

Why do we not have Stop Vaping Services?

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Key points:

- Nicotine vape (e-cigarette) use is often likened to smoking and there are enquiries about why we do not have Stop Vaping Services.
- The reason is that, based on current evidence, it would not be cost-effective for health improvement.
- Stop Smoking Services are based on strong evidence of harm from tobacco use, and an extensive evidence base on what is effective and cost-effective to support smokers to quit. Neither of these apply to vaping.

Harmfulness of vape use

Prevalence of vaping in England has risen in the past few years to 12% of the adult population,¹ but most people who vape are doing so to reduce the amount they smoke, to help them stop smoking or to remain smokefree.¹ The prevalence among adults who have never smoked regularly is around 3%.¹

While there are differing views about exactly how harmful vaping is, analysis of the chemicals ingested and health effects experienced by vapers to date support the view that, at worst, it carries a small fraction of the harm of tobacco smoking.²

There is also a risk that stopping vaping may lead some people back to smoking but evidence on this is lacking.

Effectiveness of behavioural support for cessation of vaping

Nicorette Quick Mist has been licensed for cessation of vape use, but we do not currently have evidence on the effectiveness of behavioural support. As part of the national Swap-to-Stop scheme and a new tobacco control strategy, the UK Government has committed to help build up this evidence base to inform future decision-making.^{3,4}

In the meantime, the NCSCT has published guidance on stopping vape use based on the limited evidence currently available.⁵

Importance of focusing scarce resources on where there is most need

Over recent years there has been a significant reduction in the amount invested in English Stop Smoking Services: funding fell by 30% (£41m) between 2014 and 2018. In the face of limited resources and the proven cost-effectiveness of Stop-Smoking Services, it is much more cost-effective to use available resources on these rather than divert them elsewhere.

* We welcome the Prime Minister's announcement in October 2023 of, amongst other measures, an intended significant increase to funding of local stop smoking services.³

Further resources

- Addressing common myths about vaping: Putting the evidence in context
<https://tinyurl.com/ASH-vaping-myths>
- Online training module: *Vaping: A guide for healthcare professionals*
<https://elearning.ncsct.co.uk/vaping-launch>

References

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