

Report

Report to:	Education Resources Committee
Date of Meeting:	5 March 2024
Report by:	Executive Director (Education Resources)

Subject:	Underage Use of e-Cigarettes and Vaping
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ provide a progress update on the steps being taken forward by Education Resources and partner agencies to raise awareness amongst children and young people on the potential risk to their health through vaping and the environmental damage being caused due to irresponsible discarding of these products

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) that the steps being taken by Education Resources in partnership with NHSL Public Health and other partners since the last report to committee in September 2023, to raise awareness amongst children and young people of the effects of vaping, be noted;
- (2) that the proposed actions being put forward by the Scottish Government as part of a national UK campaign be noted; and
- (3) that the proposals as highlighted in paragraph 7 of this report be noted.

3. Background

- 3.1. On the 24 May 2023, the Council considered a motion in terms of Standing Order No 20, submitted on 9 May 2023 which stated that, "South Lanarkshire Council is concerned at the health and environmental harm caused by the increasing use, particularly by young people, of Disposable Nicotine Vapour Products (DNVPs/ vapes).
- 3.2. Research suggests that almost one in five (18%) of adolescents have tried vapes. Zero Waste Scotland estimates that up to 26 million disposable vapes were consumed and thrown away in Scotland in the last year, with 10 per cent being littered and more than half disposed of incorrectly.
- 3.3. The Scottish Government announced, on 5 September 2023 in its Programme for Government, its intent to ban single-use vaping products in response to concerns over their negative environmental and health effects.
- 3.4. In January 2024, the Scottish Government in line with plans by the UK Government announced their intention to ban single use vapes and raise the tobacco age of sale so that no one born on or after 1 January 2009 can ever legally be sold tobacco in Scotland.

- 3.5. Ministers agreed to take forward the recommendations following a consultation on 'Creating a Smokefree Generation and Tackling Youth Vaping' which ran across Scotland, England, Wales and Northern Ireland last year.
- 3.6. The report also recommends that powers are taken to restrict vape flavours, how vapes are displayed in stores, their packaging and product presentation, along with powers to regulate other nicotine products. In addition, it suggests measures which are already underway or in place in Scotland, including restrictions on non-nicotine vapes and powers for local authorities to issue Fixed Penalty Notices for breaches of age of sale legislation for tobacco products and vapes.

4. Next Steps and Actions for Schools and Educational Establishments

- 4.1. The actions agreed by South Lanarkshire Council on 24 May 2023 were as follows:
- i) the Council welcomes the review of the impact of single-use disposable vapes instructed by the Scottish Government and calls on it to take urgent action to ban their sale. The Council also welcomes the forthcoming publication of the Scottish Government's Tobacco Action Plan, which will consider a range of interventions with an emphasis on reducing smoking and vaping among children and young people.
 - ii) that the Chief Executive writes to the Minister for Green Skills, Circular Economy and Biodiversity to convey the Council's view that a ban on the sale of DNVPs be introduced as soon as is practicable.
 - iii) that a paper is brought forward to a future meeting of an appropriate committee regarding issues which educational establishments are currently experiencing with vaping, the actions which the Council and its partners are taking and could take to reduce the use of vaping products amongst children and young people and the potential of a communications campaign to raise awareness of such issues.
- 4.2. A report on the actions being taken forward by Education Resources, in partnership with NHSL Public Health and other partners, was presented to the Education Resources Committee on 23 September 2023.
- 4.3. In summary, the report presented to committee in September 2023 highlighted the following:-
- ◆ Public health information shows there is increasing e-cigarette use amongst young people across Scotland.
 - ◆ In South Lanarkshire, it is reported that there has been an 18-fold rise in disposable vapes amongst vape users from January 2021 to April 2022.
 - ◆ The National Health and Wellbeing Census showed one in ten 15-year-olds regularly vape, a rate which has tripled in the last five years.
 - ◆ Discarded vapes present a risk of the leak of toxic chemicals which are deemed to be harmful to children, pets, wildlife, and water systems.
 - ◆ Refillable vape kits (which are recyclable), do not have the same environmental impact, but are marketed differently and are less likely to be an impulse purchase made by children and young people.
 - ◆ Disposable vapes, originally introduced to help curtail tobacco and nicotine use, is now being seen, not as a cessation tool for existing cigarette smokers, but as having a higher than proportionate use amongst children and young people.

This, in turn, has the potential to create a whole new generation of children and young people addicted to nicotine products.

