



Hull  
City Council

*What do we know about children and  
young people*

# VAPING?

Hull and East Riding of Yorkshire  
Summary Report 2023

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## Background

During 2022 several calls were received by Hull City Council, Public Health and Public Protection requesting information and advice on the use of vapes by children and young people and to report underage sales of vaping products. SmokeFree Hull, our local Stop Smoking Service also received calls requesting support to quit vaping. At the same time there were several articles in the press raising concerns that vapes are a gateway into smoking.

The evidence base around attitudes towards vaping amongst young people is slim, despite Action on Smoking and Health recently conducting a survey <https://ash.org.uk/resources/view/use-of-e-cigarettes-among-young-people-in-great-britain> of young people across Great Britain. To understand these attitudes better and inform our system response a local survey was conducted. The East Riding of Yorkshire Council were invited to join the survey

## Summary of Key Findings



**5,319** students aged **11 to 17** years from Hull and the East Riding of Yorkshire took part in the survey

**Over 100**  
The rate of those who had tried vaping was much lower at 26.5% (28.4% girls and 24.7% boys)

Awareness of vaping was high with a standardised rate of 94.3%

13.6% of young people who had never smoked had tried an e-cigarette

Vaping was higher among regular smokers 73.6% and former smokers at 48.8% but only 2.9% of non-smokers vape regularly



**35%** of 11 – 13 year olds don't know the rules about vaping in their school



The main source of advertising is shops, TikTok and Instagram

Vaping increased with age from 0.4% of 11-year-olds to 18.6% of 17-year-olds stating they vape regularly

Most young people who vaped had tried smoking before they tried vaping

A young person's decision to smoke or vape increased if an adult in the home smoked or vaped

- The most popular reasons for vaping were: 'I like the different flavours' and 'I like the taste' followed by 'vapes are easier to get than cigarettes' and 'vapes are cheaper than smoking'
- Disposable vapes are the most used vape among children and young people
- Ease of purchase increased with age with around 50% of 16 - 17-year-olds able to buy an e-cigarette
- Around 24% of those who said they vaped regularly also said they missed lunch or going out so they could afford an e-cigarette
- Between 28% and 33% of 16 to 17 years olds said their parents knew they vaped but didn't mind
- Overall, 72.4% said they don't vape and never will

## Data Considerations

A total of 5,319 questionnaires were completed online between 14 November and 15 December 2022. Of these, 174 were outside the age range of 11-17 years, 23 did not attend school or college in East Riding of Yorkshire or Hull or live in these local authorities, and 48 were spoilt questionnaires; all were excluded leaving 5,074 questionnaires for analysis.

There were some discrepancies in the data in terms of conflicting responses affecting around 300 questionnaires, but these were retained in the analysis as many appeared to result from young people who only occasionally used vapes and it would have biased the analyses to exclude them. Furthermore, not all questions were answered so there are some missing responses. This means that the numbers may not necessarily add up when comparing responses to individual questions.

As many of the responses differ by age and gender it is necessary to present most of the results separately by age and gender to obtain a comparison between these based on the percentage of survey responders in these groups. Where overall rates are given, directly standardised rates were used to account for the difference, which is skewed toward the 12 to 13 years age groups, otherwise this would influence the prevalence of vaping and smoking to show a lower rate than is reflective of the general population of 11 to 17 years.

## Themes

### Demographics

Primarily the age of participants for this piece of research are aged between 11 and 17. Over the course of the engagement the survey received a huge response of 5074 responses. 48.5% of responders were male with 47.4% female participation. 12-year-olds were the highest respondents for both male (509) and female (432). Compared to those aged 17 years old who had the lowest uptake of participation with 132 male responses and 252 responses.

Although awareness of vaping was high, the rate of those who had tried vaping was a lot lower at 26.5%. This was higher for girls (28.4%) than boys (24.7%). The largest response to how often they vape was 'tried vaping once or twice' at 12.7%. Former vapers 2.9%. There were more who vaped regularly (6.9%) than vaped occasionally (4.1%).

