

The Impact of Vaping on Aberdeenshire Secondary Schools: Pupils' Feedback



INFOGRAPHIC

Prevalence of Vaping & Smoking

Regular Usage Rates

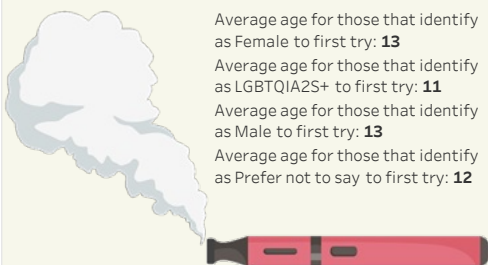
11% of young people regularly vape.



4% of young people smoke regularly.

Experimentation Age

Average age for first try: **13**



Youngest age for vaping: **4**

Youngest age for smoking: **5**



Sources of Initial Exposure

27% first learnt about vapes from family



24% first learnt about vapes from school



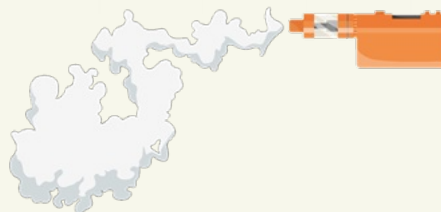
18% first learnt about vapes from friends



18% first learnt about vapes from social media



8% first learnt about vapes from TV



Access to Vapes & Cigarettes

70%

of those who access vapes find it **easy**

50%

of those who access cigarettes find it **easy**



Source vapes from

40% friends

13% shop

20% someone



36%

friends

12% shop

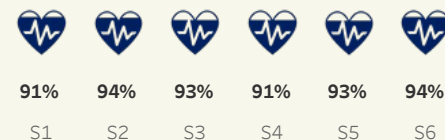
15% someone

Source cigarettes from

Perceptions & Attitudes

Health Risks Awareness

92% aware of health risks associated with vaping



90% aware of age restrictions for vapes & cigarettes



Views on Vaping

43% believe vaping is just as harmful as smoking

49% believe vaping should be used for quitting smoking only



53% approve of young people who do not vape or smoke

Health Impacts



Brain

Headaches (14)
Dizziness (5)
Sleeplessness (4)



Mouth & Throat

Sore throat (5)
Sore gums (2)
Dry throat (1)



Lungs

Coughing (33)
Difficulty breathing (23)
Wheezing (10)



Heart

Chest pain (10)



Skin

Acne (3)



Mental Health

Anxiety (3)
Difficulty controlling emotions (2)
Paranoia (1)

Quitting Efforts & Prevention

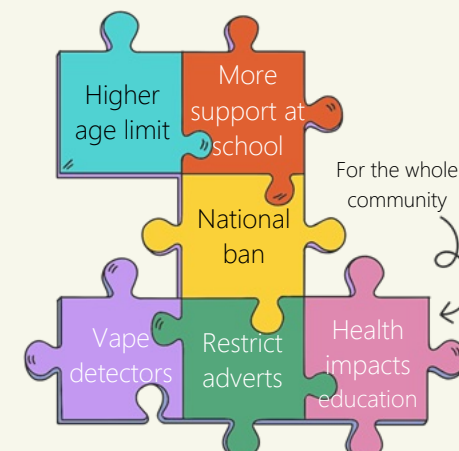
Methods used to Quit

55% quit cold turkey

23% use substitution methods (e.g. exercise, food, nicotine gums/patches)



Suggested Preventative Measures



Executive Summary

The survey, conducted across 14 academies, garnered responses from 4,364 young people, providing a substantial dataset on vaping and cigarette smoking behaviours and perceptions. The survey reveals a complex landscape of youth vaping and smoking habits, characterised by their easy access, significant health impacts and awareness of risks and regulations. However, the persistent misconceptions and the ease of obtaining these substances highlight the need for targeted interventions.

Introduction

The purpose of the survey is to understand the attitudes and behaviours of young people towards vaping and cigarette smoking. As vaping has become more prevalent, understanding these trends is crucial for developing effective public health strategies. This report highlights the importance of addressing young people’s perspectives to inform policy and prevention programs.

The survey itself delved into the perceptions, behaviours, and awareness surrounding vaping and cigarette smoking among young people attending academies in Aberdeenshire. It seeks to understand the initiation, influences, and health consequences of these habits, along with the awareness of legal regulations and the perceived effectiveness of preventive measures.

Through this survey, we aim to gather comprehensive insights into young people’s engagement with vaping and smoking, and identify potential strategies for reducing these behaviours.

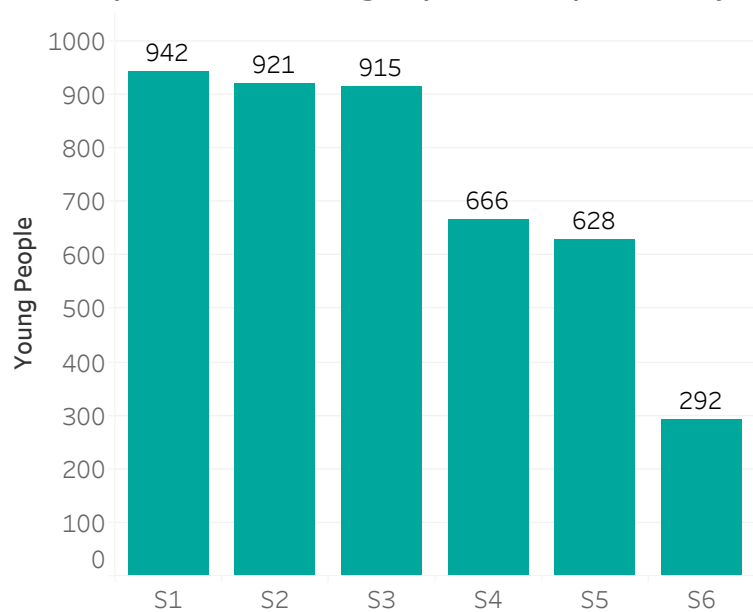
This data will also inform the development of initiatives and programs relating to tobacco/smoking and vaping, monitor and measure effectiveness of strategies, and determine which areas should take priority. All responses to the survey were anonymous.

Demographic Analysis

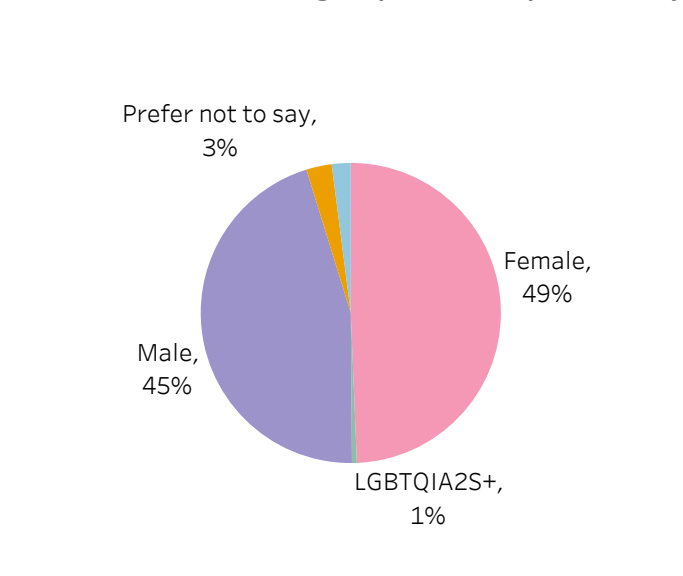
4,364 young people took part in the survey, from 14 academies.
1,979 identified as male, 2,154 identified as female. 88 are ‘unknown’ as the response was not a gender.

Out of a total of 15,852 pupils (based on the 2023 Pupils’ Census), 27.5% of young people attending academies took part in the survey.

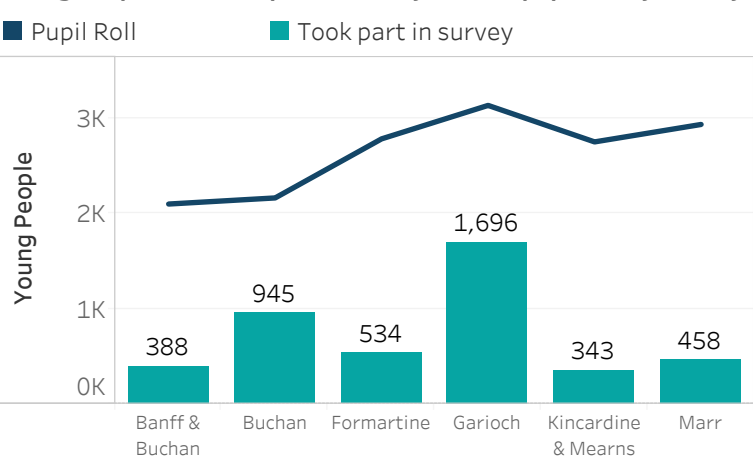
Year Group Distribution of Young People who took part in survey



Gender Distribution of Young People who took part in survey

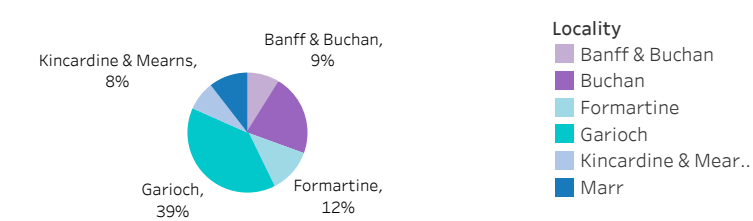


Young People who took part in survey vs total pupil roll by locality

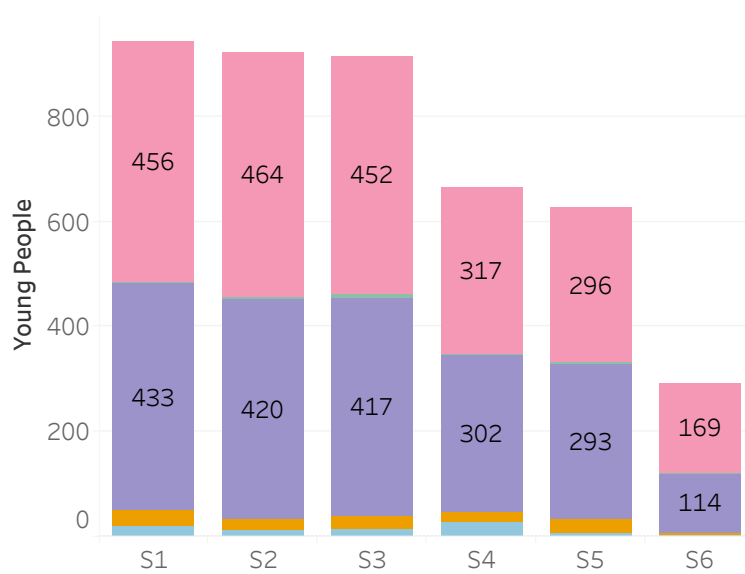


- Female
- Unknown
- LGBTQIA2S+
- Male
- Prefer not to say

Young People who took part in survey by locality



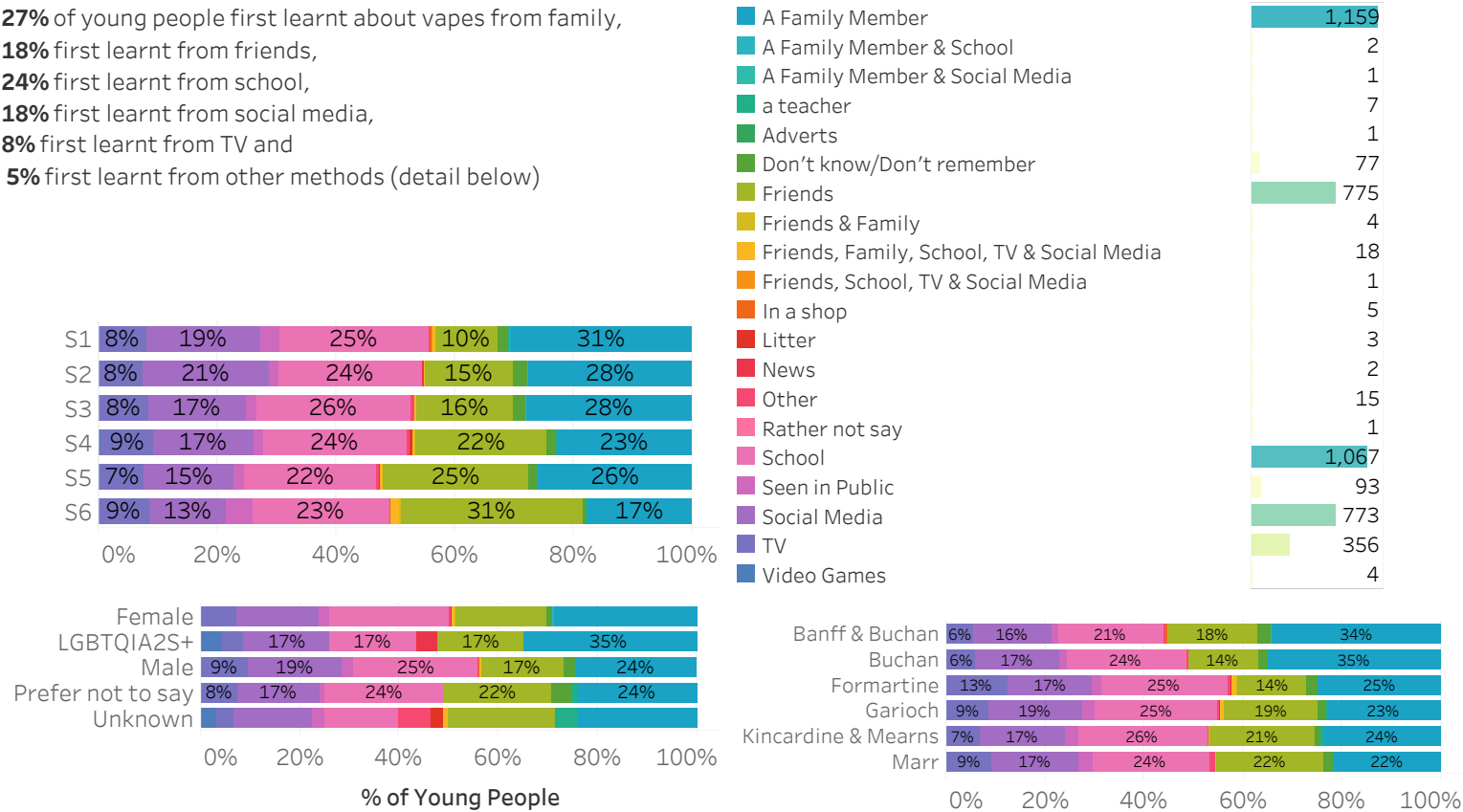
Year Group and Gender distribution of young people who took part in survey



Awareness & Perceptions

Initial Exposure to vaping/e-cigarettes

27% of young people first learnt about vapes from family,
18% first learnt from friends,
24% first learnt from school,
18% first learnt from social media,
8% first learnt from TV and
5% first learnt from other methods (detail below)



