

Health and Wellbeing Board



Date of meeting: 14 September 2023
 Title of Report: **Update to 2019 HWBB position on vaping**
 Lead Member: Councillor Mrs Mary Aspinall (Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care)
 Lead Strategic Director: Ruth Harrell (Director of Public Health)
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 Your Reference: VAPE 23 Update
 Key Decision: No
 Confidentiality: Part I - Official

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to update the Health and Wellbeing Board's [existing position on vaping](#)^A, established in January 2019, with the latest evidence on vaping and to consider the progress we're making by using vapes to help people cut down and stop smoking and the concerns that vaping presents with a particular focus on children and young people. To discuss these in the context of smoking prevalence in Plymouth and the part that vaping can play in its reduction.

Recommendations and Reasons

That the Health and Wellbeing Board adopt the following position on vaping and e-cigarettes:

1. We recognise that vaping has a key role in driving down rates of smoking in Plymouth.
2. Vaping with regulated e-cigarettes is estimated to be 95% less harmful than smoking tobacco.
3. Consumers and the public deserve protection from potential harms of vaping and the use of e-cigarettes through restrictions on their sale and marketing to children and controls to ensure safety and quality.
4. Stopping smoking is the best thing a person who smokes can do for their health. Our advice to people who smoke tobacco is to consider switching from smoking to vaping with e-cigarettes.
5. Vaping is not risk free, so our advice is: if you don't smoke, don't vape.
6. Ongoing surveillance and research is crucial to detect long-term impacts on individuals and communities. If any new risks emerge, or guidance changes, we will revise our position. In the meantime, we have a vital responsibility to communicate the reliable evidence that is emerging and use it to help guide us.
7. A task and Finish Group is to look at agreeing an approach involving a wide range of partners.

While the risk profile of vaping has not changed significantly since 2019, we are seeing a recent increase in vaping among young people and increases in the use of unregulated illegal vapes, which have a lack of control and in some cases are harmful to people's health.

8. We need clear and consistent messages to the public. There is widespread public confusion about vaping and research shows people's perceptions have become less accurate. The evidence tells us vaping with regulated products is substantially less harmful than smoking with tobacco, but a growing number of people believe vaping is at least as harmful as tobacco, or say they don't know. This is important because this misperception could be preventing people who from stopping. We have a duty to provide clear messages to the public, based on the evidence. Vaping can help people who are most dependent on smoking to quit and smokers who switch to vaping reduce the risks to their health considerably.

Alternative options considered and rejected

The lack of an agreed position to inform citywide efforts to reduce the prevalence of smoking would result in a piecemeal approach and the continued confusion in the minds of the public on the safety and effectiveness of vaping as a way of stopping smoking.

Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or the Plymouth Plan

This work supports the Plymouth Plan Healthy City Strategic Outcome that 'People in Plymouth live in happy, healthy, safe and aspiring communities where social, economic and environmental conditions and services enable choices that add quality years to life and reduce the gap in health and wellbeing between communities.'

In particular Plymouth Plan Strategic Objective I (Delivering a Healthy City), points one, two and three:

1. Delivering solutions and creating environments which address the wider determinants of health and wellbeing and make healthy choices available.
2. Reducing health and wellbeing inequalities and the burden of chronic diseases in the city.
3. Delivering the best health, wellbeing and social outcomes for all people, and reducing and mitigating the impact of poverty, especially child poverty.

Implications for the Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:

There are no additional financial implications.

Financial Risks

None

Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:

None

Other Implications: e.g. Health and Safety, Risk Management, Child Poverty:

** When considering these proposals members have a responsibility to ensure they give due regard to the Council's duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote good relations between people who share protected characteristics under the Equalities Act and those who do not.*

A coherent approach to vaping that is consistent with the evidence base will support more people to stop smoking tobacco which will have health, social care and economic benefits for those people, their families and communities.

Appendices

**Add rows as required to box below*

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Originating Senior Leadership Team member: Ruth Harrell											
Please confirm the Strategic Director(s) has agreed the report? Yes											
Date agreed: 06/09/2023											

Cabinet Member approval: Councillor Mary Aspinall (Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care) – *Approved by Email*

Date approved: 06/09/2023