



28<sup>th</sup> April 2023

Dear Parents and Carers,

Perceptions that there has been a rise in young people vaping are supported by current evidence which indicates the number of 11–17-year-olds in Great Britain currently vaping has risen to 7% compared to 4% in 2020. Whilst this increase is concerning, the data nonetheless continues to illustrate most young people do not vape or smoke. It is also worth noting that most vaping is experimental with regular vaping mainly confined to children who currently smoke or those who have done so in the past.

Smoking is undoubtedly more harmful than vaping, however, vapes are not harmless. We know short-term effects include coughing, headaches, dizziness, and sore throats. The long-term effects of vaping are, as yet, unknown.

***The public health message to young people therefore is very clear, “Don’t smoke? Don’t start to vape”.***

#### THE LAW AND VAPING

Vapes and vaping products containing nicotine, like tobacco, are age restricted. It’s illegal to sell them to under 18s, and for adults to buy them on their behalf.

Schools will have their own policies in place regarding smoking and vaping on school site and both students and parents should follow these policies. It is important that all parents and students are aware of school policies regarding smoking and vaping. This can often be found on your schools’ website.

Enforcing existing legislation to prevent the illegal sale of vaping products is an important step to take in reducing the number of young people who experiment with vapes. In Liverpool it is our intention to ensure that the law is upheld.

Working alongside our Council colleagues in Trading Standards we will soon be conducting intelligence led test purchase operations, targeting premises who are known to be selling vaping products to young people. Where you have local knowledge of retailers selling vaping products illegally, we would therefore be grateful if you could share this information via email to [trading.standards@liverpool.gov.uk](mailto:trading.standards@liverpool.gov.uk)

#### SUPPORT

Quitting smoking is one of the best ways to improve your health. It has been shown to reduce the risk of developing dementia, heart disease, cancer and stroke. You experience health benefits within weeks of stopping including breathing easier and feeling fitter.

Liverpool already has a robust smoking and vaping cessation offer available to its residents. Smokefree Liverpool provide tailored advice and access to nicotine replacement therapy to smokers aged 12 and over in a wide range of community venues across the city as well as virtual support where it is preferred. This support can be accessed by Freephone 0800 061 4212 by texting QUIT to 66777 or online at [www.smokefreeliverpool.co.uk](http://www.smokefreeliverpool.co.uk)

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'MA' with a stylized flourish.

Matthew Ashton

Director of Public Health, Liverpool