Awareness of vaping was high, when asked if they knew what a vape/e-cigarette was there was a standardised rate of 94.3% who considered themselves aware. This was slightly higher in girls (94.9%) than boys (93.7%). The rate of those who were unsure was 3.0%, and there were also 2.7% with no awareness. Of the responders with no awareness over three quarters (79.8%) were aged 11 to 14 years.

When asked how many people responders knew who vaped just over half of those aged 11 to 13 years (54.6%) either knew some or most people who vaped. By aged 16 to 17 years this had increased to 86.4%, with only 10.6% knowing hardly anyone and 3.0% knowing no one. Overall girls were less likely to know either hardly anyone or no one who vaped (29.1%) than boys (40.8%).

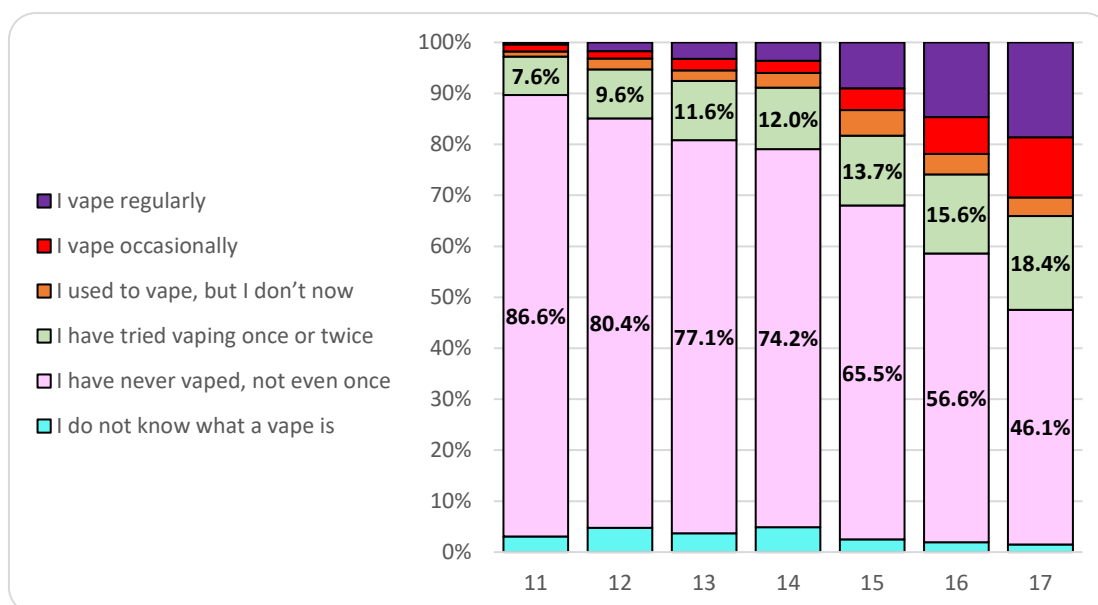


Figure 1: Change in percentage of vaping status by age

## What Do You Know About Vaping?

Of those who responded that they currently vape, there was an increase in the frequency of vaping as age increased, with 47.5% of those aged 11 to 13 years vaping three days a month or less, but by age 16 to 17 years over half (51.4%) of those currently vaping stated they vape every day.

When asked about rules their school or college had in place about vaping a similar percentage of girls aged 11 to 13 years did not know their school or college's rules (36.4%) as boys in the same age group (35.5%), however by ages 16 to 17 years this had dropped to 14.1% of girls and in boys of the same age group 18.7% stated they didn't know the rules. The percentage of those who thought that the rules were the same as smoking cigarettes/tobacco were 59.4% of girls aged 11 to 13 years, and this increased to 77.2% of girls aged 16 to 17 years. There was a similar percentage of boys aged 11 to 13 years (59.8%) however, the increase by ages 16 to 17 years to 72.5% was less than the increase for girls in the same age group.