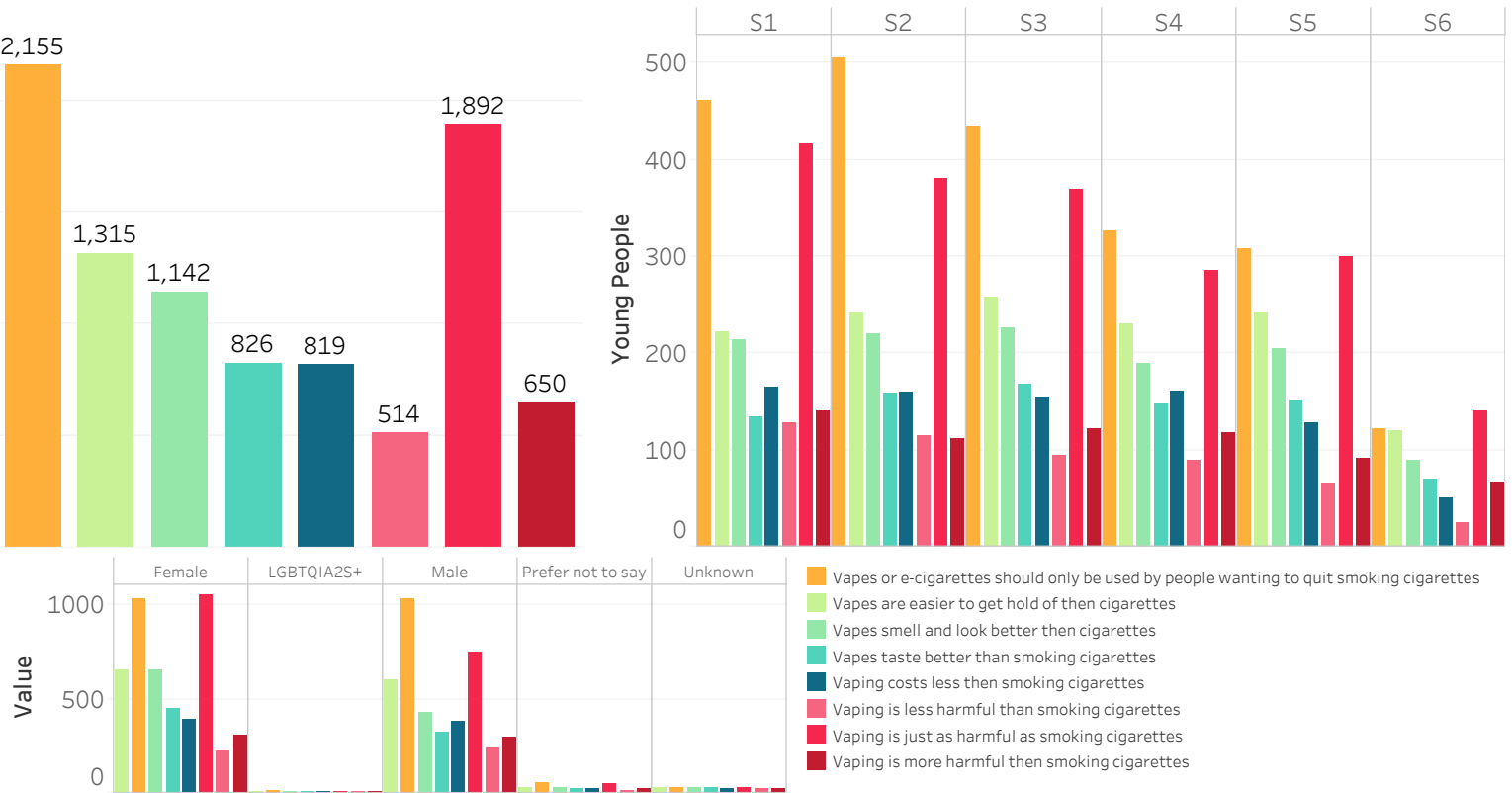
This distribution highlights the significant influence of close social circles and educational environments in introducing vaping to young people.

Initial exposure appears to vary with age. For S1 pupils, 31% of young people first learnt about vapes from family.

This compares to S6 pupils, in which 31% first learnt from friends.
This shift suggests that as young people grow older, peer influence becomes increasingly prominent.

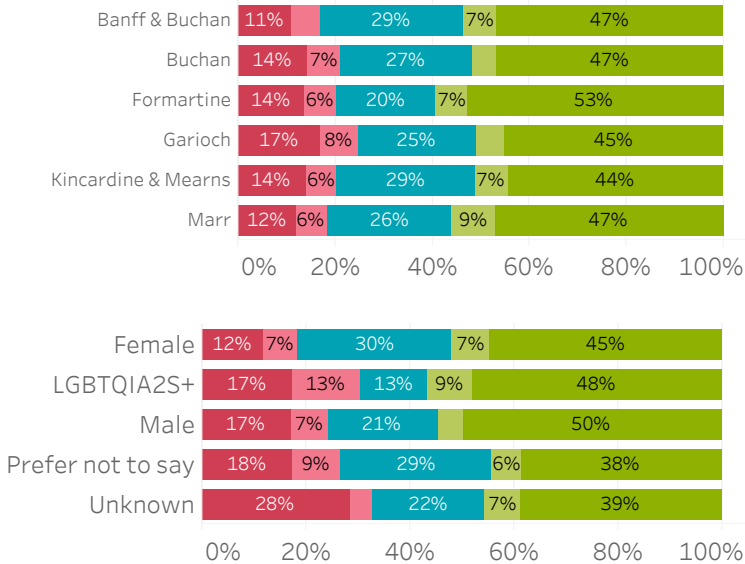
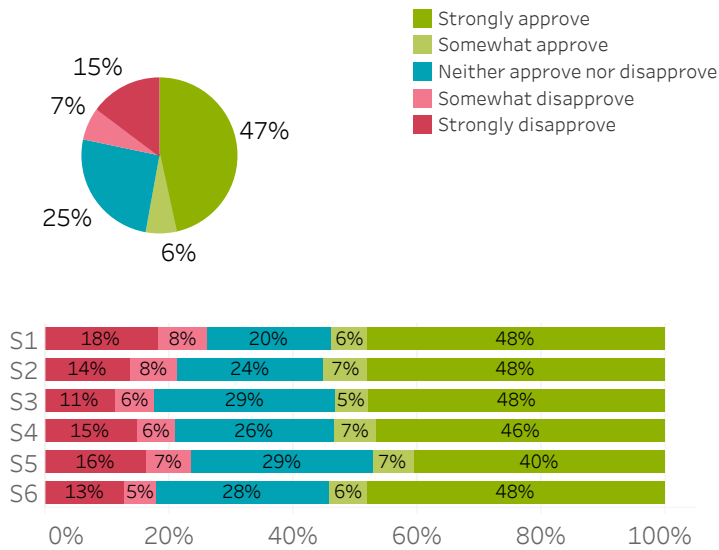
Views on vaping compared to cigarette smoking

43% of young people believe vaping is just as harmful as smoking cigarettes.
49% believe vaping should only be used by people wanting to quit smoking cigarettes.



Awareness & Perceptions

Views on young people who have never used vapes/e-cigarettes/cigarettes

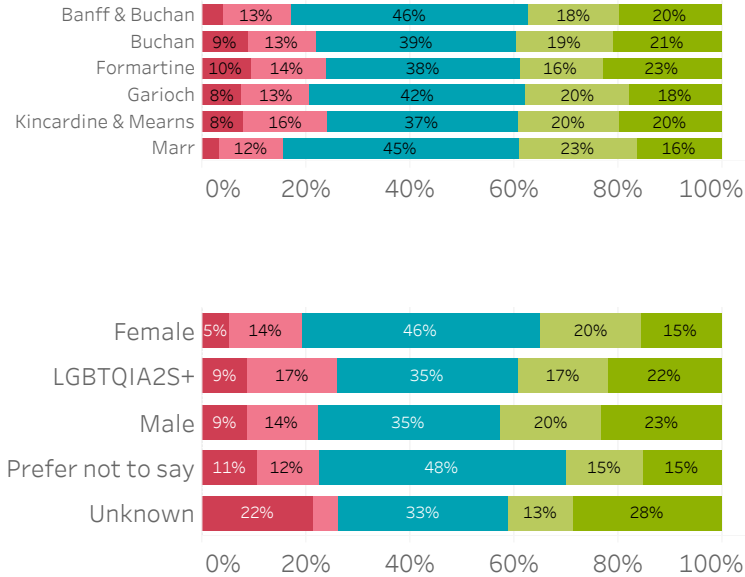
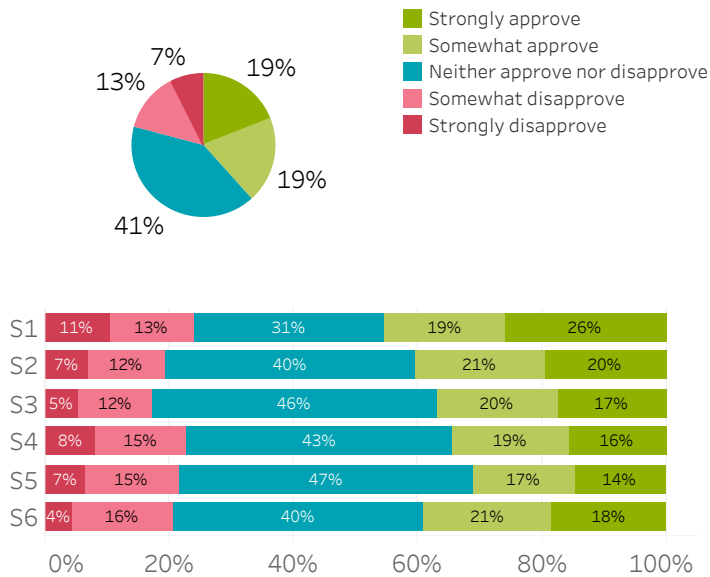


53% approve somewhat or strongly of young people that do not vape or smoke.

55% of those that identify as male approve somewhat or strongly of young people that do not vape or smoke.

This compares to 52% of those that identify as female.

How do you think others your age view people who have never used vapes/e-cigarettes/cigarettes



38% think that others their age approve somewhat or strongly of young people that do not vape or smoke.

43% of those that identify as male think that others their age approve somewhat or strongly of young people that do not vape or smoke.

This compares to 35% of those that identify as female.

Comparison of perceptions between personal views and perceived views of peers

Personal views differed from perceived peer views, indicating a possible discrepancy between private opinions and public behaviours. Views on non-vapers and non-smokers are generally positive, with 53% approve somewhat or strongly of young people that do not vape or smoke compared to 38% that think that others their age would have the same opinion.

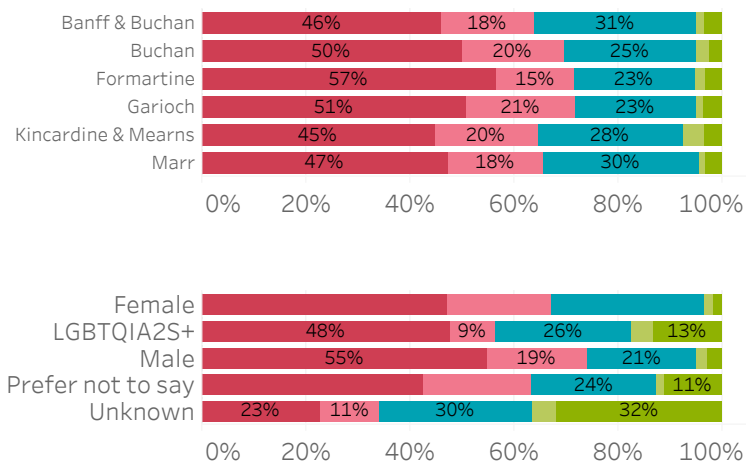
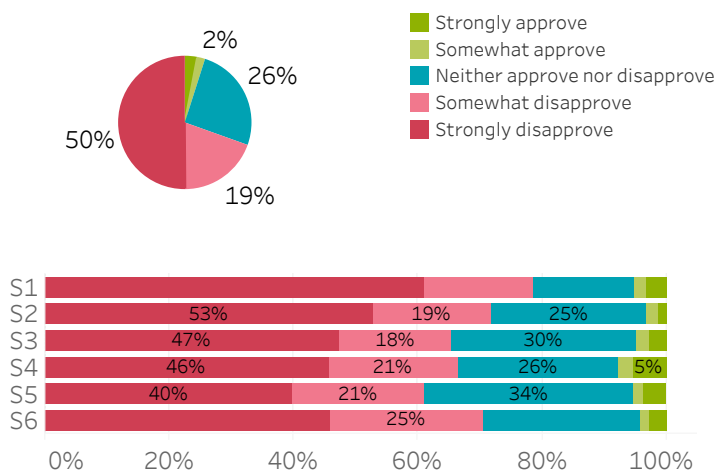
Those that strongly approve of young people that do not vape or smoke (47%) is much higher than that of what they perceive their peers believe (19%).

This is the same across genders and age groups.

This discrepancy between personal approval and perceived peer approval suggests that young people might underestimate the support for non-vaping and non-smoking behaviours amongst their peers.

Awareness & Perceptions

Views on cigarette smoking



70% disapprove somewhat or strongly of cigarette smoking.

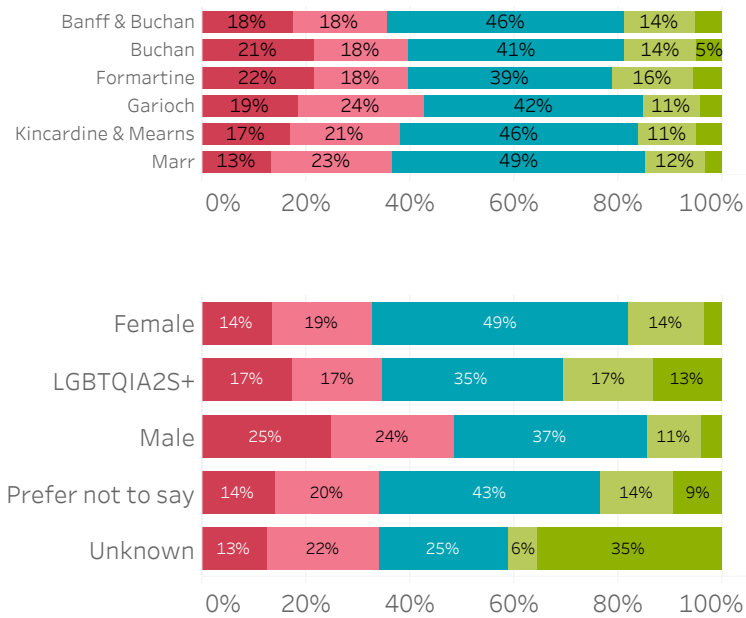
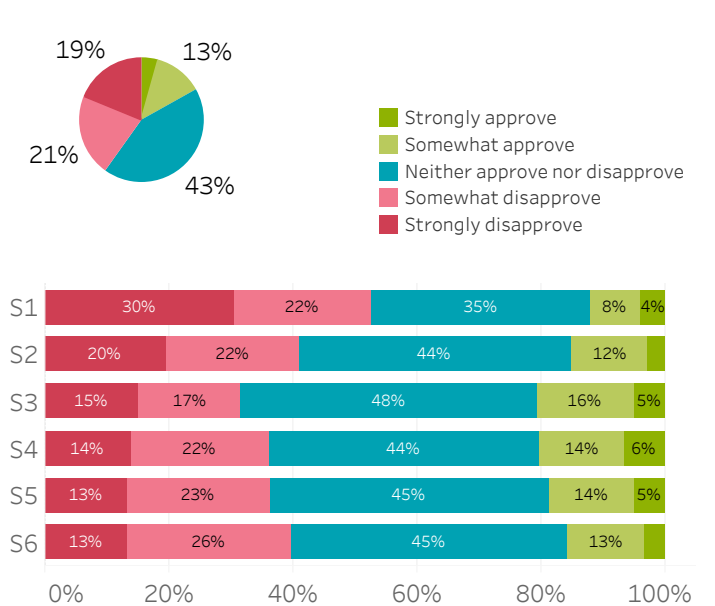
74% of those that identify as male disapprove somewhat or strongly of cigarette smoking.

