

Report

Report to:	Education Resources Committee
Date of Meeting:	26 September 2023
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 an update on the steps being taken forward by Education Resources 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 Council's position relating to a call for a ban on single use vapes due to their health and environmental harm is noted; and
- (2) that approval be given for Education Resources to take the lead on curriculum-based activities designed to raise awareness amongst children and young people as described in para 5; and
- (3) that the steps to be taken forward by Education Resources, in partnership with NHS Public Health and other partners, as highlighted in paragraph 6 and in the action plan shown in Appendix 1, be approved.

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. 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.
- 3.3. Whilst this is a 'societal issue' and not one for schools to tackle alone, it does require a wider and better understanding of the impact of vaping on children and young people's health and on the identified public health risk factor of addiction.
- 3.4. 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.

- 3.5. In addition, it is claimed that discarded vapes present a risk of the leak of toxic chemicals which are deemed to be harmful to children, pets, wildlife, and water systems.
- 3.6. It is noted that 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.
- 3.7. 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 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.

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. The action listed at 4.1 (iii) above is the one that is the main focus for Education Resources to take forward.
- 4.3. The next steps for schools and educational establishments are highlighted in the attached action plan at Appendix 1.
- 4.4. Some key aspects that will be taken forward in partnership with NHSL Public Health include:-
 - ◆ schools continue to reference and use the South Lanarkshire Council recommended resource for HWB curricular delivery - 'Healthy Schools'. Within the topic Substance Misuse (3rd Level), vaping and the use of e-cigarettes is covered in detail with resources available for staff to use in the classroom
 - ◆ all HWB co-ordinators in schools promote the use of new learning materials along with e-learning training courses available for staff from partner agency *ASH*

Scotland who support schools in tackling underage misuse of e-cigarettes and tobacco

- ♦ all schools engage pupil voice platforms with the opportunity for pupils to design and create resources which raise awareness of the harm being done by vaping

5. Education Resources

5.1. Education Resources will take the lead on curriculum-based activities such as:

- ♦ 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
- ♦ 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. Actions for the Council and Partner Agencies

- 6.1. The council's position relating to a call for a ban on single use vapes, due to their health and environmental harm is shared information with parents and carers.
- 6.2. The council, in partnership with NHSL public health, undertakes a promotional programme to help raise awareness more widely on the health impact of under 18's continuing to use and glamourise vaping products.
- 6.3. The council's Environmental Health Team be invited as a key partner to look at how best to tackle the sale of e-cigarettes and vaping products to children and young people in local communities.
- 6.4. An authority wide poster competition and social media messages be devised and launched early in the new session to engage with children and young people in schools and educational settings.

7. Scottish Government Policy Intention

- 7.1 At the time of preparing this report, 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. The Scottish Government plans to meet counterparts in the UK Government, Welsh Government, and Northern Ireland Executive to discuss potential policy responses.

8 Employee Implications

- 8.1 None

9 Financial Implications

- 9.1 Financial implications will be managed from within existing budgetary resources.

10 Climate Change, Sustainability and Environmental Implications

- 10.1 In paragraph 3.7 reference is made to the damage to the environment being caused through the discarding of vaping products on streets and in local communities. In

paragraph 6 further information on the actions being proposed by Education Resources and Consumer and Trading Standards to help mitigate the environmental implications is highlighted

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 September 2023

Link(s) to Council Values/Priorities/Outcomes

- ◆ Education and learning: inspiring learners, transforming learning, strengthening partnerships

Previous References

- ◆ Council – 24 May 2023

List of Background Papers

- ◆ None

Contact for Further Information

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

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