- 4.4. Whilst parental and personal responsibility remain the key factors to effect change along with better information on the public health risk, there is, nevertheless, a role for schools to play in raising awareness and helping to be catalysts of change amongst children and young people. The context for this being through the health and wellbeing curriculum supported by a public health information campaign. This would help to open up conversations with children and young people on the potential harm through continued use of vaping products and on the damage to the environment being caused through the discarding of these products on streets and communities.

5. Progress Update

- 5.1. Some key aspects that have and continue to be taken forward by the council, and Education Resources in partnership with NHS Public Health, the Scottish Government and other partners are as follows.

Actions by South Lanarkshire Council and Education Resources

- 5.2. It is worth noting that South Lanarkshire Council did write formally to the Scottish Government asking for actions to be taken to reduce the impact of vaping amongst children and young people and the environmental impact.
- 5.3. Following the Education Resources Committee meeting in September 2023, Education Resources proactively engaged with NHS and Health Protection Scotland to help influence the design and nature of the public health campaign and on whether a local competition at this time would add value. The advice provided was to let the national campaign be the starting point, as this is built around recent evidence-based research (see paragraph 5.7) which centres on the fact that e-cigarettes were introduced as an alternative to tobacco smoking with the aim of 'creating a smoke free generation'.

Scottish Government

- 5.4. A new marketing campaign informing parents, carers and school pupils of the dangers of vaping has been launched by the Scottish Government.
- 5.5. It comes as a new Tobacco and Vaping Framework is published, setting out actions which will be taken to create a tobacco-free generation by 2034.
- 5.6. The Framework for reaching the 2034 goal includes action to raise the age limit for sales of tobacco and plans to improve services to help people quit. In addition, the Scottish Government will continue to review what further action is needed to limit the appeal of vapes to children, young people and non-smokers during the first phase of the framework which will run until November 2025.
- 5.7. The 'Take Hold' marketing campaign will increase awareness of the harms and risks of nicotine addiction associated with vaping, with schools across Scotland provided with digital guidance packs and resources for posters along with radio and outdoor advertising. Its key message is that vapes may quickly become harmfully addictive for children and young people, affecting their concentration, mental health and mood.

Public Health Research

- 5.8. In a study by Smith et al (2023), linked to the UK Government Consultation on 'Creating a Smoke Free Generation', the findings showed, that disposable vapes were designed in such a way as to be attractive to young people. The brightly coloured

products along with the different variety of flavourings, particularly sweet flavourings, encouraged young people to try them. Whilst not being aware of the ingredients of disposable e-cigarettes, the perception was that they were less harmful than cigarettes. They also associated colour with flavour, which should also be considered when looking at the whole product. A copy of the research paper is attached as Appendix 1 to this report and any reference publicly must acknowledge the source.

Young People's Views

- 5.9. When young people were asked in the study by Smith et al, how this could be changed the most common answer was to make them all taste like tobacco.

LANDED Vaping Survey 2023/2024

- 5.10. Following on from [two previous successful surveys](#) on Cannabis and Alcohol. NHS Lanarkshire has commissioned **LANDED**, a young persons' charity based in Lanarkshire, to consult with young people between the ages of 11-25 on Vaping. The results from this survey will be used to shape future services for young people. The survey closed on the 31 January 2024.
- 5.11. To date, three schools have received a free presentation as part of the funding for the survey:-
- ◆ Strathaven Academy
 - ◆ Trinity High School
 - ◆ Duncanrig High School
- 5.12. From these three schools, LANDED got around 2,500 responses to the survey. It now costs around £500 per school to take up the offer of a bespoke presentation from LANDED. LANDED takes an informal approach when working in the classroom and their workshops are suitable for S1 to S6 pupils.
- 5.13. LANDED have also produced a series of posters aimed at children and young people to help them to not to take up vaping as long-term it is likely to lead them moving on to cigarettes and other nicotine products. www.landed.info/free-vaping-resources.