This compares to 67% of those that identify as female.

8% of those in S4 approve somewhat or strongly of cigarette smoking. This is the highest of all age groups.

Disapproval of cigarette smoking is lowest in Kincardine & Mearns, where 65% disapprove somewhat or strongly of cigarette smoking.

How do you think others your age view cigarette smoking



40% think others their age disapprove somewhat or strongly of cigarette smoking.

49% of those that identify as male think others their age disapprove somewhat or strongly of cigarette smoking.

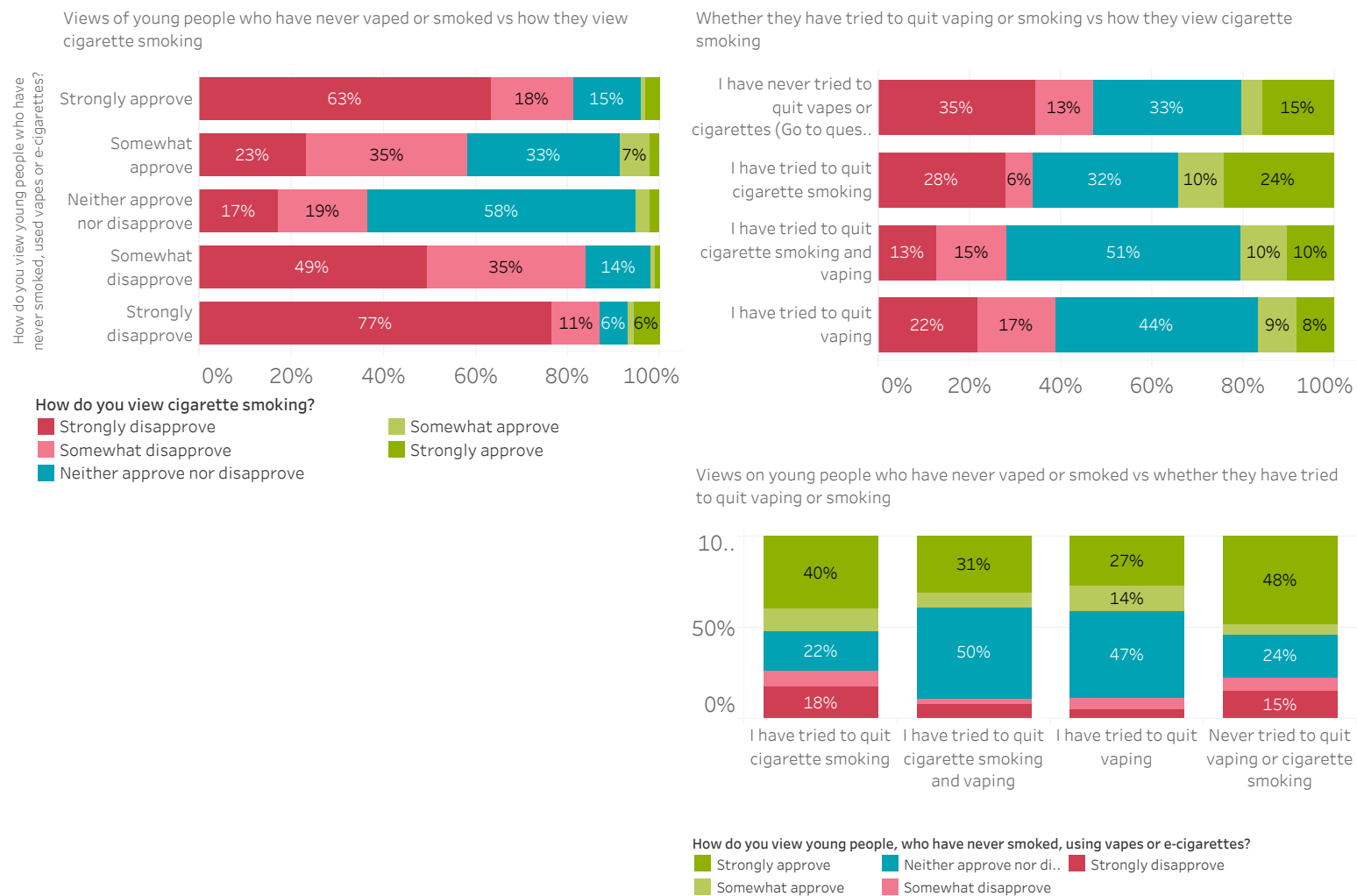
This compares to 33% of those that identify as female.

Comparison of perceptions between personal views and perceived views of peers

Personal views differed from perceived peer views, again indicating a possible discrepancy between private opinions and public behaviours. 70% disapprove somewhat or strongly of cigarette smoking compared to 40% that think that others their age would have the same opinion. This is the same across genders and age groups.

Awareness & Perceptions

Correlation of young people’s views on vaping, cigarette smoking and whether they have tried to quit vaping or smoking



Approval of Vaping use among non-smokers:

Approval of young people who have never vaped varies based on the participants’ experiences with quitting smoking or vaping. Those who have tried to quit cigarette smoking are more likely to strongly approve (**40%**) compared to those who have tried to quit both smoking and vaping (**31%**). Strong disapproval is higher among those who have never tried to quit smoking or vaping (**15%**) compared to other groups.

Views on Cigarette Smoking:

Views on cigarette smoking are influenced by whether the participants have tried to quit vaping or smoking. Those who have never tried to quit vaping or smoking show the highest strong disapproval (**35%**). Those who have tried to quit cigarette smoking and vaping show the lowest strong disapproval (**13%**) and highest neutral stance.

Correlation between approval of vaping and disapproval of cigarette smoking:

Participants who strongly approve of young people who have never vaped also strongly disapprove of cigarette smoking (**63%**). Conversely, those who strongly disapprove of young people who have never vaped are more likely to strongly disapprove of cigarette smoking (**77%**).

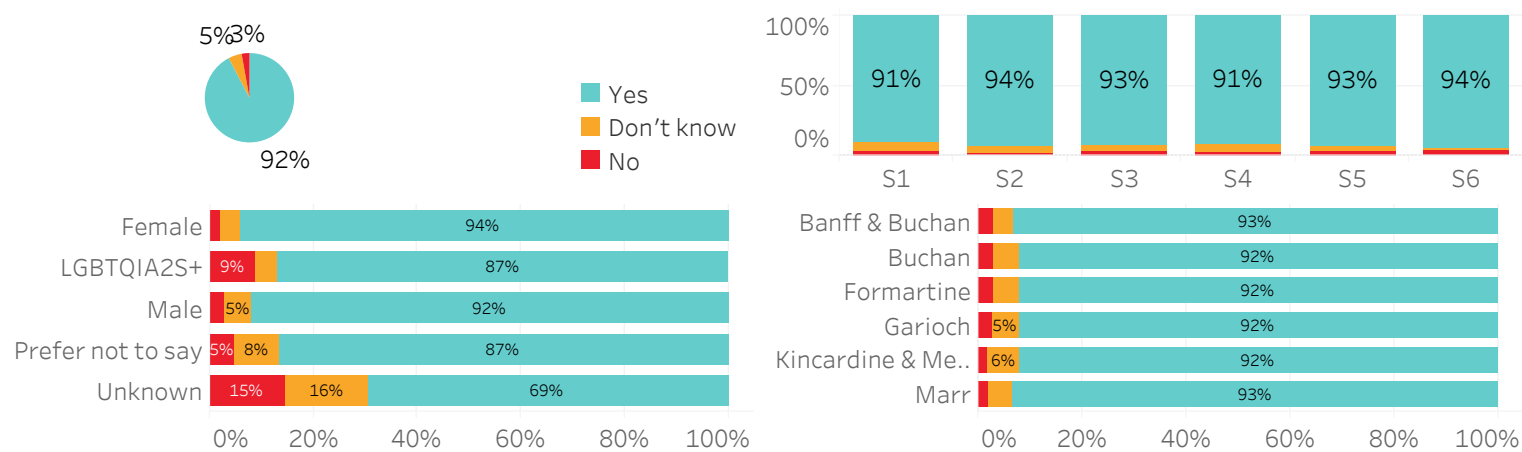
Summary

Initial exposure to vaping often came from friends, family or social media, with **42%** first exposed by friends or at school, **27%** from family and **18%** from social media. Views on young people vaping or smoking varied, with most expressing concern whilst others seeing it as trendy. The data consistently shows a discrepancy between personal views and assumed social norms across various aspects of vaping and smoking.

Experiences with quitting smoking or vaping significantly influence young people’s views on both vaping and cigarette smoking.

Health & Safety Awareness

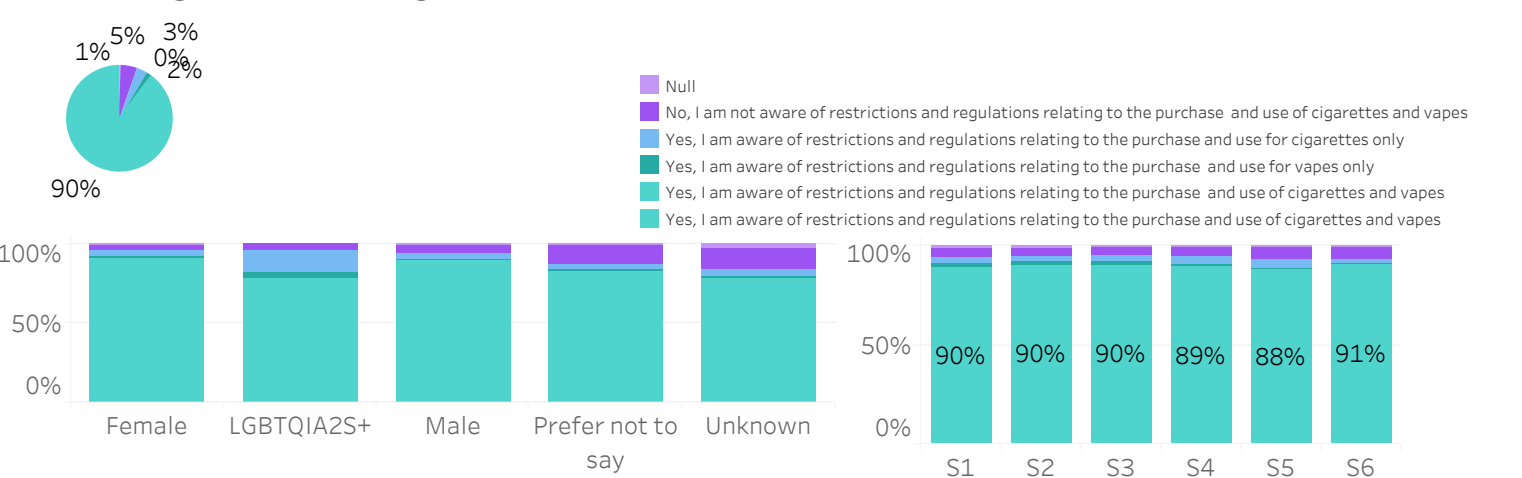
Awareness of health risks associated with vaping and cigarette smoking



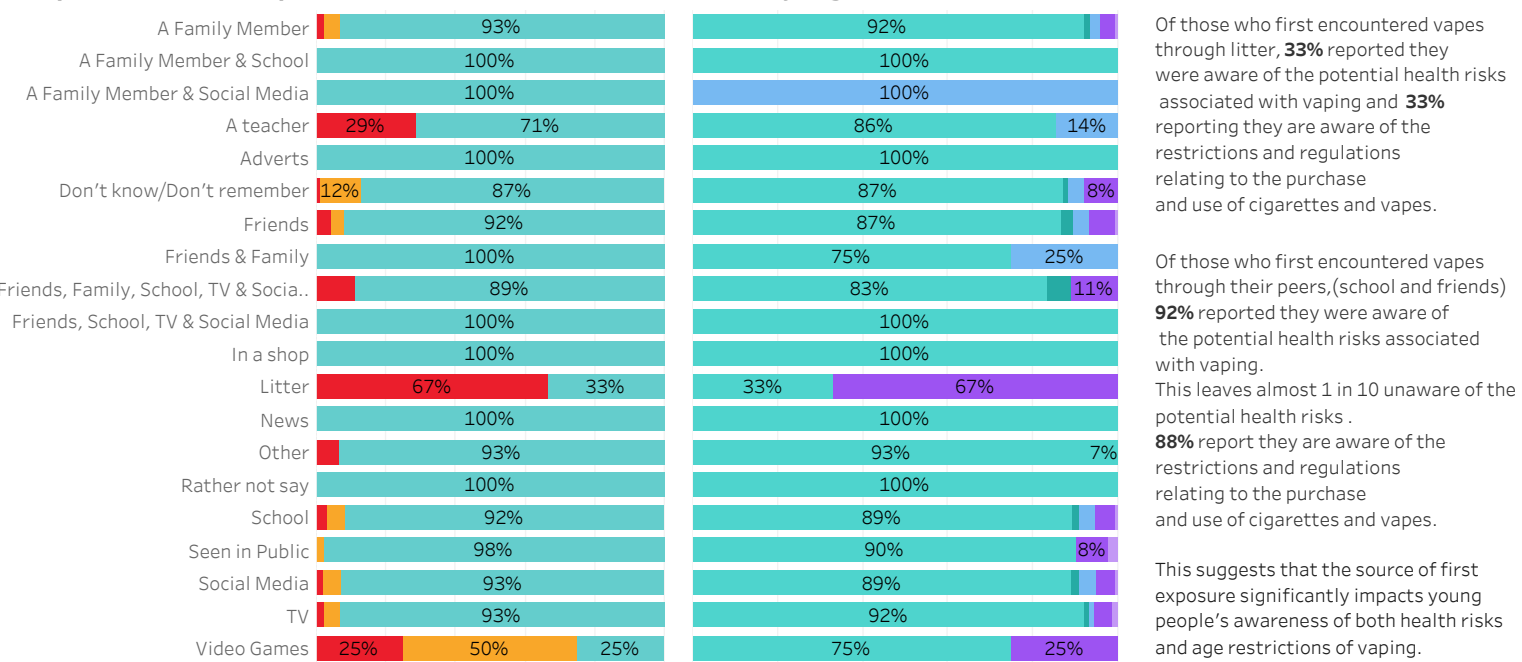
92% of young people are aware of the potential health risks associated with vaping, although some misconceptions persist.

