



SHROPSHIRE HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD Report

Meeting Date	16.11.23			
Title of report	“Stopping the start- plan to create a smokefree generation” and DHSC consultation			
This report is for (You will have been advised which applies)	Discussion and agreement of recommendations		Approval of recommendations (With discussion by exception)	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	
	Mental Health		Improving Population Health	x
	Healthy Weight & Physical Activity		Working with and building strong and vibrant communities	
	Workforce		Reduce inequalities (see below)	x
What inequalities does this report address?	Harms related to smoking and underage vaping			

Executive Summary

This paper provides an overview of the national policy paper, **Stopping the start: our new plan to create a smokefree generation**, published in October 2023, along with update on local activity.

In October 2023, the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) published its policy paper, [Stopping the start: our new plan to create a smokefree generation](#), where the government set out an intention to create the first ‘smokefree generation’. This builds upon the 2019 green paper “The smokefree 2030 ambition for England” and the Khan Review outlining recommendations aimed at supporting the 2030 ambition

The government have also proposed several proposals to reduce youth vaping, including restricting vape flavours, regulating vape packaging and point of sale displays, and restricting the sale of disposable vapes.

The Department of Health and Social Care [launched a consultation on the proposals set out in this policy paper](#) on 12 October 2023, and is inviting responses until 6 December 2023.

Specifically, DHSC is seeking views on introducing new legislation to raise the age of sale for tobacco, further regulating vaping to reduce its appeal to children, and introducing new powers for local authorities to issue fixed penalty notices to enforce age of sale legislation for tobacco products and vapes.

Public Health and the multi-agency Underage Vaping Task & Finish group are co-ordinating a response on behalf of Shropshire Council. It is intended that a summary of these responses is shared with the HWWB towards the end of November and recommended that the Board

supports the key recommendation around raising the age of sale of tobacco to those born after 1st January 2009.

The government have also committed to funding several initiatives to improve smoking cessation support, including an additional £70 million annually to support local authority led stop smoking services and £45 million over two years to roll out the national 'Swap to Stop' scheme, supporting people to stop smoking with the free provision of a vape kit and behavioural support. It is anticipated that Shropshire Council will be allocated a new indicative annual allocation of £330,230 to invest in smoking cessation however, we are currently awaiting for details of dates and specific criteria required. Plans on how this will be delivered in Shropshire are already commencing along with considerations for the Swap to Stop expression of interest.

In brief summary, the **Stopping the Start** policy [paper](#) outlines:

- **Plans to bring forward legislation to make it an offence to sell tobacco products to anyone born on or after 1 January 2009.**

This would mean that the age of sale of tobacco products will increase by one year each year, so that children turning 14 years old or younger this year will never be legally sold tobacco, phasing out tobacco over time and preventing future generations from ever taking up smoking.

- **A package to support current smokers to quit smoking.**

Government intention to double funding for stop smoking services with £70 million additional funding per year, and £5 million this year and £15 million each year after for anti-smoking marketing campaigns. This equates to £330,230 per year until end of 2028/29 for smoking cessation investment for Shropshire Council.

- **Measures to tackle youth vaping.**

While the legal age of sale for vapes is 18 (and will remain so), youth vaping has tripled nationally in the last 3 years. The government announced that it will consult on measures to reduce the appeal and availability of vapes to children, including restricting flavours, regulating point-of-sale displays, regulating vape packaging, and restricting the sale of disposable vapes.

- **Plans to strengthen enforcement**

This includes £30 million new funding each year for enforcement agencies.

It is estimated that 10% of adults in Shropshire are current smokers based on latest data which equates to over 26,000 adult smokers (Office for Health Improvement & Disparities). These plans will help strengthen and potentially broaden the existing stop smoking behavioural change offer currently provided in Shropshire by our Healthy Lives Adult Social Prescribing team as well as potential to enhance other local smoking cessation offers.

It is also recognised that the government proposals for youth vaping have in part been influenced by responses to the Call for Evidence, which Shropshire Council contributed towards via the Underage Vaping Task & Finish Group in June 2023.

Local offers and updates on tobacco dependency and underage vaping

[Tobacco Dependency](#)

- Stop smoking behaviour change support for adults is accessible via Healthy Lives Social Prescribing in Shropshire
- A new Stopping Smoking resource page has recently been launched at [Stopping smoking | Shropshire Council](#) as part of the Healthy Shropshire public facing webpage
- Dedicated NHS Long Term Plan offers for addressing tobacco dependency are currently in place for pregnant smokers, mental health in-patient clients as part of the step-down community support package and acute hospital inpatients.