84.6% of those aged 11 to 13 years said they had seen an increase in vaping (either a small or large increase) in the last year. In the age group 14 to 15 years this increased to 89.7% and in the age group 16 to 17 years 94.1% had seen an increase. Most of the survey responders said they had seen a large increase, as opposed to a small increase, in the last year with more girls having noticed a large increase than boys.

## Smoking Tobacco

Tobacco smoking remains low overall, with a directly standardised rate of 4.7% for 11 to 17 year olds that say they smoke either occasionally or regularly. This was higher for girls (5.8%) than it was for boys (3.6%). Of those who responded in this category 78% of the responses were aged 15 to 17 years. The rate of those who consider themselves former smokers was 1.9%. This meant there was rate for those who have never tried smoking or who have only smoked once or twice of 94.3% (94.9% for boys and 91.8% for girls). The percentage of survey responders who have never smoked dropped from 97.3% of 11 year olds to 63.7% of 17 year olds. This drop was larger for girls, where it dropped from 96.7% to 57.9%.

Survey responders were asked to indicate whether there was a smoker present in the household, and if so whether they smoked outside or inside the house. The percentage for those who had never smoked or smoked once or twice and did not have a smoker within the household was 96.3%, however this dropped to 87.1% when they lived with someone who smokes inside the house.

There were also rises in the percentage of former smokers, and those who smoke either occasionally or regularly, when there was a smoker present in the household, with the percentage of those who smoke either occasionally or regularly quadrupling when living with someone who smokes inside the house compared to when there was no smoker present in the household.

## Vaping promotion and advertising

When asked who they thought disposable vapes are promoted towards the largest responses were 'People who smoke cigarettes/tobacco' and 'Young people/teenagers', with 'Children' consistently being the lowest answer that they thought disposable vapes were promoted towards.

A similar percentage of girls thought they were promoted to young people/teenagers (44.8%) as they did smokers (45.6%), whereas more boys thought they were promoted towards smokers (47.5%) than young people/teenagers (41.1%). Those in the age range 11 to 13 years were more inclined to think they were promoted towards smokers (46.4%) than young people/teenagers (35.5%) however by the ages of 16 to 17 years this opinion had swapped with 61.0% believing them to be promoted towards young people/teenagers as opposed to 44.1% believing them to be promoted towards smokers.

These majority opinions were also shared when comparing smoking status, and whether people had vaped at least once, however those who had never smoked/smoked once or twice were more likely to think they were promoted towards smokers (46.5%) than young people/teenagers (42.5%), as were those who had never vaped (48.4% and 42.6% respectively). Those who were either occasional or regular smokers had their opinion the opposite way round with 53.7% believing them to be promoted towards young people/teenagers than they were smokers (42.4%). It was the same with those who had vaped at least once, although the difference was not as great as with the smokers (50.2% towards young people and 45.9% towards smokers). Those who smoked or vaped also showed a notable larger proportion of people who believed they were promoted towards 'Everyone' (25.4% of regular or occasional smokers and 19.6% of those who had vaped at least once).

When asked where they had seen advertising that encouraged vaping 33.7% of responders indicated they had not seen any advertising for vapes. This was higher for the boys (38.5%) than girls (29.5%), with the highest group being boys aged 16 to 17 years (44.2%). In those who had never tried vaping 37.4% had not seen any advertising for vapes.

