



Chief Executive
Wendy Perera

To:
Parents and Guardians

From
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Dear Parent/Guardian,

Following recent national coverage about the underage use of vapes (also known as e-cigarettes), I am writing to you about the harmful effects they can have for our children and young people. I would like to take this opportunity to provide some information about vaping and how you can protect and support your child. Whilst it is important to understand the risk of vaping, I also need to remind you that about 80% of children have not tried vaping and, vapes are a good quit aid for adults trying to give up smoking.

What are vapes?

There are many varieties of vapes, which are battery powered devices that heat a liquid to create vapours to be inhaled. The liquids often contain nicotine flavourings and other chemicals. The vapes may be brightly coloured, with many flavours, increasing their appeal to young people.

Risks of vaping in children and young people

Vapes should not be used by children and young people, and non-smokers should not start vaping. The health effects of vaping can include headaches, coughing, insomnia, worsening of asthma symptoms, and throat and mouth irritation. As vapes are a relatively new product, the long-term health effects are still not known as there is not enough research into long-term use. Exposing children and young people to nicotine, which is highly addictive, could have negative impacts on developing brains.

The law and vaping

It is against the law to sell nicotine products to anyone under the age of 18. It is also illegal to buy vapes on behalf of anyone under 18. Unsafe, illegal vapes have been on the rise with reports showing that they can contain dangerous chemicals like lead and nickel. Some products contain nicotine when claiming they do not, or contain harmful cannabis chemicals.

What is the council doing?

We recognise that this is an issue that needs to be addressed to protect children and young people. We are therefore:

- working to stop underaged sales of vapes and tackling illegal vapes. You can report illegal vapes and underage vape sales to [Age Restricted Sales \(iow.gov.uk\)](https://www.iow.gov.uk/age-restricted-sales)

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- continuing to support people to stop smoking through our Stop Smoking Service, [Smokefree Island](#).
- working to raise awareness and encourage behaviour change to stop smoking and prevent vaping uptake by children and young people.

What can you do?

You can support your children by understanding the risks of vaping in children and young people and talking openly about vaping. There are tips for discussion at the end of this letter.

You can find more useful information on the [Smokefree Island](#) or [NHS](#) website. Quit smoking advice is available at [Smokefree Island](#) and support relating to a wide range of health and wellbeing issues for families is available at [Family Assist](#) and [IW Family Information Hub](#).

Yours sincerely



**Simon Bryant FFPH
Director of Public Health
Isle of Wight Council**

Tips for a discussion with your family:

- Know the facts: get credible information about vapes (some resources are included in the links below).
- Choose the right time and place: A more natural discussion will increase the likelihood that your child will listen, for example, if you see someone vaping or find out someone they know vapes.
- Ask questions, listen, and learn from what they tell you and answer their questions.
- Set your clear expectations with them: explain that children and young people should not vape and share why you don't want them to vape.
- Role model healthy behaviours to your children, for example not vaping in the house or car.
- If your child is vaping, you can help them quit by seeking professional support through our Isle of Wight Stop Smoking Service – [Smokefree Island](#)
- It might also be helpful to explore the reasons why they are vaping in case further support is needed, such as anxiety and stress, or low mood.