Awareness of legal age restrictions and regulations was high, with 90% reporting they are aware of the restrictions and regulations relating to the purchase and use of cigarettes and vapes. 200 young people reported that they were not aware of any restrictions and regulations.

Awareness of age restrictions and regulations



Comparison of first exposure to awareness of health and safety regulations

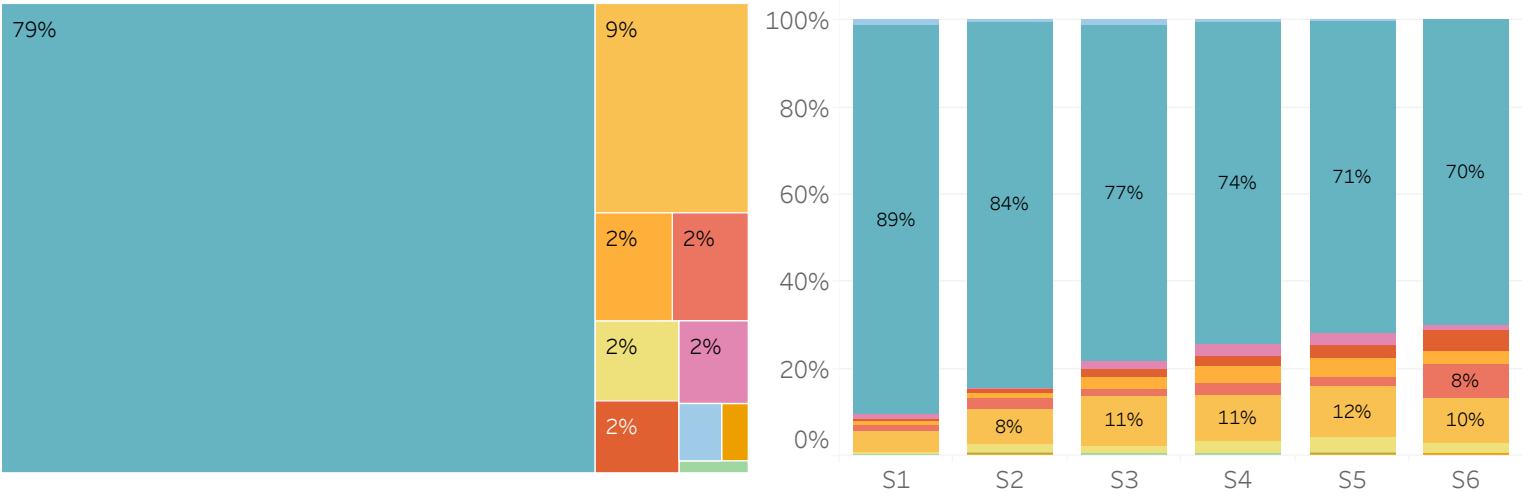


Summary

The widespread awareness of potential health risks suggests that public health campaigns and educational efforts have been largely effective in communicating the risks of vaping. Similarly, awareness of legal age restrictions and regulations is high indicating that most young people are informed about the legal framework designed to protect them from early initiation and potential addiction. However, the gap in awareness underscores the need for ongoing targeted education and communication efforts to ensure all young people understand the legal boundaries and health implications associated with vaping and smoking.

Nicotine Awareness

Current vape use



In summary, **11%** of young people reported vaping regularly. **3%** of young people regularly vape and smoke cigarettes. **2%** vape once a week or more. **2%** use vapes that sometimes or always contain nicotine.

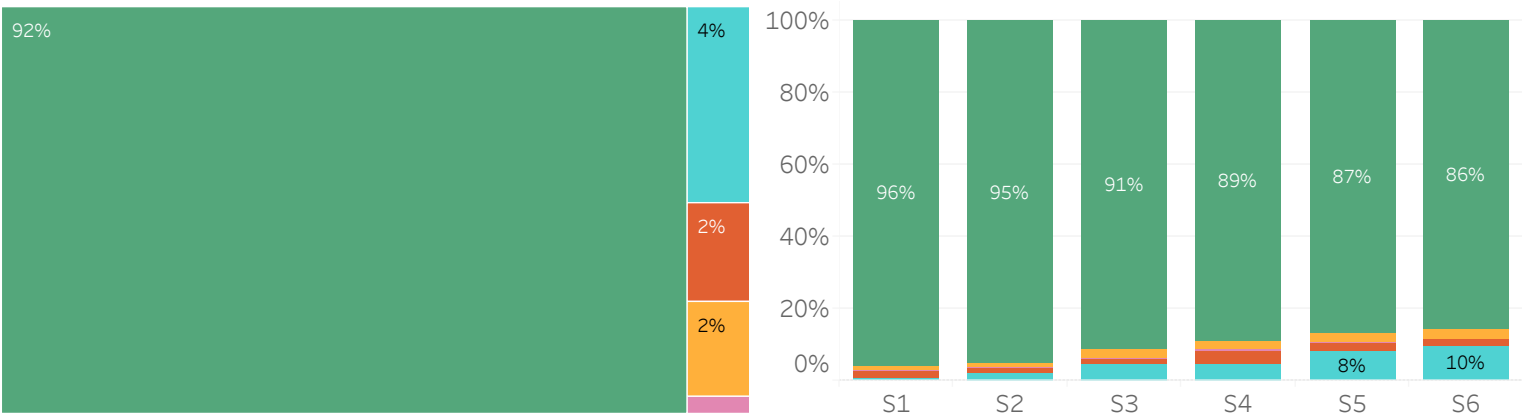
This highlights a segment of the younger population with a potentially higher risk of developing nicotine dependence and other issues.

9% report having vaped in the past, suggesting a significant turnover where some young people experiment with vaping but do not continue the habit in the long-term.

Among S6 students, **8%** of participants report they vape no more than once a month, suggesting vaping takes place socially in older age groups.

- I don't know if the vapes/e-cigarettes I use contain nicotine
- I have never tried a vape or e-cigarette (Go to Q16)
- I use a vape or e-cigarette and also smoke cigarettes everyday
- I use a vape or e-cigarette and also smoke cigarettes sometimes
- I use a vape or e-cigarette once a week or more
- I use a vape or e-cigarette sometimes but no more than once a month
- I used to use a vape but I don't use one now
- The vapes/e-cigarettes I use always contain nicotine
- The vapes/e-cigarettes I use never contain nicotine
- The vapes/e-cigarettes I use sometimes contain nicotine

Cigarette smoking



In terms of cigarette smoking, **4%** of young people currently smoke regularly. **4%** report they previously used to smoke.

This appears to increase with age. While only **3%** of S1 pupils regularly smoke cigarettes and **1%** report they are former smokers, these figures rise to

5% of S6 pupils regularly smoke cigarettes and **10%** report they previously used to smoke. This trends suggests that as students progress through school, their exposure to and engagement with smoking increases.

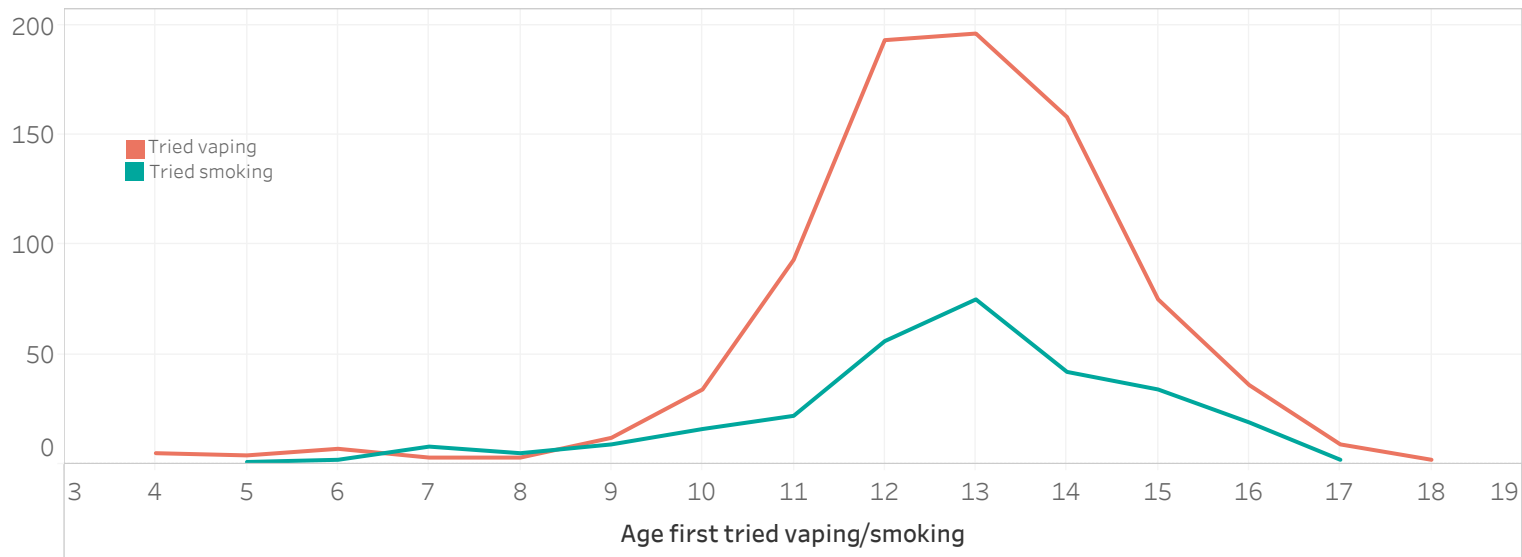
- I have never tried/smoked cigarettes (Go straight to Q25)
- I smoke between 1-9 cigarettes a week
- I smoke between 10-20 cigarettes a week
- I smoke more then 20 cigarettes a week
- I used to smoke cigarettes but I don't now

Summary

This data underscores the importance of targeted interventions that address both vaping and smoking behaviours among young people, particularly as they transition through different school years. It also highlights the need for continuous education on the risks associated with nicotine use and the importance of preventative meausres to curb the initiation and regular use of vapes and cigarettes among young people.

Behavioural Insights

Age of first vaping and cigarette smoking attempt



13 is the average age a young person tried vaping. This compares to **13** on average, where a young person tried smoking.

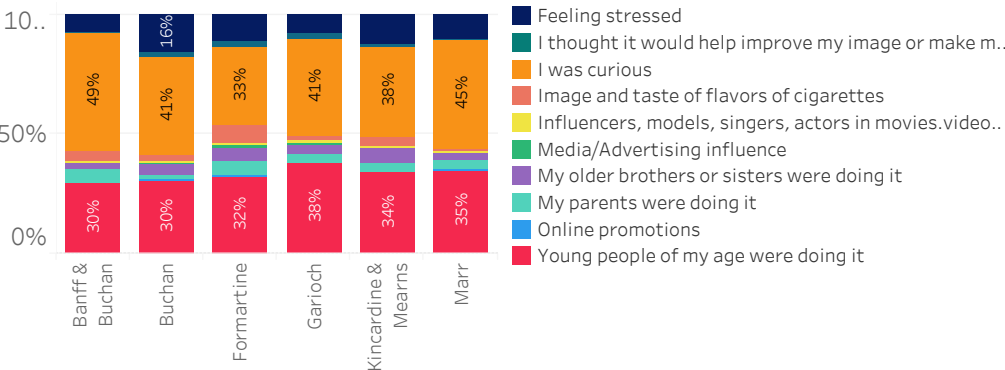
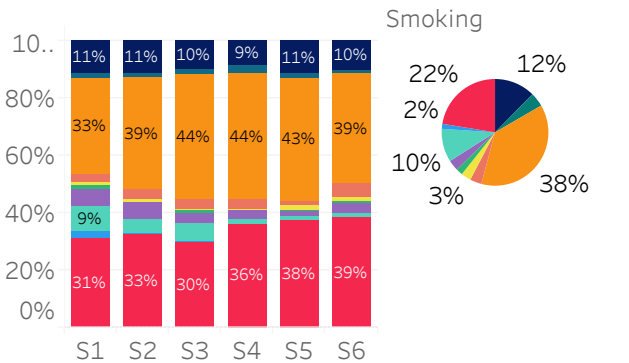
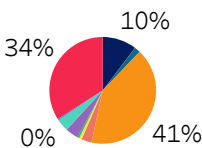
4 is the youngest age a young person tried vaping. This compares to **5** years old as the youngest a young person tried smoking.

18 is the oldest age a young person tried vaping. This compares to **17** years old as the oldest a young person tried smoking.

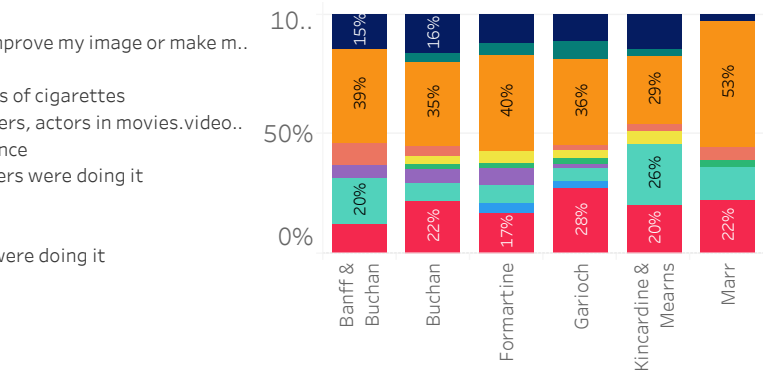
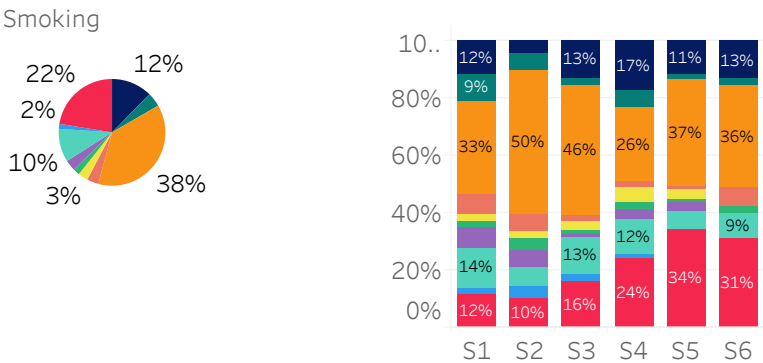
This early initiation of vaping and smoking is concerning, as it indicates that adolescents are experimenting with these behaviours during critical developmental years. The youngest instances for trying vaping and smoking, although rare, highlight the urgent need for parental and community awareness and intervention to prevent such early exposure.

Influences for trying vaping and cigarette smoking

Vaping



41% of those that tried vaping tried out of sheer curiosity.
33 young people reported they felt pressured to try from peer pressure
34% of young people that tried vaping reported it was because their peers were vaping.



