

Recommendations for Stop Smoking Practitioners: Using e-cigarettes in your Service

Introduction

This document offers some practical guidance for local practitioners and should be read in conjunction with Public Health England, SE region position statement on e-cigarettes ([adph-south-east-newposition-statement-on-electronic-cigarettes-sps-v9.pdf](https://www.stopforlife.org.uk/adph-south-east-newposition-statement-on-electronic-cigarettes-sps-v9.pdf) ([stopforlife.org.uk](https://www.stopforlife.org.uk))). We encourage practitioners to provide information on the benefits of vaping as an option and as part of a supported quit attempt. This would include advising clients about how to use e-cigarettes effectively, the importance of buying from a reputable retailer and directing them to sources of further information. E-cigarettes can be used by adults over the age of 18.

Southampton City Council are reviewing if and how they can fund the supply of e-cigarettes for people using the smoking cessation services they commission. The NHS is also starting to fund services within NHS Trusts this year and clarification is also due on what this may cover. In the meantime, unless you have been advised otherwise, clients will need to buy their own e-cigarettes. Even though there are initial device costs for vaping, it is on average considerably cheaper than smoking.

1. Are e-cigarettes effective in helping clients to quit smoking cigarettes?

Yes. Vaping is positively associated with quitting smoking successfully. In 2017, over 50,000 smokers stopped smoking with a vaping productⁱ. The extensive use of vaping products in quit attempts compared with licensed medication suggests vaping products may reach more people who smoke and so have more impact than NRT and varenicline. NRT and varenicline are still effective too.

2. Should we provide behavioural support to smokers wishing to use an e-cigarette to quit smoking?

Yes. For dependent smokers seeking help, using e-cigarettes with support is the best option (18+). Using a vaping product as part of a quit attempt in local stop smoking services had some of the highest quit success rates (between 49% and 78%) many of these quitters would otherwise likely have continued to smokeⁱⁱ.

3. What about clients who are smoking and vaping?

Using e-cigarettes without stopping smoking (dual use) does not provide health benefits. Anyone who is using both should be strongly encouraged to stop smoking tobacco as soon as they can.

4. Are e-cigarettes safe?

There is still a lot we do not know about e-cigarettes. They are not risk free, but based on current evidence, they have a much lower risk than tobacco. Public Health England estimate that e-cigarettes are 95% safer than tobaccoⁱⁱⁱ. E-cigarettes should be kept out of reach of children.

5. Do e-cigarettes comply with the Tobacco and Related Products Regulations 2016?

All e-cigarette products that are legally sold in the UK will be registered with the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA). Local Trading Standards Departments will be monitoring compliance with regulations and should be able to advise if any shops have been found to be selling non-compliant goods.

6. Where should e-cigarettes be purchased?

Vape shops and established online companies comply with extensive e-cigarette regulation. The Independent British Vape Trade Association lists some retailers [Find a Vape Shop – IBVTA members vaping shops](#) but there are many others. Always encourage clients to use mainstream retailers as specialist shops that only sell e-cigarettes and associated vaping paraphernalia will be more likely to possess accurate knowledge and have built up useful experience.

7. Do we need to worry about using e-cigarettes produced by tobacco industry?

Tobacco industry products are mostly cartridge-based ('1st generation') devices, the refillable e-cigarettes ('2nd generation') are not produced by them. The vast majority of e-cigarettes have no links at all to the tobacco industry.

8. Are e-cigarettes a fire hazard?

Advice from Hampshire Fire & Rescue Service^{iv} includes:

- Never leave the e-cigarette on charge or in a USB point unattended or overnight – they can ignite & cause fire.
- Replace the batteries in the vape if they get damaged or wet & store loose batteries for the vape in a case. Keep these away from metal objects such as coins and keys.
- Protect the vape from extreme temperatures.
- Always use the correct charger for the vape.
- Always read and understand the manufacturer's recommendations for use and care of your device.

9. What to do if a client feels unwell after using an e-cigarettes product?

You can report side effects and safety concerns with e-cigarettes or refill containers to the MHRA^v through the [Yellow Card scheme](#).

10. What about the use of e-cigarettes in pregnancy?

While licensed NRT products are the recommended option, if a pregnant woman chooses to use an e-cigarette or has already stopped smoking with the use of an e-cigarette and feels that it helps her to stay smokefree, she should not be discouraged from doing so. While e-cigarettes are not completely risk free, current evidence shows e-cigarettes are significantly less harmful to a pregnant woman and her baby than smoking tobacco^{vi vii}.

Additional sources of information

- Information for the public: - [E-cigarettes | Smokefree \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)
- For services and practitioners:
 - [E-cigarettes | Smokefree \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk) – as an introduction
 - [e-cigarettes briefing \[2\] v4 \(ncsct.co.uk\) 2016](http://ncsct.co.uk) – as guidance
- SE region statement - ([adph-south-east-newposition-statement-on-electronic-cigarettes-sps-v9.pdf \(stopforlifeoxon.org\)](http://stopforlifeoxon.org))
- [8 things to know about e-cigarettes - Public health matters \(blog.gov.uk\)](http://blog.gov.uk) – 2020 update
- [vaping-in-the-home-advice-for-parents.pdf \(rospa.com\)](http://rospa.com) – 2016
- [Smoking and health 2021: A coming of age for tobacco control? | RCP London](http://rclondon.org)

This document will be updated annually based on research and evidence, in the meantime refer to [E-cigarettes | Smokefree \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk) or contact southampton.smokefreesolutions@nhs.net.

Southampton City Council and the NHS have committed to not working with the tobacco industry in any way. This applies to all our commissioned services too. Please do not collaborate with any tobacco company if they contact you and report their approach to publichealth@southampton.gov.uk for local monitoring.

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References

ⁱ Vaping in England: an evidence update including vaping for smoking cessation, Public Health England, February 2021, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/vaping-in-england-evidence-update-february-2021>

ⁱⁱ McNeill, A., Brose, L.S., Calder, R., Simonavicius, E. and Robson, D. (2021). Vaping in England: An evidence update including vaping for smoking cessation, February 2021: a report commissioned by PHE. London: PHE.

ⁱⁱⁱ McNeill, A, Brose, L.S., Calder, R., Hitchman, S.C., Hajek, P. and McRobbie, H. (2015) E-cigarettes: an evidence update, August 2015: a report commissioned by PHE. London: PHE

^{iv} Smoke Safety, Hampshire & IOW Fire & Rescue Service <https://www.hantsfire.gov.uk/safety/home-safe-home/fire-hazards-in-and-around-your-home/smoking/>

^v E-cigarettes: regulations for consumer products, MHRA, May 2021 <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/e-cigarettes-regulations-for-consumer-products#advice-for-consumers>

^{vi} Smoking in Pregnancy Challenge Group. Use of electronic cigarettes in pregnancy: a guide for midwives and other health care professionals. <https://smokefreeaction.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/2019-Challenge-Group-ecigs-briefing-FINAL.pdf>

^{vii} Whittington JR, Simmons PM, Phillips AM, Gammill SK, Cen R, Magann EF, et al. The Use of Electronic Cigarettes in Pregnancy: A Review of the Literature. *Obstet Gynecol Surv.* 2018 Sep;73(9):544–549.