

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC HEALTH TEAM ACTIVITY REGARDING VAPING AND SMOKING.

Wokingham Public Health Team

Partnership working

- Berkshire West Tobacco Control Alliance brings together key regional partners across several different organisations to help achieve a greater impact in implementing shared tobacco and vaping actions across the region.
- Wokingham Public Health and Trading Standards are an active member of the Berkshire West Tobacco Control Alliance along with Mental Health Trust representatives, Stop Smoking Service Provider, BOB ICS colleagues and Maternity and Acute Trust representatives.
- Public Health and Housing Engagement Teams are working on facilitating and foster relationship between local stop smoking services and opportunities around local redevelopments, seeking to promote smoke free homes, worksites and venues.

Strategy, Data & Intelligence

- Public Health leading on an *Alcohol, Drugs, Tobacco and Vaping* [ADTV] needs assessment for both adult and children's in Wokingham, due to be completed March 2025.
- Public Health leading on the development of an ADTV Strategy, in partnership with internal and external colleagues participating in a series of workshops, using a building blocks of health approach across the life course to help inform strategic forward plan.
- Public health commissioned local insights project, gathering intelligence from Wokingham working-age residents who are in routine and manual occupations around smoking and vaping – evaluation report under consideration.
- Public health analysis of Wokingham and Berkshire school responses in Oxwell student survey which included questions on vaping which will be used in the ADTV needs assessment and work with schools.

Enforcement

- The Public Protection Partnership [PPP] routinely conduct underage test purchases for illegal sales of illicit products to children and seizures of illegal tobacco and non-compliant vapes. 22 vapes visits were undertaken in Wokingham in 2024/25 with two fails recorded.
- The PPP also took part in Operation Joesph which was a government funded project which looked at specific aspects of enforcement and compliance around the sales of vapes looked at nicotine levels in vapes, which found around 13% of 'nicotine free' vapes on sales in the UK contained nicotine.

- Information for retailers and general advice for schools is also been published and is available [Vaping Education Campaign - PPP](#)
- PPP have also recruited a new dedicated age restriction products officers and will be looking to set up market surveillance and enforcement activities in 2025/26.

Environment

- Vapes should not be disposed of in standard waste or recycle bins at home, nor public litter bins – Wokingham residents should dispose of vapes at the retailer they purchase them from (where it is offered) or, at the designated collection point for electrical items at Bracknell or Reading recycle centres.

Commissioned Services

- ‘[Smokefreelife Berkshire](#)’ is the local stop smoking service which is commissioned by Public Health. The service offers free behavioural support for up to 12 weeks alongside access to free nicotine replacement products and therapies. The service is available for all residents aged 12 and over.
- Smokefreelife Berkshire regularly deliver Very Brief Advice (VBA) training for those who engage with smokers to confidently advise on local support and refer to Smokefreelife Berkshire.
- Public Health to review the local uptake of the implementation of the government’s [Swap2Stop scheme](#) made available via national funding, giving adult smokers free access to vapes as part of their quit journey
- Public Health are piloting an Enhanced Outreach Stop Smoking Service which is specifically designed for adults with a serious mental health condition and those working in routine and manual occupations. This service will offer prolonged courses of up to 16 weeks of behavioural therapy and a flexible approach to quitting in addition to what is offered by our standard stop smoking service, including access to Swap2Stop vapes.
- NHS Trust-commissioned stop smoking service currently includes Healthy Pregnancy Advisors who offer stop-smoking support for pregnant women, while Wokingham’s health visitors, commissioned by Public Health and provided by Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust, discuss smoking's impact during antenatal visits, new birth visits, and child health reviews, promoting smoke-free environments and referring families to support services.

Health Promotion and Education

- Public Health commissioned the National College for Smoking Cessation and Training (NCSCCT) to deliver a vaping workshop in February 2023 to a mixture of School Nurses, Teachers, Public Health Staff and Youth Workers, 17 attendees.
- In partnership with Public Health and Health Promoting Schools Programme, Coram Life Education delivered health harms online workshops on Vaping, Smoking and Nicotine for Year 5 and 6 pupils between Sept 23 – Sept 24. The workshops were run in 11 schools in the borough reaching 1040 pupils.