Underage Vaping (led by the Task & Finish Group)

- Production of the Position Statement on youth vaping (available here: [shropshire-position-statement-on-underage-vaping.pdf](#)) aimed at education, professionals and others working with children and young people and providing a summary of the facts, key messages for action and recommended contacts if concerned
- A new youth vaping information page at [Youth vaping | Shropshire Council](#) highlighting risks of harm for health, legality, exploitation and hosting a suite of resources to promote conversations with young people to better understand the facts
- Localisation of a Parent and Carer vaping facts leaflet with a distribution plan for printed and electronic versions of the leaflet
- Exploring options of support for young people addicted to nicotine-containing vapes
- Initial collation of local intelligence on attitudes and beliefs towards vaping via links with local health professionals, SYA, the Public Health School Nursing team and via the launch of the new Safer Spaces (Office of the Police Crime Commissioner grant-funded) programme.

Recommendations

1. For the HWWB to support the proposal for the Vaping Task & Finish Group to lead collation of responses for the DHSC Stopping the Start consultation, given many of the members also have a vested interest in smoking cessation, creating a smokefree generation and underage vaping for submission by 6th December
2. For the HWWB to support the recommendation within the policy paper raising the age of sale of tobacco to those born after 1st January 2009.
3. To consider and endorse the current and proposed local activity related to smoking cessation plans and underage vaping including support promoting the new smoking and vaping information and resources Healthy Shropshire webpage.

Report

An Overview of Smoking Harms

Smoking is the single biggest cause of preventable illness and death in England and one of the biggest drivers of health inequalities. We know from the evidence that;

- Smoking currently kills around 64,000 people in the UK every year.
- One in every four cancer deaths are caused by smoking.
- In addition to deaths, smoking causes multiple harms, illness and disease including stillbirths, lung disease, heart disease, stroke and dementia.
- Most smokers start young, regret ever starting and try to quit multiple times.

- Addiction means people want to quit but can't. Their freedom of choice has been taken away, causing harm to the individual and those around them by e.g. passive smoking/smoking in pregnancy.
- Children and young people must be protected from the harms of addiction.
- Smoking costs society £17 billion a year through healthcare, lost productivity, and social care costs.
- Those who are unemployed, on low incomes or living in areas of deprivation are far more likely to smoke than the general population with smoking attributable mortality rates being 2.1 times higher in the most deprived local authorities than in the least deprived.

Creating the first 'smokefree generation'

In October 2023, the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) published its policy paper, [Stopping the start: our new plan to create a smokefree generation](#), where the government set out an intention to create the first 'smokefree generation'.

The government proposed several proposals to reduce youth vaping, including restricting vape flavours, regulating vape packaging and point of sale displays, and restricting the sale of disposable vapes.

The government also committed to funding several initiatives to improve smoking cessation support, including an additional £70 million annually to support local authority led stop smoking services, and £45 million over two years to roll out the national 'Swap to Stop' scheme, supporting people to stop smoking with the free provision of a vape kit and behavioural support.

Background to the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) consultation

The smokefree 2030 ambition for England

In 2019, the government published its green paper on preventative health; [Advancing our health: prevention in the 2020s](#). Here, it announced an ambition for England to become 'smokefree' by 2030 – achieved when adult smoking prevalence falls to 5% or less.

The APPG on Smoking or Health published a [report](#) on delivering a Smokefree 2030 in June 2021 which set out detailed recommendations on how to reduce smoking to 5% by 2030.

The Khan Review

The government commissioned Javed Khan to carry out a review into the government's ambition to make England smokefree by 2030. Mr Khan published his independent review, the [Khan Review: making smoking obsolete](#), in June 2022 which found that "without further action, England will miss the smokefree 2030 target by at least 7 years, and the poorest areas in society will not meet it until 2044".

The review set out a package of 15 recommendations aimed at supporting the 2030 ambition. This included four "critical must dos" for the Government, centred on increasing investment in smokefree policies, increasing the age of sale of tobacco by one year every year, promoting vaping as a smoking cessation tool, and improving the prevention of ill health by offering smokers advice and support to quit at every interaction within the NHS.