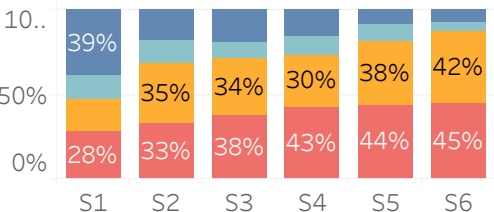
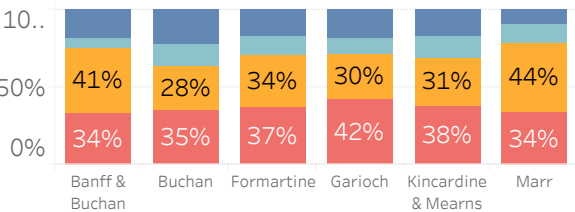
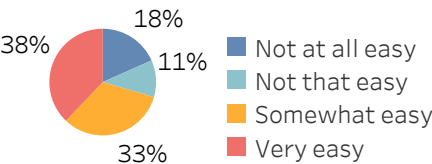
38% of those that tried smoking tried out of sheer curiosity.
9 young people reported they felt pressured to try from peer pressure
22% of young people that tried smoking reported it was because their peers were smoking.

Summary

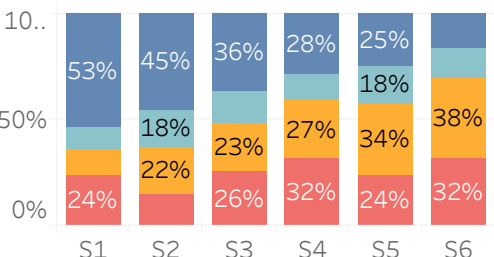
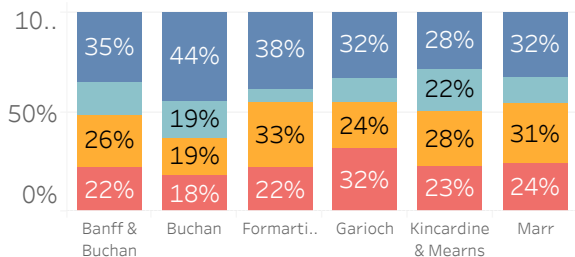
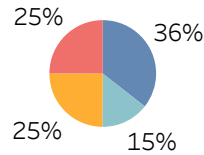
Motivations for trying vaping and smoking differ slightly but show common trends of curiosity and peer influence. These figures underscore the substantial role that social environments and peer groups play in the initiation of both vaping and smoking among young people.

Behavioural Insights
Access to vapes and cigarettes

Vapes



Cigarettes



Access to vapes and cigarettes appears relatively easy for many, in which **70%** of those that access vapes reporting they find it somewhat or very easy to access vapes, **38%** finding it very easy to access vapes.

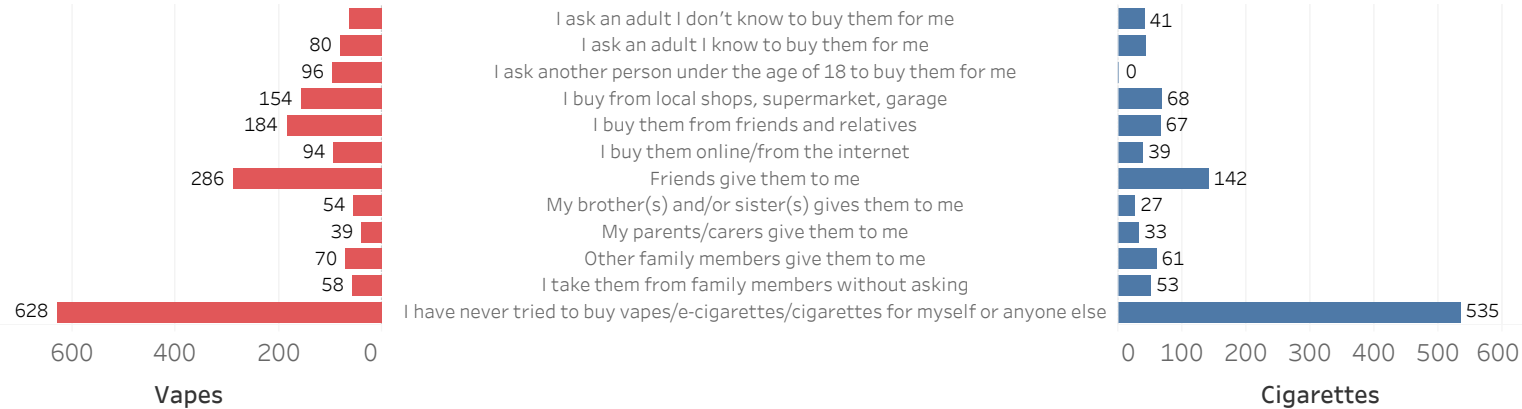
Access appears to become easier with increasing age. Of the S1 pupils that access vapes, **47%** reported they find it somewhat or very easy.

This increased to **88%** for S6 pupils.

Access to cigarettes, while not as prevalent as access to vapes, still poses a significant issue.

50% of those that access cigarettes reporting they find it somewhat or very easy to. **25%** finding it very easy to access cigarettes. These figures also increased with increasing age.

Sources for obtaining vapes and cigarettes



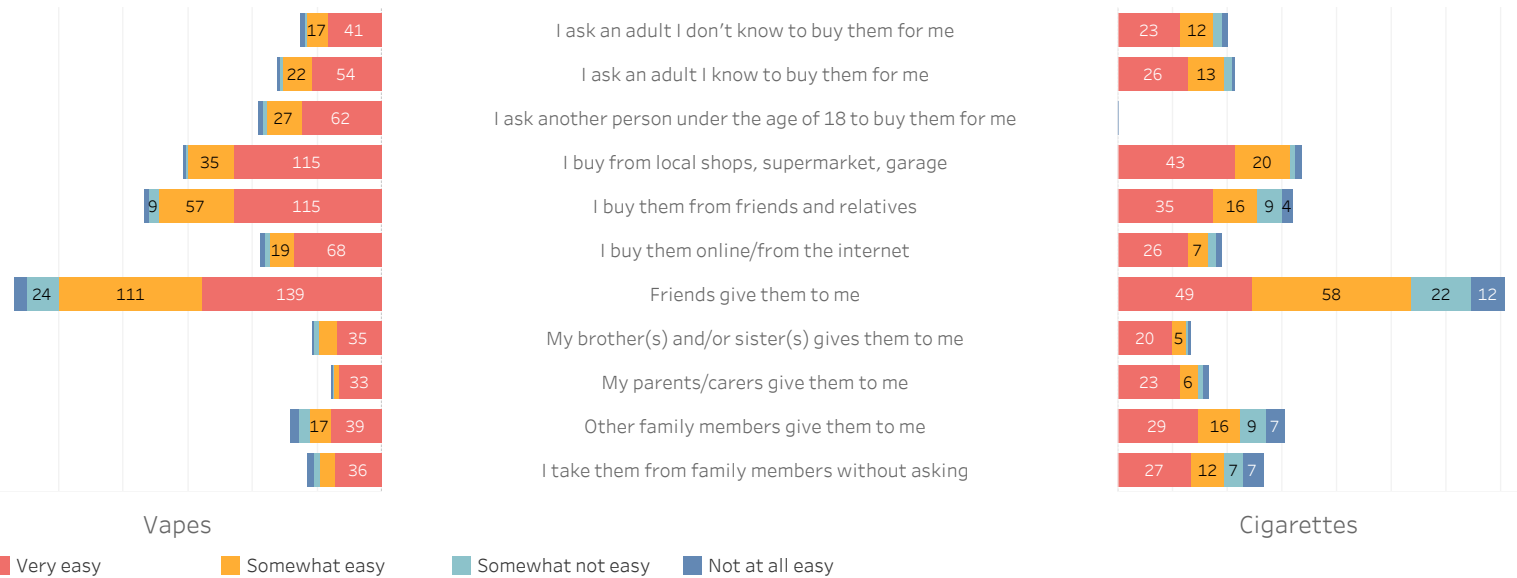
Young people primarily obtain vapes and cigarettes through their social networks.

For vapes, **40%** buy or get them from their friends. **20%** ask someone else (whether an adult they know, don't know or other person aged under 18) to buy vapes for them. **13%** source them from local shops.

Similarly for cigarettes, **36%** of those that access cigarettes buy or get them from their friends. **15%** ask someone else, to purchase them and **12%** source them from local shops.

Behavioural Insights

Sources for obtaining vapes and cigarettes vs access to vapes and cigarettes



Most sources are considered somewhat or very easy to access, with the highest ease of access being when vapes are given to young people from friends. Other "easy" sources include buying them from local shops, buying them from friends and relatives, buying them online and also asking someone else to buy them for them.

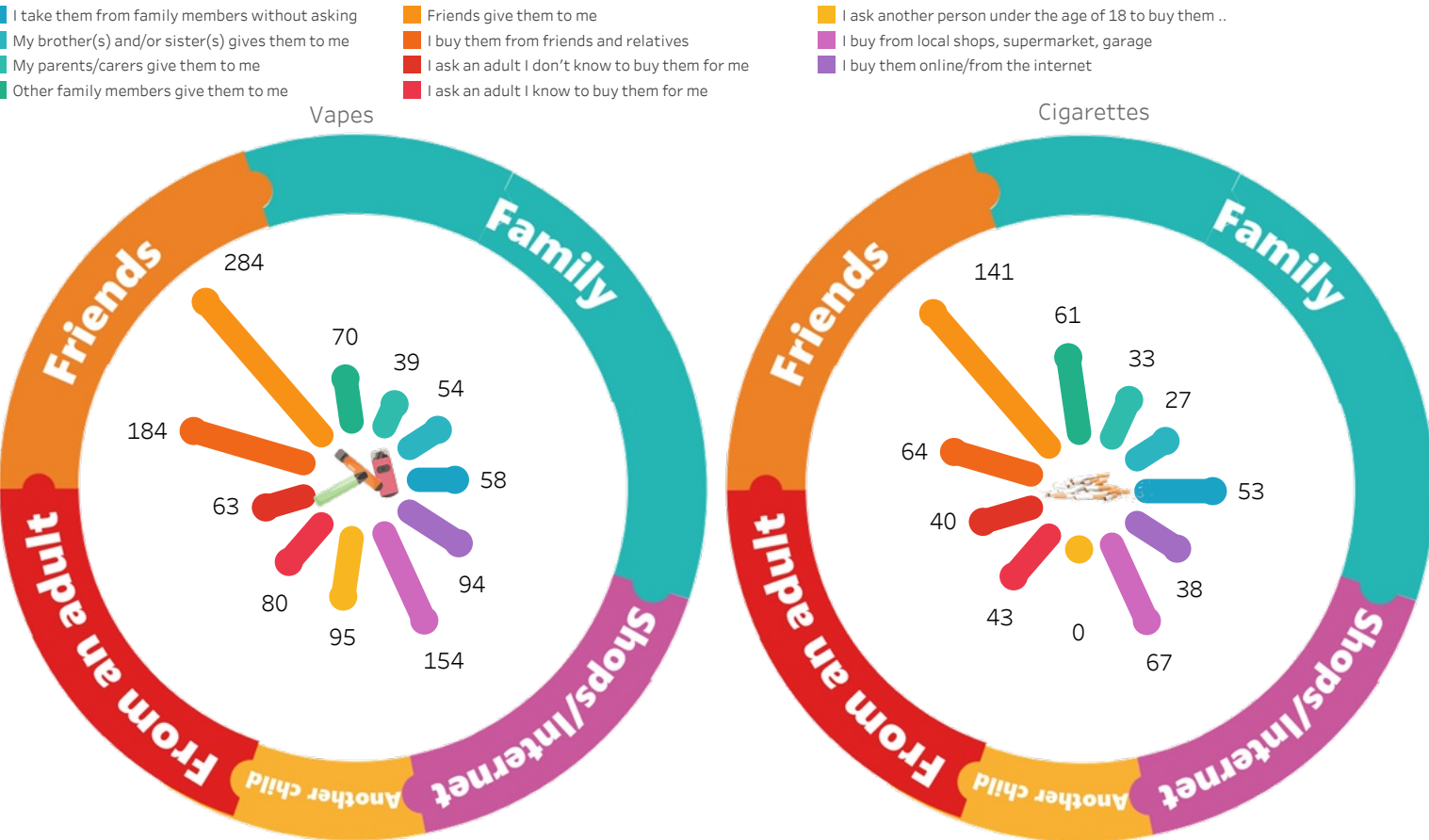
As regards cigarettes, the highest "easy" access is from friends. Other sources of relatively easy access include buying them from local shops and buying from friends and relatives.

Both vapes and cigarettes are perceived as easy to buy from local shops. Access online is also fairly easy. Family influence also appears high, with young people either being given or taking vapes from family members fairly easily, suggesting a high level of availability within households. However overall, social sources are the highest for easy access of vapes and cigarettes.

In summary, young people find it generally easier to access vapes compared to cigarettes. Vapes are more frequently perceived as easy to obtain across a wide range of sources.

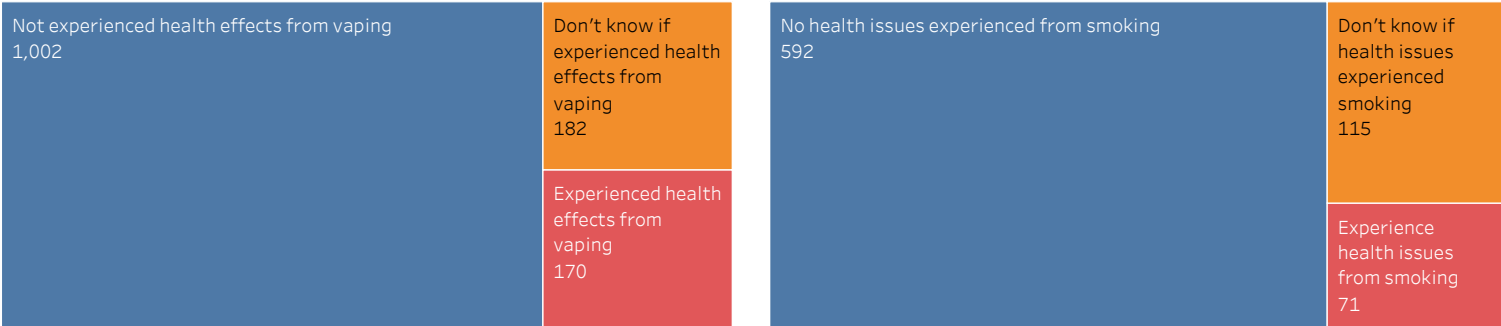
Summary

Access to vapes and cigarettes appears relatively easy for many, across a wide range of sources, highlighting the need for stricter controls and enforcement, education and community engagement. By addressing a combination of these areas, we can work towards significantly reducing the ease of access to vapes and cigarettes for young people and promote healthier lifestyles.



