

POSITION STATEMENT

The use of nicotine vapes
as a smoking cessation
aid for adults



Purpose of this document

Despite progress in tobacco control there are still nearly a million people in London who smoke. Smoking is the leading preventable cause of ill health and premature death in our population.

Smoking rates are higher in deprived communities and in people with mental health and addiction problems. In addition it is a major driver of health inequality, responsible for around half the difference in life expectancy between those on higher than lower incomes.

This position statement has been drafted for a range of London Tobacco Alliance (LTA) partners to assist the development of organisational, regional, or sub-regional policies and/or individual practice in relation to the use of nicotine vapes (also known as e-cigarettes or vapes) to help adults to quit smoking.

In acknowledgement of current issues around children and young people, a separate workstream on this issue is in development. This statement's specific focus is on nicotine vaping for adults who wish to give up smoking tobacco. LTA does not condone the use of vaping products by young people in any circumstances. It has a stance of supporting work to educate young people around the possible harms of vaping. An example is the work that ASH has undertaken with partners to produce resources around youth vaping available here.

Although the evidence around the effectiveness of nicotine vaping products for smoking cessation, and relative risks of nicotine vaping compared with smoking is now well-established, new information continues to become available.

A range of national and international policies, articles and research resources have been developed over time. This position statement has been developed based on the latest systematic reviews of the evidence to provide a collective position on the use of nicotine vapes. It will remain a live document.

This document is supported by an online toolkit on [LondonTobaccoAlliance.org.uk/resources/vaping-toolkit](https://londontobaccoalliance.org.uk/resources/vaping-toolkit)

Please get in touch with any questions or feedback:

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INTRODUCTION

Nicotine vaping offers adult smokers an alternative source of nicotine which significantly reduces the harms of smoking.¹ Vaping is the most popular stop smoking aid in use in England.

There is strong and growing evidence including systematic reviews of clinical trials, and consensus across the UK's leading health organisations, that vaping is substantially less harmful than tobacco smoking although it is not risk-free.



A nicotine vape is a device that delivers an inhalable aerosol by heating a solution that contains nicotine, propylene glycol and /or vegetable glycerine, plus flavours.

Despite this, elements of uncertainty and confusion remain amongst the public and some health care professionals. Please note that in this document we discuss 'nicotine vaping', which is the LTA's preferred term to 'e-cigarette', in line with the latest review by Kings College London.

The London Tobacco Alliance (LTA) is committed to making London SmokeFree by 2030, defined as a smoking rate below <5%. We also have a shared ambition to reduce health inequalities in the capital. We can only achieve this through working together, developing, and following effective tobacco control policies, running successful public health campaigns, and delivering evidence-based smoking cessation support and tobacco harm reduction strategies. Nicotine vaping as an aid for adult smokers to quit forms part of this approach. This has been strengthened recently by the government's announcement of funding to provide adult smokers with vaping kits; the "Swap to Stop" initiative.

In addition to outlining the LTA position and making a call on partners to adopt a consistent approach to nicotine vapes, this document aims to summarise the latest evidence. We include evidence on safety, effectiveness as a stop smoking aid and regulation in order that smoking cessation providers, health professionals and adult smokers who live and work in London can make informed decisions about their use.

1. www.gov.uk/government/publications/nicotine-vaping-in-england-2022-evidence-update/nicotine-vaping-in-england-2022-evidence-update-summary

THE LTA POSITION

The London Tobacco Alliance (LTA) endorses the use of nicotine vapes that meet UK regulatory standards as an aid for adults to stop smoking.

These are vapes that have been submitted or notified by the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency can be identified at www.cms.mhra.gov.uk/ecig-new and through the **VapeClick website**. Currently no vaping products are licensed as medicines on the UK market but this could change in the future.

There is strong evidence to demonstrate that the quality and length of life of people in London who currently smoke will be significantly improved if they quit smoking. An effective way to do this is by supporting as many as possible to use nicotine vapes as well as other evidence-based interventions such as behavioural support in their attempts to quit smoking.

Alongside behavioural support and licensed stop smoking aids, the LTA believes that nicotine vapes can play a significant role in reducing the harm from tobacco, supporting smokers to quit, improving public health, and helping to reduce health inequalities.

Therefore, all adult smokers should have access to, and opportunity to use, nicotine vapes as an aid to give up smoking.

Nicotine vaping products are not risk-free, and we strongly recommend that non-smokers should not start vaping.

We also strongly support measures to make vaping less accessible and appealing to children. Such approaches should be encouraged and enforced.

The negative environmental effects of smoking tobacco are well documented. Vaping products also produce significant waste – in particular the battery and plastic components. This is especially the case for disposable vapes. The LTA supports work to encourage users to avoid disposable devices where possible. People who vape should be encouraged to dispose of vape kit responsibly, through electrical recycling, or returning them to where they were purchased.

“Nicotine vaping will have an important role to play in achieving London’s ambition to be a smokefree city by 2030.”



THIS IS OUR

POSITION

1

Systematic reviews of the evidence show that nicotine vapes are substantially less harmful than smoking tobacco although not risk free.

Individuals who use nicotine vapes to quit smoking will gain significant health benefits.

2

Nicotine vapes are the most popular stop smoking aid in England and clinical trials confirm they are an effective support for smokers to quit.

3

Through the LTA we should continue to encourage adult smokers to use nicotine vapes and other smoking cessation aids rather than smoking tobacco.

People who formerly smoked and vape, who are concerned about relapsing to smoking if they stop vaping, should not be discouraged from vaping.

OUR CALL ON PARTNERS

Based upon this position we are calling for the following:

1

Local Authorities and health professionals should promote and offer nicotine vaping as an effective smoking cessation aid, alongside accurate information on their benefits in line with the latest guidance and evidence from NICE, Cochrane review, OHID and KCL and the Independent review by Dr Javed Khan OBE.⁴

2

NHS trusts, Integrated Care Boards, primary care settings should adopt and implement policies to make it easier for staff, patients and visitors using hospital sites, mental health services and maternity services to choose to vape rather than smoke as part of a smokefree NHS. There are example policies where NHS trusts have implemented this.

The toolkit is available on the London Tobacco Alliance website
[LondonTobaccoAlliance.org.uk/resources/vaping-toolkit](https://london-tobacco-alliance.org.uk/resources/vaping-toolkit)

3

Public and private sector employers, businesses and organisations or institutes should adopt policies that make it easier for employees and customers to choose to use a nicotine vape rather than smoke as part of their smokefree policy.

4

Improved education and training for health care and smoking cessation professionals is required to ensure they are equipped and up to date with the latest evidence and information. The LTA will maintain a live toolkit to support professionals to access the latest information and best practice, but it should remain a training and educating priority across the health and care system.

⁴ www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-khan-review-making-smoking-obsolete

PUTTING OUR WORDS INTO ACTION

We are developing a toolkit to support our partners with understanding the evidence, using the right messaging, and signposting people to the information they need.

The toolkit includes:



LTA mission and ambitions



Background - harms of smoking



Types of vapes



Training to help smokers switch and quit



Smoking prevalence in London



Vaping prevalence in London



Evidence around vaping



Messaging/information packs and Myth busters – sharing the truth about vaping



Children and young people

Available to all partners on the London Tobacco Alliance website.

LondonTobaccoAlliance.gov.uk/resources/vaping-toolkit



Get in touch with us to find out more about the London Tobacco Alliance as an individual or as an organisation.

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