- Public Health partnering with local secondary schools and Wokingham Secondary Federation, as part of the Health Promoting Schools/PHSE Network, to provide public health updates on health prevention topics in schools. This includes 3 network meetings across the school year – vaping included on recent agenda
- Public Health promotion of national PSHE resources on vaping, including the vaping year 9 lesson pack and vaping – KS3 form time activities (10,11).
- Public Health is currently developing a Vaping Toolkit for Schools. This toolkit will provide educators, parents, and students with essential resources on vaping and is expected to be launched Jan/Feb 2025.
- Public Health promotion of national campaigns such as Stoptober and the NHS' Better Health Smoke Free initiatives through local communications.
- 'Hooked' education theatre production, commissioned by Public Health available to all Secondary schools, will be run in February 2025 – evaluation of impact to follow.
- Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust's Health Visiting and School Nursing team's launched the '*ChatHealth*' text service which provides support and advice for children, young people and parents on health and wellbeing issues including smoking and vaping.
- School Nursing staff attended the National Centre for Smoking Cessation and Training [NCSCT] workshop in 2024 to help stay up to date on the latest training and evidence.
- Wokingham Drug and Alcohol service provider, Cranstoun, produced a workbook and self-help tools which will be included and distributed with the vaping toolkits to be launched with schools Feb/March 2025 by Public Health.

Next Steps

- Public Health to finalise and publish ADTV needs assessment and co-production of a new ADTV Strategy and action plan (June 2025).
- Public Health to review evidence base and findings from local insights work and evaluation of enhanced stop smoking service and Swap2Stops scheme and use to inform the recommissioning of future local stop smoking service by September 2026.
- Public Health to review findings of the impact of 'Hooked' education production by June 2025.
- Public Health to monitor and review delivery of services and projects commissioned using the local stop smoking services and support funding for 2024/25 and 2025/26.
- Public Health and Cranstoun the launch schools vaping toolkit, workbook and self-help toolkit in February/March 2025.

Bracknell Forest Public Health Team

Research and Vaping Initiatives

In Bracknell Forest Healthy Dialogues were commissioned to conduct exploratory work on vaping among young people and parents using behavioural insights. This research provided insights and facilitated collaboration across Berkshire East, including professionals and the PPP. Actions developed to support quitting and preventing vaping uptake include:

- Prevention, harm reduction, and cessation strategies with age-appropriate messaging (young people).
- Direct engagement with young people (resources for schools/campaign for young people).
- A parent information leaflet shared with schools during the transition period (Year 7 parents).
- Developed a workshop and follow-up actions for retailers in collaboration with the PPP. Targeted initiatives specifically focusing on youth vaping for retailers (PPP should have completed).

Past initiatives include:

- Smoke-free homes and smoke-free sidelines projects.
- Development of South East regional policy guidance on vaping in schools for professionals.
- School Health and Wellbeing Survey to include information on smoking and vaping.

Tobacco Control Alliance and South-East Regional Coordination:

The development of a Tobacco Control Alliance across Berkshire East was initially planned but has been paused. A South-East Regional Coordinator has since been introduced to support regional tobacco control policies and communications.

Plans with Stop Smoking Services Grant

Bracknell Forest Council will be using some of the grant funding to recruit a Tobacco Control and Smoking Cessation Public Health Officer. This role will drive forward the tobacco control agenda by building relationships across the region, identify collaboration opportunities with various organisations including the PPP, support engagement in the development of a needs assessment and promote the Smoke-Free agenda.

Funding is also used to commission targeted stop smoking services. These resources offer information on the harms of smoking and available support for residents to start their quitting journey.