Health Impact

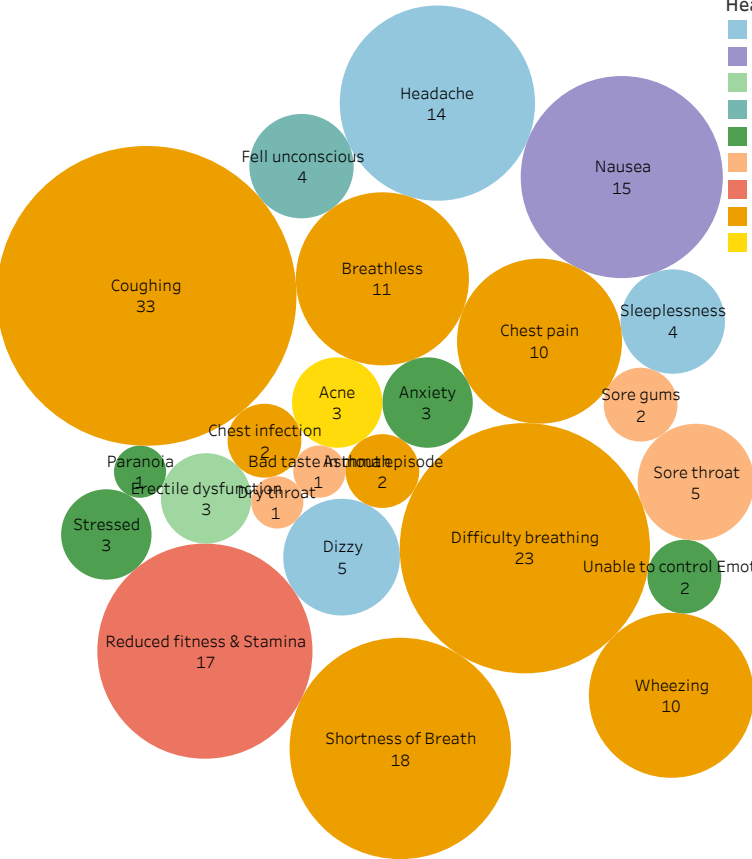
Health issues and side effects experienced from vaping and cigarette smoking



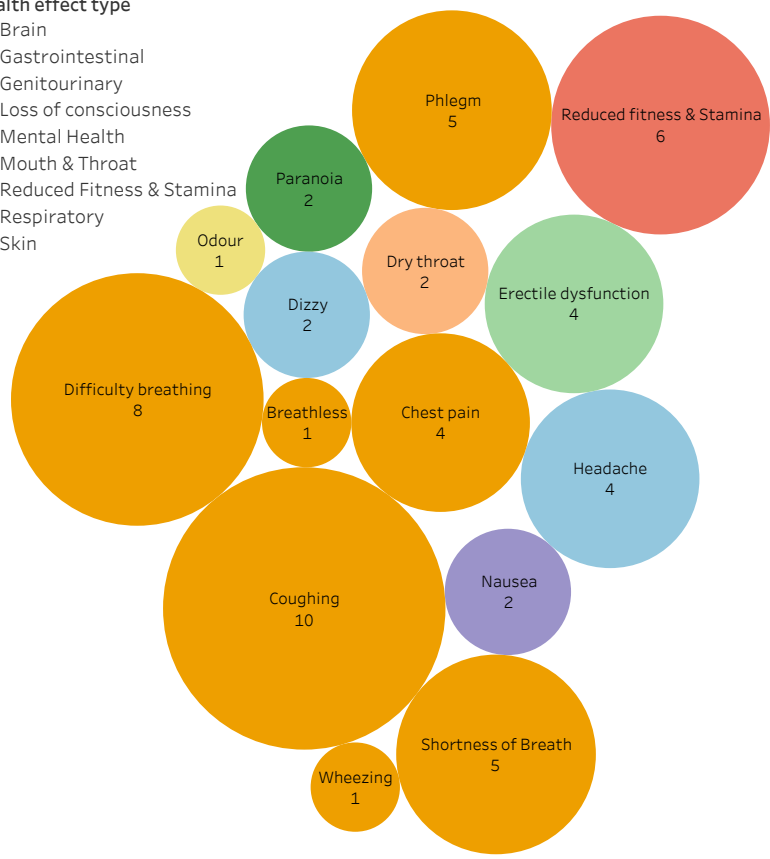
13% reported they experienced health issues from using vapes. Similarly for cigarettes, 9% reported they experienced health issues.

Description of specific health problems

Vaping



Smoking



The data reveals a wide range of health effects reported by young people who vape, spanning respiratory, mental health, fitness, genitourinary, skin, dental, neurological and gastrointestinal categories. The prevalence of these effects underscores the potential health risks associated with vaping, particularly with young people.

Respiratory Effects

The most frequently reported health issues are respiratory-related, highlighting the immediate impact of vaping on the respiratory system. The most common effects reported from both vaping and smoking included coughing, difficulty breathing and shortness of breath. Overall, vaping appears to cause more severe and varied respiratory symptoms compared to smoking. These could have long-term implications for their respiratory health.

Reduced Fitness and Stamina

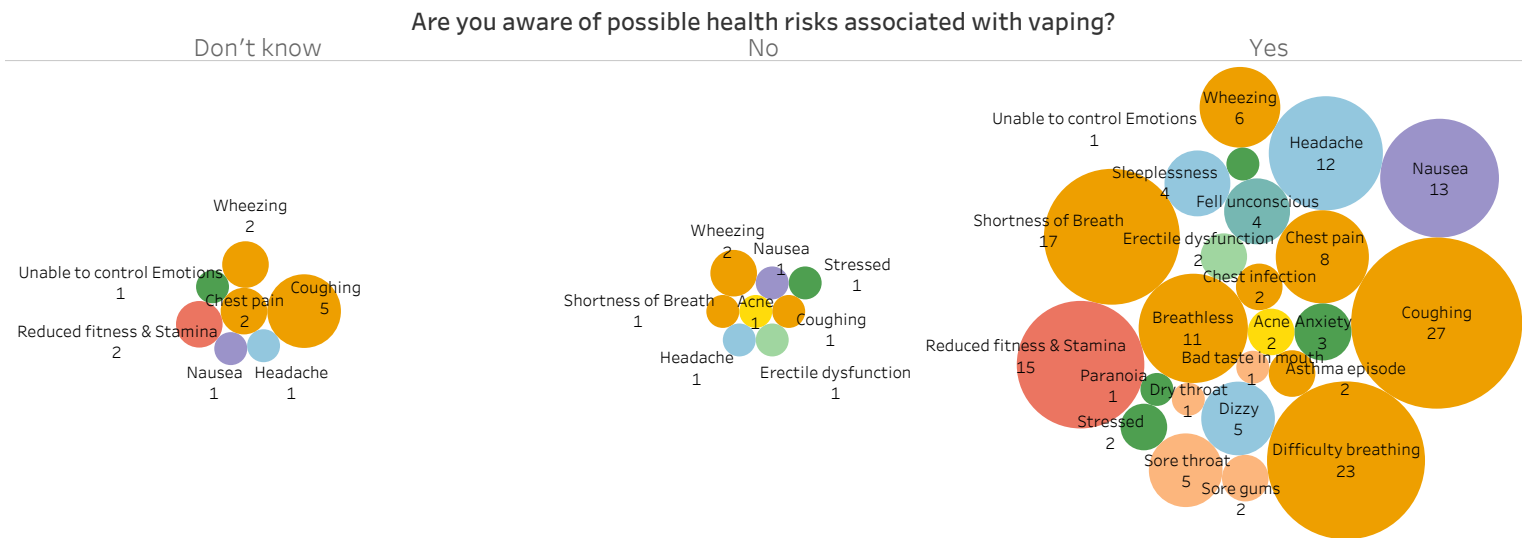
17 young people reported experiencing reduced fitness and stamina due to vaping. Both vaping and smoking were reported to negatively impact fitness and stamina. This could have significant implications for overall physical health and athletic performance.

Mental Health

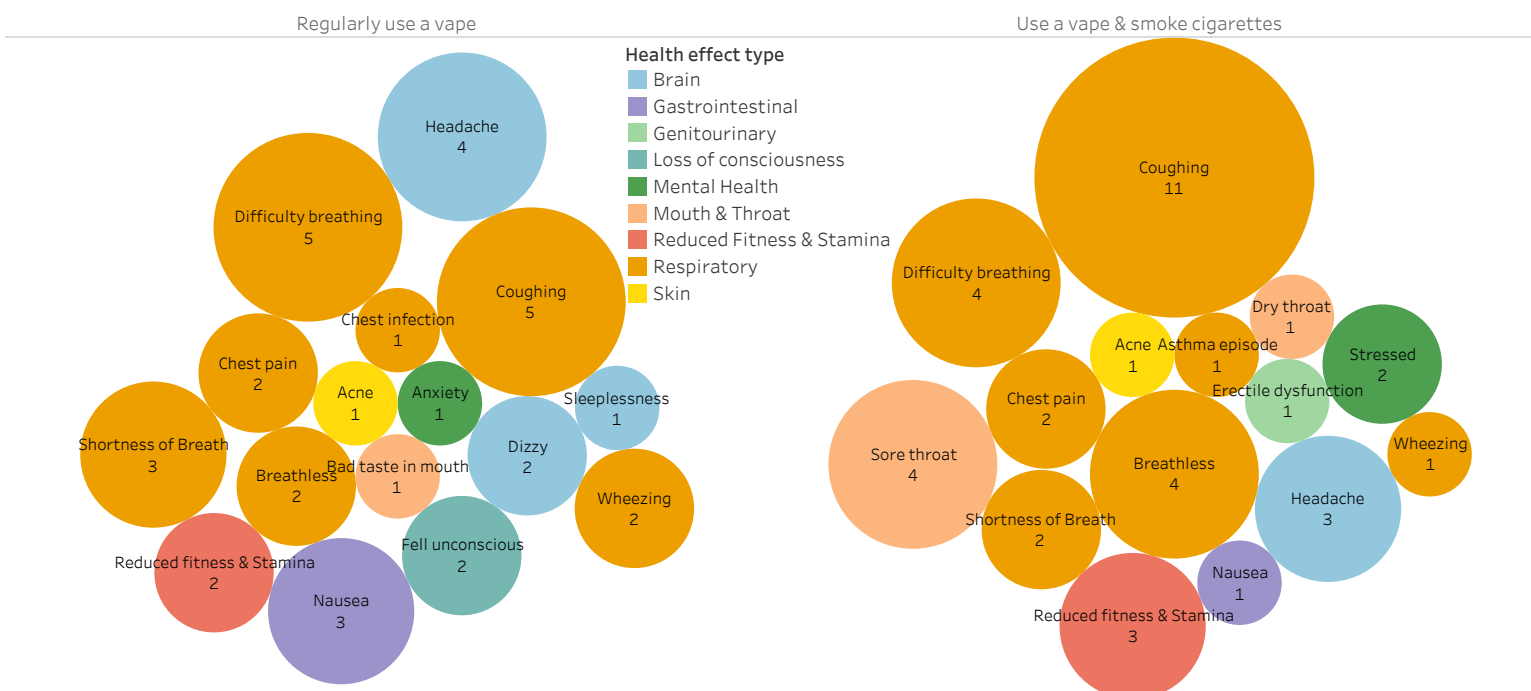
Vaping appears to also affect mental health. Whilst less prevalent than respiratory effects, these mental health effects are concerning and suggest a need for further investigation. Vaping is associated with more mental health issues than smoking, suggesting a potentially higher psychological impact

Correlation of awareness of potential health risks of vaping, whether the young person has experienced any health effects and vape use

Whether the young person was aware of possible health risks associated with vaping versus whether they experienced any health effects



Those who are aware of the health risks associated with vaping reported a broader range and higher number of health effects compared to those not aware or unsure. Awareness seems to correlate with a broader and more frequent reporting of adverse health effects, emphasising the importance of education and awareness campaigns in helping young people identify and address health issues related to vaping.

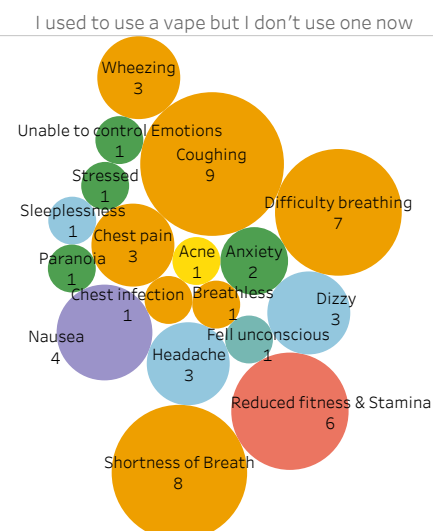


Respiratory issues dominate the most reported health effects among regular vape users, with coughing and difficulty breathing the most common effects.

Those who vape and smoke cigarettes reported more health effects of a greater variety compared to regular vapers. These included coughing, difficulty breathing and breathlessness. This group also reported unique issues such as dry and sore throats and asthma episodes, suggesting a potentially higher severity of health effects.

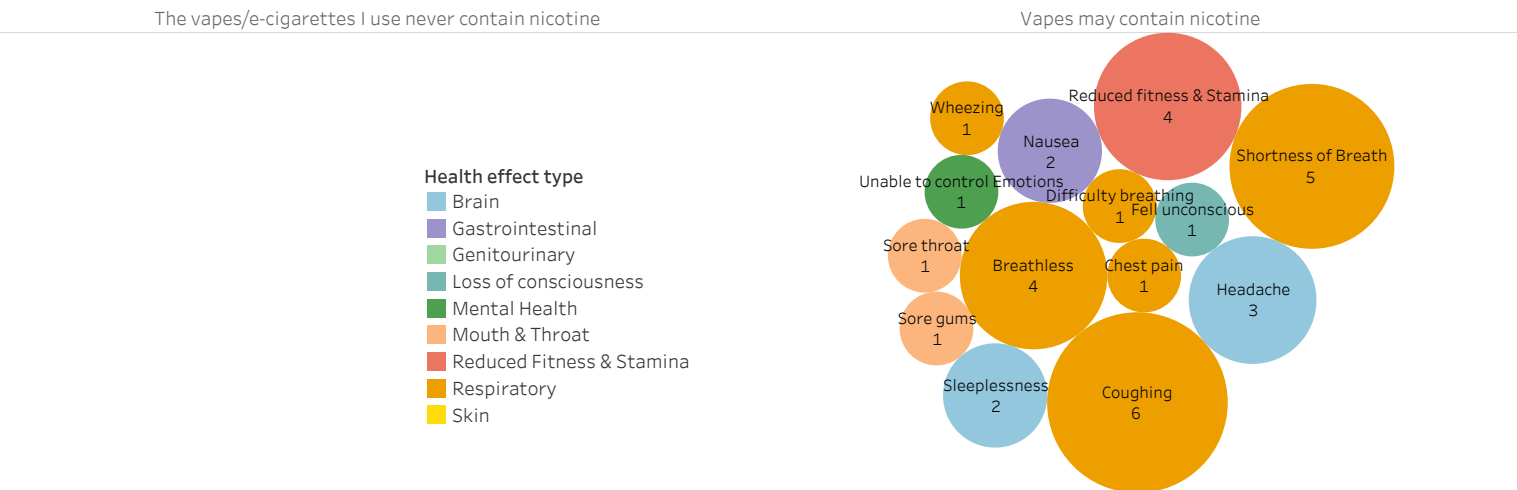
Those who used to vape reported significant respiratory issues including shortness of breath, coughing and difficulty breathing. They also reported a number of mental health issues including anxiety and paranoia. Other notable effects included reduced fitness and stamina, nausea and headaches.

From these charts, it appears that combining vaping and smoking increases health risks. Former vapers reported a broad range of health effects including mental health which may indicate these effects linger after stopping vaping. All groups reported respiratory effects, emphasising the potential long-term impacts of vaping on young people's health.



