



Dr Chris Llewelyn

Prif Weithredwr / Chief Executive

**Cymdeithas Llywodraeth Leol Cymru
Welsh Local Government Association**

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Ein Cyf / Our Ref: Sep112023

Dyddiad / Date: 13 October 2023

Gofynnwch am / Please ask for: Sharon Davies

Llinell uniongyrchol / Direct line: 07917275203

Ebost / Email: sharon.davies@wlga.gov.uk

Dear Ms Bryant,

Children and young people vaping in schools.

Thank you for your letter of the 11th of September regarding children and young people vaping in school and offer the following information as our response.

Schools, of course play their part and have a zero-tolerance policy to any learner vaping in school settings. Schools communicate to their learners, parents, and carers to make sure young people and their families understand the health facts about vaping and know about vaping and the law. This is a growing issue for schools, and they are continuously working closely with their councils on how best to tackle this issue in providing the appropriate support and advice to the young people in their schools.

Trading Standards departments cover a wider range of diverse statutes and regulations, which include amongst other things, food standards, weights and measures controls, product safety, consumer credit, animal health and welfare, underage sales etc. For context, many departments are now reactive to complaints and act on intelligence received and are limited in what they can achieve proactively.

Underage sales of a wide range of products remain a concern for trading standards, and they aim to direct resources to highlight problem products and business activity where the sales of underage and restricted products are an issue.

The most recent information for 22/23 from Trading Standards shows that for nicotine containing vapes, that across Wales (not every LA provided data) 196 test purchase attempts were made by supervised children under the age of 18. Of the 196 attempts, a sale was made 49 times. Follow up enforcement action, in line with the local authority enforcement policy was carried out.

Trading Standards officers are also working with schools in Wales to help to provide advice and education to pupils. For example, in Anglesey, officers have visited at least three high schools in the last period for this purpose.

In England, the central government has announced £3m of funding to tackle the illegal sale of vapes. Trading Standards in Wales are discussing a business case with Welsh Government officials in order to provide a similar Wales plan.

In relation to the child appealing nature of vapes (containing nicotine or otherwise), Trading Standards would support the case for standardised, non-appealing packaging.

Please also find attached an information PowerPoint presentation, presented by Trading Standards Wales, to the Directors of Public Protection Wales, which provides further information in relation to dealing with this problem – including the need to pay for expensive sampling and analysis costs, and the storage of illegal products which have been seized by officers.

I hope this is helpful to the Committee's deliberations.

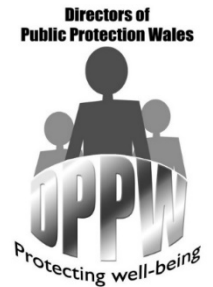
Your sincerely,



Y Cyng / Cllr Ian Roberts
Llefarydd Addysg CLILC
WLG A Education Spokesperson

The vapes market

and the challenge for local authorities in Wales



Safonau Masnach Cymru
Trading Standards Wales

In the headlines

Kids being hospitalised by vaping as youth e-cigarette smoking 'is becoming epidemic'

A paediatric respiratory consultant issued a shocking warning today as they revealed how children are being admitted to hospital because of vapes – as calls to ban the e-cigarettes grow

By **Kieren Williams**, News Reporter

13:14, 6 Jun 2023 | UPDATED 10:26, 9 Jun 2023



BOOKMARK

Young kids are being hospitalised by **vaping** as calls grow to ban **e-cigarettes**.

A paediatric respiratory consultant issued the shocking warning today as they revealed how children are being admitted to hospital because of vapes.

Dr McKean, a doctor at the Great North Children's **Hospital** in Newcastle, said they were seeing a rising number of children developing dangerous lung conditions related to **vaping**.

The vice president for policy at the Royal College of Paediatrics and Children Health (RCPCH) also called for a ban on disposable e-cigarettes as the organisation warned that "youth vaping is fast becoming an epidemic".

Directors of
Public Protection Wales



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Trading Standards Wales

In the headlines

STARK WARNING I took up vaping instead of cigarettes aged 16 but ended up on life support with organ failure – don't make my mistake

Alice Fuller

Published: 16:49, 27 Jun 2023 | Updated: 16:50, 27 Jun 2023



A TEENAGER who took up vaping as an alternative to smoking ended up on a life support machine with organ failure.

Ewan Fisher made the switch in a bid to improve his [boxing](#) skills and overall [fitness](#) - but he found himself with the lungs of an 80-year-old.

The lad said he was puffing away on fruity [e-cigarettes](#) up to 14 times a day, which caused a condition called hypersensitivity pneumonitis.