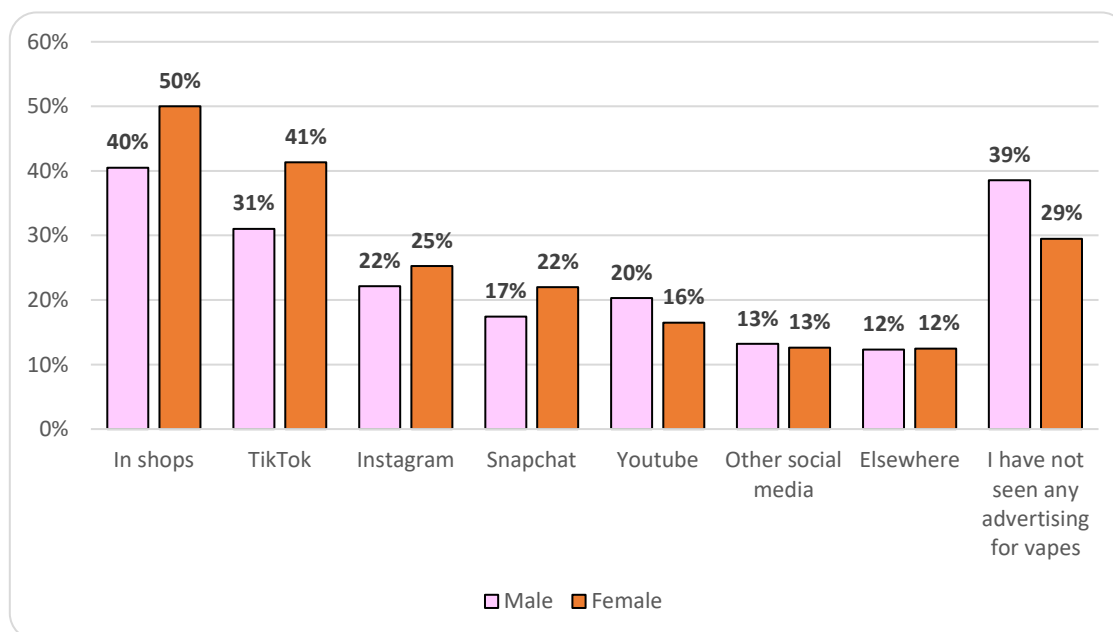


Figure 14: Percentage of the sources where advertising for vapes was seen by gender



## What Do You Know About Vaping?

Of those who had seen advertising the main source was 'In shops', with 45.5% having seen advertising there. However, there was a difference between girls (50.0%) and boys (40.5%). Over half of those who had tried vaping (53.2%) reported seeing advertising in shops. The second most popular source of seeing advertising was 'TikTok' where over a third (36.2%) reported seeing advertising. Again, there was a difference between girls (41.3%) and boys (31.0%). Almost half of those who had tried vaping (49.9%) reported seeing advertising here.

The third most popular source was 'Instagram' at 23.7%. These top three sources of advertising were common when broken down by groups based on age and gender, smoking status and whether they had tried vaping, except for in the group for boys aged 11 to 13 years where the third most popular source of advertising was given as 'YouTube' (23.9%).

## Opinions around vaping

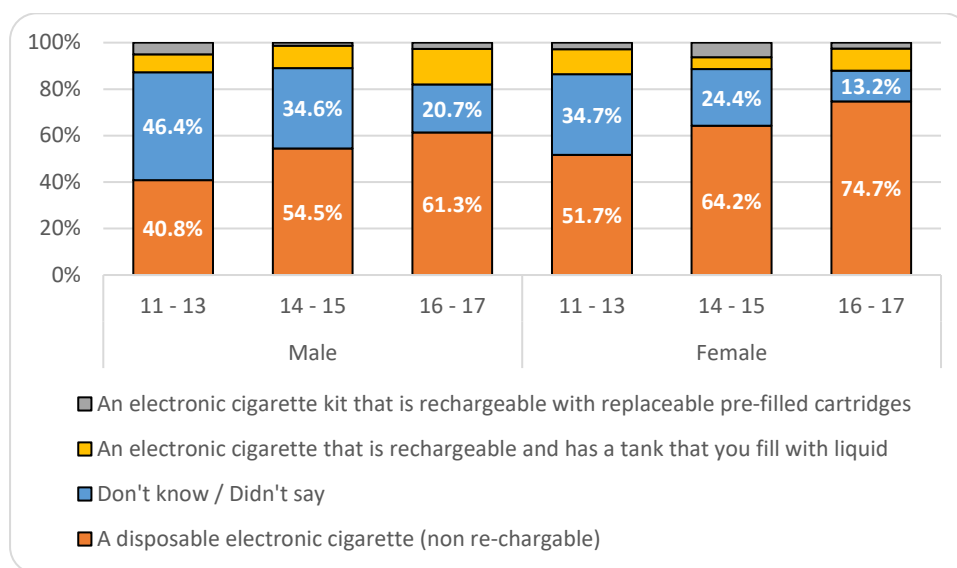
Everyone who had indicated an awareness of what a vape/e-cigarette is was also asked to select what they had heard about vaping. The most selected answer was 'They are addictive' with 72.5% of the responders having heard this. This percentage was larger in those who smoke either occasionally or regularly (81.0%) and those who had tried vaping (77.3%). The second most selected answer was they are 'Less harmful than smoking cigarettes/tobacco' with over half of the survey responders (57.5%) having heard this. This was the second most common statement across various categories except for 'They taste good' which was the second most common in girls aged between 16 and 17 years, those who smoke either occasional or regularly (80.0%), and those who had tried vaping at least once (76.2%). The least common statement was 'They are for cigarette/tobacco smokers only' with only 7.2% of all survey responders having heard this.