Health Impact

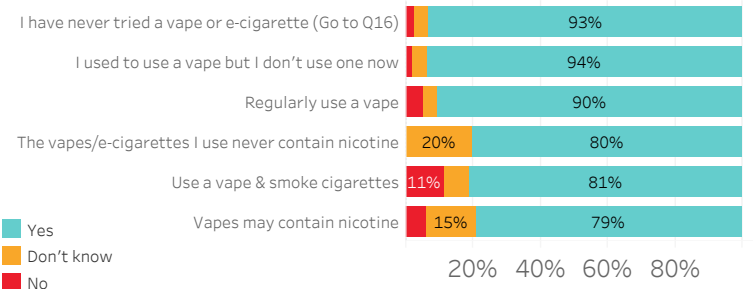
Correlation of awareness of potential health risks of vaping, whether the young person has experienced any health effects and vape use



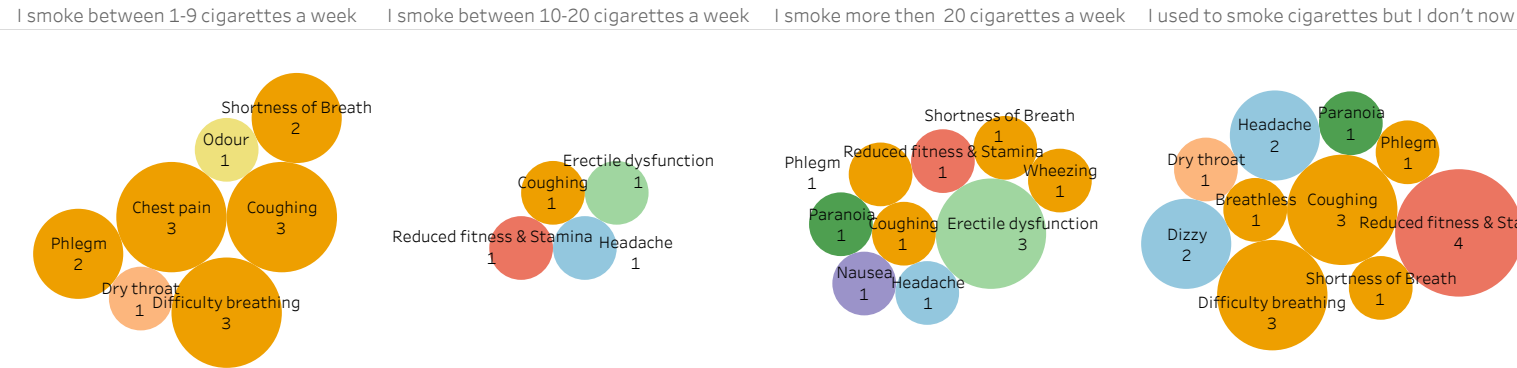
Those that reported the vape they use contains or may contain nicotine reported a range of health effects from vaping, most commonly respiratory issues. Headaches and sleeplessness were also reported, along with reduced fitness and stamina.

The highest awareness is among those who used to vape but don't use one now and those who have never tried vaping. The lowest awareness is among those who use vapes that contain or may contain nicotine and those who believe their vapes do not contain nicotine.

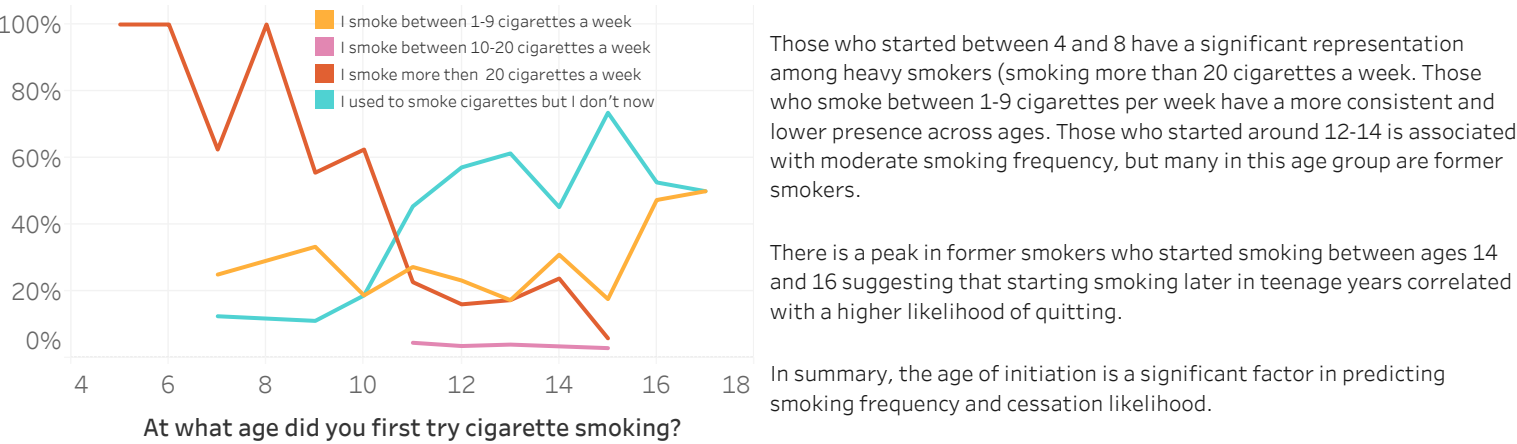
The highest uncertainty of risks is from those using nicotine-free vapes, possibly due to a misconception that nicotine-free products are harmless. The highest proportion of young people who are unaware of the health risks are those that vape and smoke cigarettes.



Correlation of age the young person first tried smoking, whether the young person has experienced any health effects from smoking and smoking use

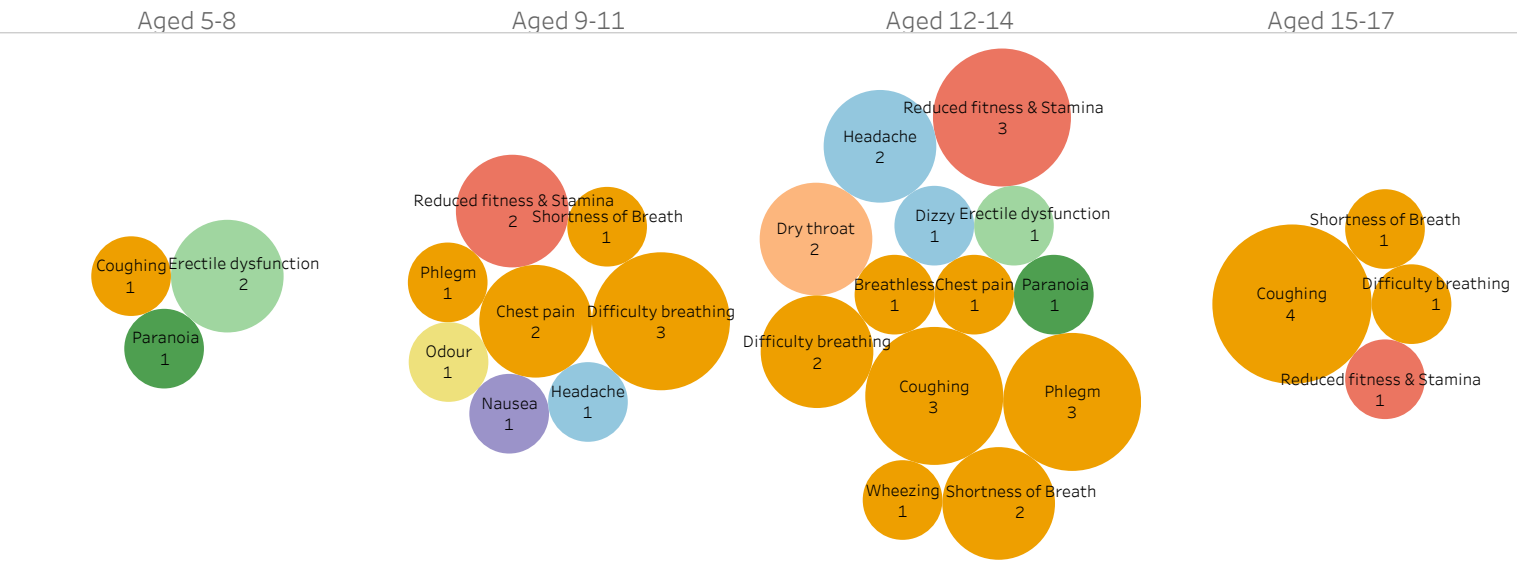


Health effects reported correlate with smoking frequency. Those that smoke between 1-9 cigarettes a week report mainly respiratory issues including coughing. With increasing smoking frequency, a broader range of health effects are reported, including mental health, reduced fitness and stamina, nausea and headaches. Those that used to smoke reported a wide range of health effects, with reduced fitness and stamina, difficulty breathing and coughing the most common.



Health Impact

Correlation of age the young person first tried smoking, whether the young person has experienced any health effects from smoking and smoking use



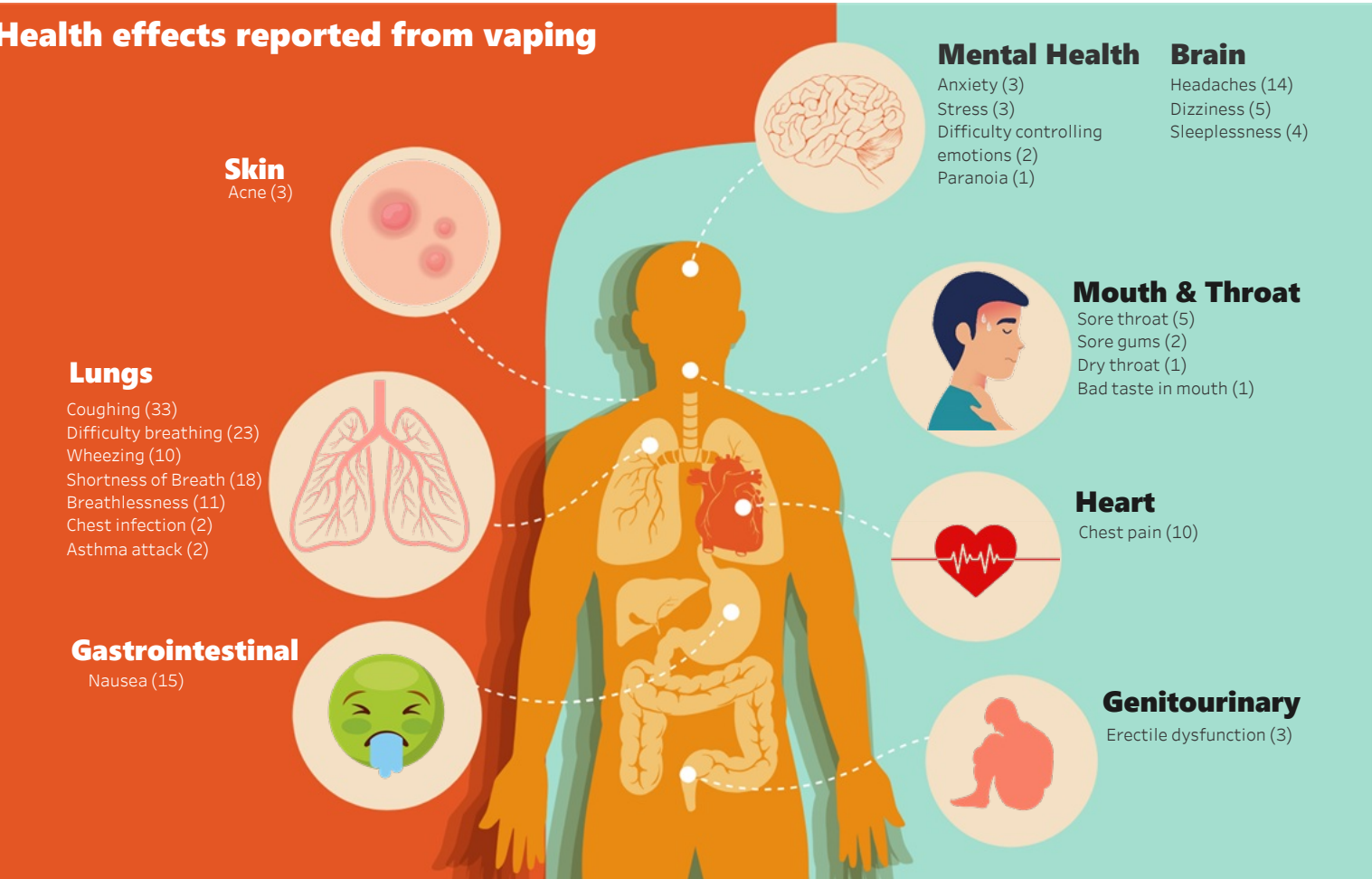
Health effect type

- Brain
- Gastrointestinal
- Genitourinary
- Loss of consciousness
- Mental Health
- Mouth & Throat
- Reduced Fitness & Stamina
- Respiratory
- Skin

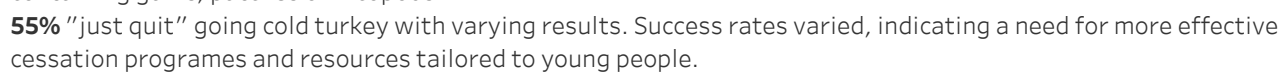
Summary

There is a clear correlation between the age of smoking initiation and the severity and variety of health effects experienced from young people from smoking. Early starters tend to experience fewer health effects, while those who start smoking during their teenage years report a wider range of issues, particularly respiratory problems and reduced physical fitness. This highlights the critical impact if smoking initiation age on long-term health outcomes.

The data reveals a significant health impact from both vaping and smoking among young people, with a wide range of health effects reported. Respiratory issues dominate the reported effects for both habits, but vaping is associated with more severe and varied symptoms. Reduced fitness and mental health issues are also prevalent amongst vapers. The correlation between awareness and reported health effects underscores the need for continued education and awareness efforts to help young people understand and mitigate the risks associated with vaping and smoking. Additionally, the age of smoking initiation plays a crucial role in determining the severity and variety of health effects, highlighting the importance of preventing early initiation to protect long-term health.