Raising the age of sale of tobacco for those born on or after 1 January 2009

In October 2023, Prime Minister Rishi Sunak set out plans to [introduce legislation to prohibit children born on or after 1 January 2009 from legally buying cigarettes in England](#). This would

effectively raise the smoking age by one year, every year, until it applies to the whole population. The government would also prohibit people above the age of sale from purchasing tobacco products for people below the age of sale ('proxy purchases').

The proposal formed part of the government's ambition to create the first 'smokefree generation', discussed below.

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Consulting on the new proposals

The Department of Health and Social Care [launched a consultation on the proposals set out in the policy paper](#) on 12 October 2023, and is inviting responses until 6 December 2023.

Specifically, DHSC is seeking views on introducing new legislation to raise the age of sale for tobacco, further regulating vaping to reduce its appeal to children, and introducing new powers for local authorities to issue fixed penalty notices to enforce age of sale legislation for tobacco products and vapes.

Underage Vaping

The DHSC Consultation process includes opportunity to comment on a range of measures aimed at reducing youth vaping whilst ensuring that adult smokers have easy access to vapes as part of their quit attempts.

The proposals the government is looking at include:

- **Restrict vape flavours** (given the most frequently used vape flavour for children is fruit flavour, with 60% of current youth vapers reporting use)
- **Regulating point of sale displays**, as currently vapes can be readily displayed and be seen and picked up by children in retail outlets where they are often close to sweets and confectionary
- **Regulating vape packaging and product presentation**, where research has shown standardised packaging with reduced brand imagery can decrease the appeal of vape products amongst young people
- **Restricting the sale of disposable vape products** which have non-recyclable components and is therefore poses a threat to the environment

- **Reviewing non-nicotine containing vapes** which are not subject to the same product standards and age restrictions as nicotine containing vapes, with intention to prohibit sale of non-nicotine containing vapes to under 18s
- **Preventing industry from giving out free samples of vapes to children**, by closing the loophole in laws that allow retailers to give free samples of vapes and other nicotine containing products to under 18s.

The Shropshire Underage Vaping Task & Finish Group welcome the above proposals.

As identified in the recently published Shropshire Position Statement on Vaping among Children and Young People created by the Task & Finish Group, national data has reported an alarming increase in children and young people who vape. Nationally, it is reported that 20.5% of 11–17-year-olds have tried vapes of whom 3.7% vape more than once a week. Almost half of those who have tried vaping have never smoked a tobacco cigarette.

Intelligence from healthcare professionals working with children and young people in Shropshire reflects a similar position locally; initial data collected from a cohort of 641 Year 9 students across 6 schools indicates that 17% have tried vaping compared to 6.7% who have tried cigarettes and over 13% of this cohort vape regularly. Of the students who do vape, 88% said their vape contains nicotine. Engagement activity with young people has highlighted their familiarity with vaping and disposable vaping brands. Only a minority of young people knew that vaping is intended to help adults quit smoking, with some even believing vaping was made for young people-particularly due to the attractive flavours.

The Shropshire stance, as set out in our Position Statement on Vaping among Children and Young People is that vaping is not for children and the safest, healthiest option is not to vape or smoke. This is consistent with the recommendation of England's Chief Medical Officer Professor Chris Whitty: "If you smoke, vaping is much safer. If you don't smoke, don't vape".

Given that tobacco smoking is the most important cause of health inequalities, and smoking prevalence has steadily decreased in Shropshire since 2011, we do not want to see efforts eroded by an increase in children and young people vaping. We should continue to encourage smokers to swap to vaping as the lesser risk as part of a concerted quit effort drawing on the local and national support resources available, whilst actively preventing the targeted marketing and illegal sale of vapes to children.

A Local Offer

Tobacco Dependency & Smoking Cessation Services

Universal access to stop smoking behavioural change advice is available to adults through the Healthy Lives Social Prescribing programme in Shropshire.

There are more specialist offers also available aimed at specific high-risk cohorts as part of the Tobacco Dependency Treatment programme for delivery of the NHS Long Term Plan and the national pharmacy smoking cessation scheme. This includes:

- **Mental Health In-patients:** Shropshire Public Health's Healthy Lives Team provides behavioural stop smoking support along with nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) funded by the ICB to support mental health in-patients as part of the community step down offer.
- **Pregnant Smokers:** A maternity stop smoking offer is implemented as part of the Local Maternity and Neonatal System (LMNS) Healthier Pregnancy Programme with behavioural support and NRT provided for 12 weeks.