This occurs when the lungs develop an immune response to something you breathe in, resulting in inflammation of the tissue.

Ewan fell ill the night before he was due to start his [GCSE](#) exams aged 16.

He spent [eight weeks in intensive care](#) and then needed an artificial lung to keep him alive.

READ MORE ON VAPING



STARK WARNING I took up vaping instead of cigarettes aged 16 but ended up on life...

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In the headlines



EXCLUSIVE

Health > News Health

DEADLY RISK Urgent warning as vapes contaminated with flesh-eating drug found in Britain

Joe Davies

Published: 21:00, 28 Jun 2023 | Updated: 9:24, 29 Jun 2023



VAPES contaminated with a deadly, flesh-eating drug have been found in Britain, The Sun can reveal.

Xylazine, a horse tranquilliser causing havoc with [drug](#) users in the [US](#), was discovered in modified [e-cigarettes](#).

Health bosses issued a warning to [NHS](#) clinics because it causes skin and tissue necrosis and is easy to overdose on.

Experts said the vapes, which were impounded in Luton, [Beds](#), could kill unsuspecting users.

Abbas Kanani, superintendent pharmacist at [Chemist Click](#), said: "It could have serious and potentially dangerous effects.

"In severe cases, [respiratory depression](#) can be life-threatening."



Health

BAD HABIT Urgent vape warning as e-cigarettes leave children suffering with collapsed lungs

Harry Goodwin

Published: 23:25, 25 Jun 2023 | Updated: 9:34, 26 Jun 2023



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Size of the market



- 4.3 million people vape regularly (GB)
- Half a billion vapes bought each year in the UK
- 168 million of these are single use



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Size of the market

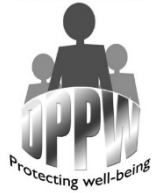


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Packaging and marketing



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Underage Sales

- Across Wales, 15% of young volunteer attempts to purchase nicotine containing vapes have resulted in a sale
- Test purchase failure rate is as high as 24% in some areas
- Anecdotal evidence that retailers are not taking underage sales of nicotine containing vapes as 'seriously' as underage sales of alcohol or tobacco



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Illegal vapes and product safety

- Non-compliant with regulations
- Liquid strength greater than 20mg /ml
- Liquid volume greater than 2ml / approx. 600 puffs
- Vapes and liquids not registered with the MHRA
- Presence of heavy metals (e.g. lead, nickel and chromium)
- In one area of Wales in 22-23, 14/37 test purchases (38%) resulted in the sale of illegal vapes
- In the same area there were 37 seizures of illegal vapes (retail value £51k)



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Links to serious crime

- Concerns that illegal vapes are becoming the new illegal tobacco, but with a wider audience
- Evidence that illegal vapes are being concealed on premises in the same way as illegal tobacco
- Intelligence suggests vapes are being used to groom children and there are CSE concerns at specific premises



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Environmental concerns

Material Focus research in 2022 reported

- 1.3 million single use vapes are thrown away each week in the UK
- Across all vapes, the equivalent of 23 tonnes of lithium is thrown away per year – equivalent to 3000 batteries for electric vehicles

Disposal of seized vapes is not straightforward and is proving costly for authorities



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Tackling the problem

Announcing the new crackdown on Tuesday, Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said

'I'm deeply concerned about the sharp rise in kids vaping and shocked by reports of illicit vapes containing lead getting into the hands of school children'

*'Our new **illicit vape enforcement squad** – backed by £3million – is on the case, but clearly there is more to do. That is why I am taking further action today to clamp down on rogue firms who unlawfully target our children with these products'*

The UK Government's call for evidence on youth vaping closed in June:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/youth-vaping-call-for-evidence/youth-vaping-call-for-evidence>

Crackdown on illegal vapes after LBC exposed scandal of nicotine filled e-cigs sold with no age checks

30 May 2023, 05:21 | Updated: 30 May 2023, 05:22



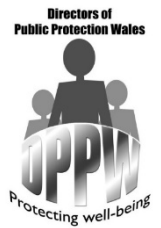
Rishi Sunak has pledged to crack down on illegal vape marketing, following an LBC investigation. Picture: Alamy/LBC



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What support is needed in Wales ?

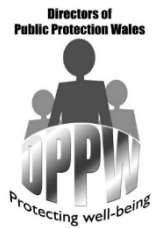
- Sampling and analysis of products (reference to a central database to avoid duplication)
- OPSS proposal for disposal of seized vapes through approved WEEE recycling schemes – still the cost of transport to be addressed
- Operational support / detection dogs
- Storage of seized products...



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Next steps...

- TSW in discussion with Welsh Government
- Business case is being prepared



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