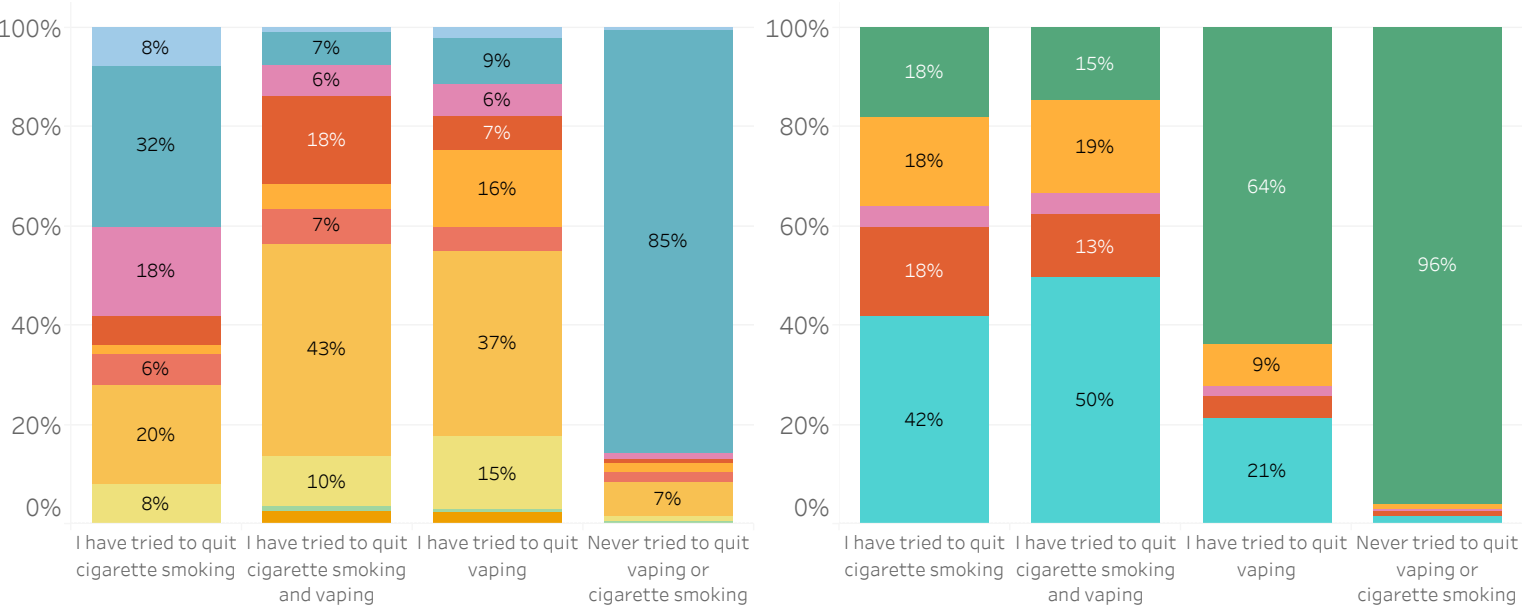
Experiences and Success Rates in attempting to quit

[illegible]

Method	Successful (%)	Unknown (%)	Not successful (%)
Everything	0	0	9
Just quit	71	19	18
Locked vapes away	0	0	1
Reduced usage	0	1	0
Stopped buying	2	7	1
Stopped spending time with fellow vapers	2	8	2
Stopped thinking about vaping	1	3	1
Substitute - Alcohol	0	3	0
Substitute - Drugs	0	1	0
Substitute - Exercise	0	5	0
Substitute - Food	3	3	4
Substitute - Gum	2	15	2
Substitute - nicopods	1	2	0
Substitute - nicotine patches	0	2	0
Substitute - non nicotine vapes	0	1	0
Substitute - vaping instead of smoking	0	2	0
Support app	0	1	0
Support from friends & family	0	2	0

Quitting Attempts and Methods

Correlation between vape use, cigarette use and whether the young person has tried quitting vape or cigarettes



Please read the following statements on vaping or e-cigarettes and select the option that best desc..

- I don't know if the vapes/e-cigarettes I use contain nicotine
- I have never tried a vape or e-cigarette (Go to Q16)
- I use a vape or e-cigarette and also smoke cigarettes everyday
- I use a vape or e-cigarette and also smoke cigarettes sometimes
- I use a vape or e-cigarette once a week or more
- I use a vape or e-cigarette sometimes but no more than once a month
- I used to use a vape but I don't use one now
- The vapes/e-cigarettes I use always contain nicotine
- The vapes/e-cigarettes I use never contain nicotine
- The vapes/e-cigarettes I use sometimes contain nicotine

Please read the following statements on cigarettes and select the option that best de..

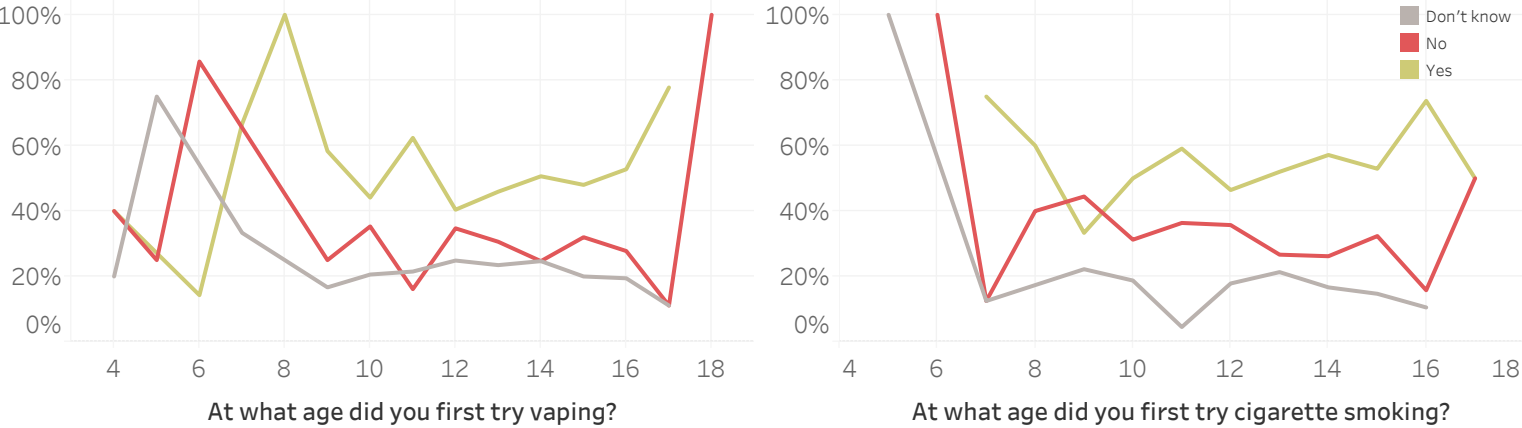
- I have never tried/smoked cigarettes (Go straight to Q25)
- I smoke between 1-9 cigarettes a week
- I smoke between 10-20 cigarettes a week
- I smoke more than 20 cigarettes a week
- I used to smoke cigarettes but I don't now

Those who have never tried to quit vaping or cigarette smoking have the highest awareness of the health risks (85%) and the lowest usage of vapes. Those that have tried to quit both vaping and cigarette smoking show the highest frequency of using a vape every day (18%) and sometimes but no more than once a month (43%). Among those that have tried to quit vaping, 37% still use a vape once a week or more and 15% use it sometimes but no more than once a month, indicating a significant struggle with quitting.

Similarly with cigarette smoking, quitting attempts are common across all levels of smoking frequency. 21% those that have tried quit vaping used to smoke, indicating successful cessation of smoking but ongoing challenges with vaping.

This data reveals that attempts to quit smoking or vaping are associated with varying levels of ongoing vape use. Those who have tried to quit both vaping and smoking are most likely to continue using vapes frequently, suggesting a potential substitution. This highlights the need for ongoing, targeted support for quitting.

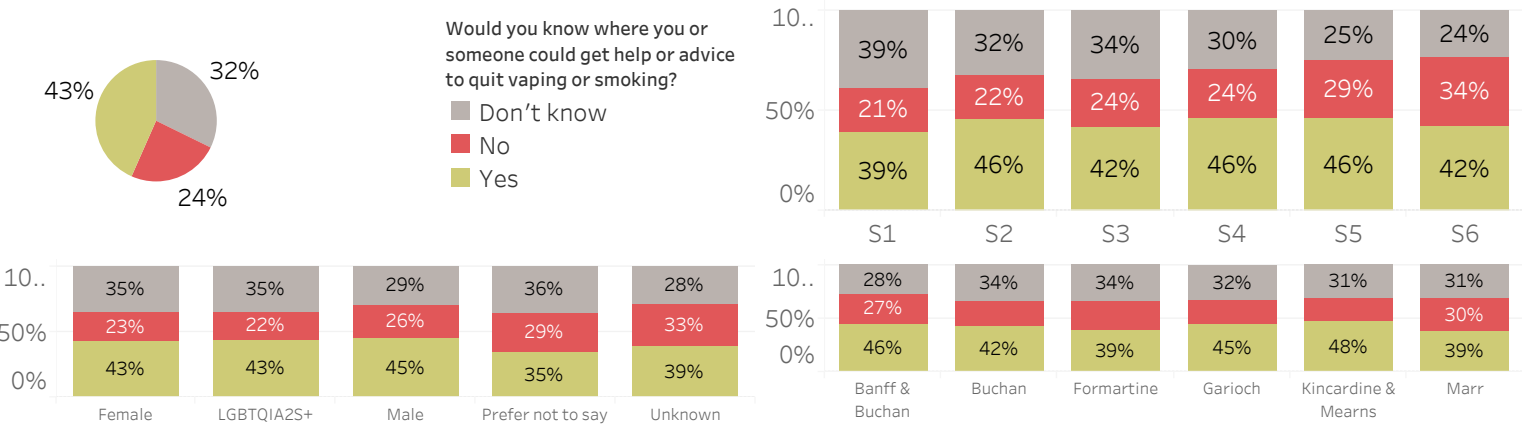
Correlation between which age the young person started vaping or smoking and whether they are aware where they could get advice to quit vaping or smoking



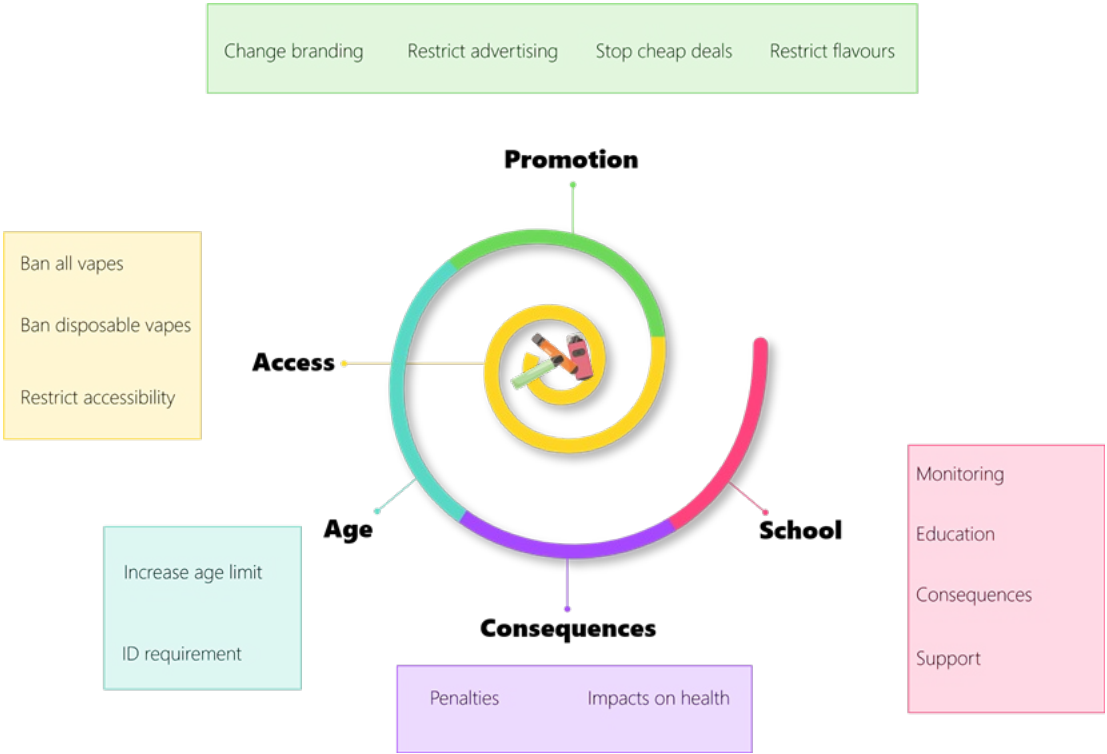
Young people who start vaping or smoking at a very early age are less likely to know where to get help or advice to quit. Awareness of quitting resources improves as they get older, with significant increases in awareness observed in late teenage years. This suggests a need for targeted education and support for younger age groups to ensure they have the necessary information and support to quit.

Preventative Measures

Awareness of resources for quitting



Suggested effective measures for reducing vaping and smoking among young people



Young people suggested a range of potential effective measures to reduced vaping and smoking in young people. This has been grouped into five main themes: access, promotion, age, consequences and schools.

Access:

1 in 4 young people believe that there should be a national ban on vaping (24%), with participants noting "unless there's a full ban, people will always find a way to vape underage". Disposable vapes were also suggested to be banned. A number of participants also suggested restricting availability of vapes, including through prescription-only availability, increasing prices and making vapes "less visible" in shops: "Put them in chemists for people stopping smoking.... make vapes more expensive and harder to get"

Promotion:

Participants suggested restricting vaping advertising could reduce the influence on young people, "social media/trends influence young people quite a lot, so if there was less advertising, not as many influencers/celebrities smoking" Changing branding was also suggested, such as making vapes less attractive to young people: "They should have covers like fags and change the packaging so they are less appealing to kids". A number of participants suggested stopping "cheap deals" on vapes in shops, with some suggesting "vapes are advertised on posters, shops do deals 2 for a tenner 3 for £12, stop that". Lastly, 4% suggested changing, reducing or ensuring there was no flavour at all. 4% suggested making them less colourful and more 'bland'.

Age:

5% suggested that there should be a higher age limit, with shops requiring an ID to be shown in order to buy s vape: "NZ approach: increase legal age to buy them each year until nobody can legally buy them... make people who purchase them show ID".

Preventative Measures

Suggested effective measures for reducing vaping and smoking among young people

Consequences:

6% believe there should be stricter regulations and greater enforcement of the law. Some participants suggested fines, "whoever sells vapes to people underage should get a large fine and a ban to sell them... fine people who are under age vapers, increase action taken against vaping underage".

The consequences of vaping on health were also emphasised, 1 in 20 participants believe there should be a campaign/education awareness highlighting the negative impacts: "strongly emphasising that vapes are just as bad as cigarettes.... show all the health consequences, showing people what happens to ur body when u vape".

Schools:

A number of participants suggested greater monitoring in schools, such as vape detectors or the ability for staff to search those suspected with carrying vapes: "allowing teachers or trusted adults to search the student/bag if suspected of using vapes or cigarettes...vape detectors in the toilets would be useful... or in entrance of schools".

Having more education in school on vaping, such as "bring in a NHS nurse/doctor to explain to the kids why vaping is bad... posters and information around the school about the dangers of vaping... teach it in primary school and highlight the health risks".

A number suggested more consequences at school for vaping, including "disciplinary measures when caught vaping... speak to parents if their child vapes or smokes... expel people who smoke/vape with a zero tolerance policy".

Lastly, more support was suggested, including "amnesty bins... accessible support for those trying to quit...making sure people are feeling OK, mental and physical".

Conclusion

The survey reveals a complex landscape of youth vaping and smoking habits, characterised by their easy access, significant health impacts and awareness of risks and regulations. However, the persistent misconceptions and the ease of obtaining these substances highlight the need for targeted interventions. These should include stricter enforcement of regulations, comprehensive education campaigns, and robust support systems to help quitting. Addressing these issues together can help mitigate the long-term health risks associated with vaping and smoking among young people in Aberdeenshire.