- Acute In-Patient: An acute in-patient offer is provided as part of the in-house SaTH Smoking Cessation Service which offers community step down linked to a pharmacy scheme in Shropshire.

A newly developed Shropshire Council webpage has been created (accessible at: [Stopping smoking | Shropshire Council](#)) as part of the Healthy Shropshire public facing webpage. This contains information on the universal support offer provided by Healthy Lives, the benefits of stopping smoking, and a range of tools and resources which can help quit smoking.

Shropshire Public Health supports the **Stopping the start** policy paper plans for government to create a smokefree generation with the aim to phase out tobacco use over time and welcomes the additional investment for Local Authorities to tackle smoking at local level. It is anticipated that Shropshire Council will receive a new indicative annual allocation of £330,230 up to 2028 for investment in smoking cessation. Plans on how this will be delivered in Shropshire will be progressed once further details about when the funds will be made available and clarification of specific expectations are confirmed. This will accompany conversations about how potential for a local programme utilising the Swap to Stop initiative, providing vaping starter kits to adult smokers as part of their quit smoking journey along with behaviour change support.

Underage Vaping

The multi-agency underage vaping Task & Finish group has been focusing on collating local intelligence and developing communications to effectively share the best available facts on vaping.

Programmes to date have included;

- Production of the Position Statement on youth vaping (available here: [shropshire-position-statement-on-underage-vaping.pdf](#)) aimed at education, professionals and others working with children and young people and providing a summary of the facts, key messages for action and recommended contacts if concerned
- Review of national and locally available intelligence on youth vaping including establishing links with the Public Health School Nursing health survey
- Links with the Public Health School Nursing team and the Marches School to design a suite of packages that can be used in schools for vaping lesson plans
- Development of a dedicated youth vaping webpage (accessed at: [Youth vaping | Shropshire Council](#)) under the public facing Healthy Shropshire webpages. This includes information about health risk, the law, safety, exploitation, the environment and a toolkit of resources to promote conversations with young people and help those who work with children and young people to YP better understand the facts. This has only just been published with more content to potentially be included currently being reviewed.
- Adaption and localisation of the Smokefree Sheffield Parent and Carer vaping facts leaflet which provides a brief overview of the facts and how to have conversations with children about vaping. A comms plan is in place with support from the Task & Finish group on distribution of printed copies of the leaflet. A digital version will be available from the new webpages.
- The Task & Finish group are linked to the OPCC grant-funded Safer Spaces project to collate the views of young people in Shropshire about a range of factors that could cause harm or are associated with social concerns. The initial pilot conversations are focused on Shropshire young people's attitudes and beliefs on vaping and the

feedback will be reviewed by the group to help guide future communications/work programmes.

Further conversations about exploring support for young people addicted to vaping are also now being explored.

<p>Risk assessment and opportunities appraisal (NB This will include the following: Risk Management, Human Rights, Equalities, Community, Environmental consequences and other Consultation)</p>	<p>Ensuring we have the right capacity and partnership buy-in to co-produce and deliver plans for smoking cessation based on the new commitments and funding. Avoiding duplication and opportunity to enhance existing offers as well as addressing gaps to improve health outcomes for smokers and young people who are regular vape users.</p> <p>This should reduce avoidable health inequalities and demands on services related to smoking related conditions.</p> <p>The proposal by central government to reduce supply of disposable vapes will reduce the number of discarded disposable vapes and the increased support to help people to quit smoking should reduce the number of discarded cigarette butts.</p>	
<p>Financial implications (Any financial implications of note)</p>	<p>Additional funds are being provided for smoking cessation investment to LAs, however there will still be a need to consider sustainable models for investment. There is currently no specified budget to support vaping cessation for young people.</p>	
<p>Climate Change Appraisal as applicable</p>	<p>There may be an environmental impact through reduced discarded devices and cigarette butts.</p>	
<p>Where else has the paper been presented?</p>	<p>System Partnership Boards</p>	
	<p>Voluntary Sector</p>	
	<p>Other</p>	
<p>List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)</p>		
<p>Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder) Portfolio holders can be found here or your organisational lead e.g., Exec lead or Non-Exec/Clinical Lead</p> <p>Cllr Cecilia Motley – Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care, Public Health & Communities Rachel Robinson – Executive Director, Health, Wellbeing and Prevention</p>		
<p>Appendices (Please include as appropriate)</p>		