture market research with local children and young people on vaping via the use of focus group/conversation (linking with existing forums, groups, and outreach links) • Inclusion of vaping questions within Shropshire's Public Health Nursing Service school health survey • Inclusion of vaping questions within the forthcoming children and young people Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) 				

2. Recommendations (Not required for 'information only' reports)

The HWBB is recommended to receive this report for information, to raise awareness and share the Position Statement on Underage Vaping for those working in education establishments, professionals and others working with children and young people who vape.

3. Report

The earlier two Task & Finish groups set up with a focus on understanding -local data on underage vaping and communications about underage vaping have been combined. This provides opportunity to ensure communications are guided by local understanding of underage vaping and to shape our information collection approaches.

A joint Position Statement presenting the facts on current evidence and known risks on vaping amongst children and young people has been produced by the Task & Finish group. This position statement is aimed at those in education establishments, professionals and others who work with children and young people who vape. The purpose is to clarify messages which may be mixed or confusing depending on the source and provide opportunity to raise awareness of additional considerations such as legality of selling to or purchasing vapes for underage young people, the Trading Standards role as well potential links to exploitation.

We promote the message that vaping is not for children and the safest, healthiest option is not to vape or smoke.

The Position Statement includes a section on key messages for action should there be specific concerns related to vaping, along with contact details for Trading Standards, or concerns about exploitation. The Position Statement is endorsed by the Shropshire Council Director of Public Health, Director of People, and the Chief Medical Officer from NHS Shropshire Telford & Wrekin.

This document has already been shared with a wide number of networks however, we would welcome the Board's support to raise the profile of this Position Statement. A copy of the Position Statement can be found embedded below.



Shropshire Position
Statement on Underage

The Task & Finish group is currently working on an approach for communications aimed at children and young people. The voice of the young person is at the core of this work, and an initial exercise to work with and collate the views on vaping of young people in Shropshire is currently underway. This includes working with partners to connect with our children and young people to both help define what questions should be asked and to gather this market research, which will be used to shape the messages used within communications. It is recognised that different approaches may be needed for different cohorts of children and young people and also the need for their support in understanding where best to place these messages for optimum impact.

A national suite of resources has been made available. These include posters designed to present the facts about vaping to children and young people and a leaflet aimed at parents and carers which includes tips on having conversations about vaping with a child. The Task & Finish group is in the process of reviewing these resources including any potential to localise them for Shropshire.

The national resources also include a PHSE resource. In Shropshire, a PHSE resource on vaping is currently being designed by the Public Health School Nursing service for delivery in schools, with the support and input from the Task & Finish group.

There is ambition to develop a dedicated section on the Shropshire Council webpage to host the communications and resources about underage vaping and ensuring links to other local webpages within the system to centralise resources for easier access and wider reach.

An initial exercise to review local data and intelligence to inform a Shropshire narrative on underage vaping identified limited systematic collation. Information is available via Trading Standards however is reliant on reporting of concerns about underage sales or illegal vapes being sold. A health survey delivered by the Public Health School Nursing service includes specific questions on vaping, and feedback from this should be available shortly. Questions around vaping will also be included within the forthcoming CYP Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and will provide an opportunity to compare Shropshire findings with the national picture.

Shropshire is also co-ordinating a response to the Smokefree 2030 youth vaping Call for Action. Its purpose is to identify opportunities to reduce the number of children accessing and using vape products, while ensuring they are still easily available as a quit aid for adult smokers. The Call for Action is asking local areas to share insights, evidence or data that could support regulatory compliance, appeal of vapes, marketing and promotion of vape products, role of social media, effective educational approaches to prevent the uptake of vaping by children, the impact on the environment and understanding the vape market. If anyone would like to contribute towards the call for evidence please contact Gordon Kochane, Public Health Consultant, and for further details please visit [Youth vaping: call for evidence - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk).

Risk assessment and opportunities appraisal

(NB This will include the following: Risk Management, Human Rights, Equalities, Community, Environmental consequences and other Consultation)

There is risk that the decline in smoking rates could be replaced by an increase in vaping, whether that is nicotine or non-nicotine-based vapes. Whilst there is currently no specific research focusing on the health impact of vaping on young people's development and long-term respiratory system impacts; evidence supports, and locally it is agreed, that vaping is not for children and the safest, healthiest option is not to vape or smoke.

Vapes can be purchased online often with relative ease and are more challenging to regulate. There has been a large rise in sales of non-compliant vapes (with risks around product safety requirements such as chargers and batteries). This is compounded by worrying indications that the supply of vapes may be linked to child exploitation and serious organised crime.

Tobacco smoking is the most important cause of health inequalities. Vaping and tobacco smoking are linked given vaping is a recognised and encourage smoking cessation tool. Reducing vaping among children and young people is important for reducing the impact of both known and unknown health risks of vaping (precautionary principal). Communicating the relative and absolute risks of vaping adequately are essential to minimising the significant risks of tobacco smoking in children and young people, as well as adults.

Shropshire supports the Local Government Association's call for action to central government for vapes to be in plain packaging, be kept out-of-sight, for mandatory age-of-sale signage on vaping products and a ban on free samples as tools that can help achieve this.

Financial implications

(Any financial implications of note)

There are no current financial implications to be noted. However, the progress of this work and final outcomes are currently being defined and therefore financial implications continue to be under review.

Climate Change Appraisal as applicable

Disposal vapes are a particular environmental pollutant and increasing in popularity. Action to reduce vaping, particularly of disposal vapes which are popular among young people, will reduce the environmental impact of these products.

Where else has the paper been presented?

System Partnership Boards	
Voluntary Sector	
Other	

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder) Portfolio holders can be found [here](#) or your organisational lead e.g., Exec lead or Non-Exec/Clinical Lead

Cllr Cecilia Motley – *Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care, Public Health & Communities*

Rachel Robinson – *Executive Director, Health, Wellbeing and Prevention*

Appendices

(Please include as appropriate)