West Berkshire Public Health Team

Partnership Working

- West Berkshire Public Health part fund the PPP's Senior Programme and Community Officer role. This role leads on the commissioning of West Berkshire's Local Stop Smoking Service, Smokefree life Berkshire and the Local Stop Smoking Service and Support Grant funding. Moreover, the role line manages a Public Health Project Officer who supports with this work.
- West Berkshire Public Health are active members of the Berkshire West Tobacco Control Alliance. Hosted by Reading Public Health, the alliance brings together key partners to develop a shared plan of actions to deliver across the three local authorities with the shared objective of reducing smoking prevalence.
- Sovereign Housing and GP surgeries across West Berkshire have been approached by Public Health to support the instigation of conversations and relationships being built with our stop smoking provider to further promote the service provision and encourage resident engagement in initiatives such as 'smokefree' homes.
- The Senior Programme and Community Officer chairs the Substance and Behaviour Harm Reduction Partnership within West Berkshire. Tobacco and vaping are regularly prevalence across West Berkshire are regularly discussed at this quarterly meeting and actions to reduce prevalence are detailed within the SBHRP Plan. The partnership is governed by the Health and Wellbeing Board Steering Group and Building Communities Together Partnership.

Data

- The young peoples attitudinal survey conducted by PPP during April to June 2024 found that of the 4014 West Berkshire Secondary School pupils who answered the survey, 5.9% (236) had ever smoked a cigarette and 14.1% (564) had ever tried vaping. 22.2% (125) of pupils answered that they vape every day.
- Insights work with routine and manual workers across West Berkshire is currently underway. The results of this will be used to develop a targeted marketing campaign to be launched in summer 2025.
- Data in respect of both numbers of referrals to West Berkshire's commissioned young people's drug and alcohol service The Edge for young people who vape in addition to using an illegal substance and exclusively vape have been requested. Furthermore, numerical and anecdotal data has been requested from Secondary schools across West Berkshire regarding number of bag searches undertaken owing to a vaping concern, number of isolations/ exclusions given for pupils owing to vapes and perceived impact vapes are having on pupil's behaviours, attitudes, attendance and health.

Commissioned Services

- West Berkshire Public Health commission the local stop smoking service provision, Smokefree life Berkshire. Available to all smoking residents over the age of 12, the service provides a free tiered approach of intervention for up to 12 weeks, including Tobacco Dependency Advisor support in addition to various nicotine replacement

therapies. Furthermore, the service provide Very Brief Advice (VBA) training available to those who regularly engage with smokers to inform of the service available.

- Smokefree life Berkshire have taken part in the Office of Health Improvement and Disparities Swop2Stop scheme during 2024/25. Consideration for the continuation of this scheme moving forward into the new financial year is taking place.
- Using the Local Stop Smoking Service and Support Grant funding from the government, West Berkshire Public Health have been commissioned an evaluation by reading University of the effectiveness of this service. Their findings report is due to be published in July 2025.

Health Promotion and Education

- Regular vaping awareness sessions are undertaken in secondary schools, predominantly to years 7 and 9 as part of a PSHE lesson, tutor session or assembly by the PPP's community engagement team, in addition to students at Newbury College. Moreover, a vaping awareness session was delivered to pupils during the Young Health Champions Conference.
- This academic year, vaping awareness sessions have been offered and delivered to primary school year 6 pupils in preparation for their transition to secondary school.
- Information leaflets for parents/ carers containing general information about vapes, talking to their child about vapes and how to spot illegal vapes have been created and circulated to secondary schools for wider dissemination.
- West Berkshire Public Health commissioned Risking it All to deliver drama performances to secondary schools across West Berkshire focussing on health harm topics that are prevalent within the area. Vaping was one of these topics included in the performance. 13 performances took place, including a parents and professionals evening session.
- Communications promoting national quit smoking campaigns and raising awareness of and how to access our local stop smoking service provision are regularly shared on the Public Health's social media platforms.

Next Steps

- Continue to forge positive relationships with partners to promote Smokefree life Berkshire's services.
- Consider the viability of commissioning a quit vaping/ nicotine service for children.
- Work with Newbury College's Health and Social Care Department to develop a West Berkshire health harm campaign aimed at year 9 pupils, using West Berkshire imagery and anecdotes.
- Scope the setting up and delivery of a Responsible Retailer scheme for independent retailers of age restricted goods to sign up to.
- Continue to ensure the effective spending of the Local Stop Smoking Service and Support grant funding.
- Begin the commissioning process for a new Local Stop Smoking Service to be completed by end of September 2026. Consideration for a quit vaping/ nicotine service will also be within scope.