6. Actions by Education Resources

- 6.1. Education Resources will take the lead on curriculum-based activities:-
- ◆ plans are in place for next session to continue to raise awareness and share good practice across establishments – including new IDL lesson plans being produced by NHS Lanarkshire and other resources which are currently being trialled by the West Partnership
 - ◆ Healthy Schools Programme - designed by teachers from North and South Lanarkshire in collaboration with local NHS and health and social care staff, the framework covers learners from nursery through to the final year of high school and aligns with the Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes. It attempts to address the determinants of unhealthy behaviours and enhance the children's ability to make positive choices
 - ◆ new resources and materials will be highlighted to schools for dissemination amongst learning communities including Head Teacher supports available from Link Officers
 - ◆ planned and appropriate action will be delivered by representatives of CQIS on supporting schools, co-ordinated by the Quality Lead Officer with responsibility for Curriculum (HWB)

- ♦ the active engagement of children and young people through the Youth Council and at individual Pupil Council level will help to shape and influence the way ahead over this school session.

6.2. Actions Currently Being Taken Forward by Schools and Services

Actions being taken forward	What will be done
Schools will use the South Lanarkshire Council recommended resource for HWB curricular delivery - 'Healthy Schools'	Within the topic Substance Misuse (3 rd Level), vaping and the use of e-cigarettes is covered in detail with resources available for staff to use in the classroom.
HWB co-ordinators in schools will promote the use of new learning materials	e-learning training courses available for staff from partner agency <i>ASH Scotland</i> who support schools in tackling underage misuse of e-cigarettes and tobacco.
Schools will engage with children and young people through pupil voice platforms	Using the voice of pupils to design and create resources which raise awareness of the harm being done by vaping and in identifying preventative steps which they believe will have an impact.

Preventative Measure

- 6.3. Education Resources have sought to explore what practical measures can be taken to prevent the use of vaping products in and around the school environment with some other local authorities. In Inverclyde, for example, they have embarked on a small-scale pilot with a high school to install monitors in corridors and in toilet areas (similar to smoke detectors) with a wi-fi based app alerting members of the schools senior management team. Prior to introduction, pupils and parents were informed that this was being introduced as a measure to prevent the use of vapes inside the school building. Early indications are that this is having an impact with evidence of less disposable vapes being discarded on school premises. Grant funding was used to offset the costs and a medium to long-term funding option is being considered and assessed in light of the financial pressures on budgets.

7. Proposals and Actions for the Council and Partner Agencies

- 7.1. The following proposals are presented for noting:-
- 7.1.2 Education Resources continue to work in partnership with NHSL public health on evidence-based promotional programmes to help raise awareness more widely on the health impact of under 18's and to change the narrative associated with the glamourisation of vaping products.
- 7.1.3 An authority wide poster competition to engage with children and young people in schools and educational settings is carried forward into the new term in August 2024 to enable the national programme to be rolled-out as step one and to ensure any impending legislative changes by the Scottish Government are taken account of.

7.1.4 Education Resources be invited to look at options associated with the introduction of sensors in school, buildings and to take a cost-benefit analysis approach and to present a report on the feasibility, findings and options to a future meeting of the Education Resources Committee.

7.1.5 The council's Trading Standards Team is responsible for any actions on enforcement with regards to the sale of e-cigarettes and vaping products to children and young people in local communities.

8. Employee Implications

8.1. There are no employee implications attached to this report.

9. Financial Implications

9.1. Financial implications will be managed from within existing budgetary resources. Noting that a cost benefit analysis will be undertaken on a proposal to explore the feasibility of introducing sensors into school buildings.

10. Climate Change, Sustainability and Environmental Implications

10.1. Reference is made in this report on the damage to the environment being caused through the discarding of vaping products on streets and in local communities. Zero Waste Scotland in June 2023 has published an equality impact assessment on the use of vaping products in communities.

11. Other Implications

11.1. There are no further risk implications identified other than those contained in the report and noting that a pan Lanarkshire approach with NHSL Public Health and other partners are key players in assessing the risks and identifying appropriate actions.

12. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

12.1. This report does not present a new strategy, policy or plan and is, therefore, not subject to equality impact assessment.

12.2. There was no requirement to undertake any formal consultation in terms of the information contained within this report although engagement with partners, agencies and the professional associations and trade unions is a key factor if we are to work together to effect change, including direct engagement with children and young people.

Carole McKenzie

Executive Director (Education Resources Resources)

12 February 2024

Link(s) to Council Values/Priorities/Outcomes

♦ Education and learning: inspiring learners, transforming learning, strengthening partnerships

Previous References

♦ Education Resources Committee – September 2023

♦ Council – 24 May 2023

List of Background Papers

- ◆ Study by Smith et al (2023), linked to the UK Government Consultation on 'Creating a Smoke Free Generation'
- ◆ Zero Waste Scotland – environmental impact report (June 2023)

Contact for Further Information

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

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