Those aware of vaping were also asked a series of statements about how much they agreed or disagreed in relation to young people who vape. Of the statements where the survey responders either agreed or strongly agreed the most popular was 'They think it's less harmful than cigarettes/tobacco' with 78.3% agreeing. In the age group of 16 to 17 years 83.3% agreed with this compared to 76.1% of 11 to 13 years. The next most agreed with statements were 'They like the different flavours' (75.2%) and 'They like the taste' (71.1%). Overall, almost two thirds of survey responders also agreed that for young people 'Vaping is a waste of money' (65.6%) although less who had tried vaping agreed with this (54.4%) and less than half of those who were either occasional or regular smokers agreed with this (40.1%). The most disagreed with statement was 'You should not vape unless you smoke cigarettes/tobacco' with 41.6% of the survey responders either disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with this. This was slightly higher for those who had tried vaping 47.1% and those who were either occasional or regular smokers (52%).

## Types of products used and purchasing vapes

When asked what type of the e-cigarette the survey responders use most (or did use if they no longer used e-cigarettes) a considerable proportion of the younger ages didn't know (or didn't say) which could suggest that as vaping in younger ages still appears to be largely 'giving it a try' they were unaware of the types of e-cigarettes. By the older age ranges those who didn't know/didn't say had reduced greatly, with disposable e-cigarettes (non-rechargeable) being the most prevalent type accounting for 69% in the age range 16 to 17 years (61.3% of the boys and 74.7% of the girls) as the main type of e-cigarette they used.

**Figure 17: Percentage change in the main type of e-cigarette used by gender and age group**



When asked what brand of e-cigarette survey responders usually use the most popular choice was Elux, accounting for over half of the responses (46.5%). This was particularly popular in the age range 14 to 15 years (56.0%) compared to 11 to 13 years (42.2%) and 16 to 17 years (43.2%). The second most popular was Elf Bar with 31.3% of the responses. Lost Mary was the third most popular (6.5%). All three of these accounted for 84.3% of the overall responses and all three are the disposable (non-rechargeable) type suggesting that currently this is the most popular type of e-cigarette among the survey responders. In fact, the most popular type of non-disposable e-cigarette was SMOK, an e-cigarette that is rechargeable, with 3.1% of the overall responses, however 81% of these responses were in the older age range 16 to 17 years.

E-cigarettes are subject to the same age of sale laws as tobacco. On 1st October 2015 it became illegal for retailers to sell e-cigarettes or e-liquids to someone under 18 and for adults to buy (or try to buy) tobacco products or e-cigarettes for someone under 18. However, there were still more than 14% of responses in each age group who indicated that it is easy for them to buy e-cigarettes. By the age of 16 years almost half indicated that they found it easy to buy e-cigarettes.

When asked how much they currently spend on vaping a week the most common response across all age groups was 'Nothing', with 88% of 11 year olds spending nothing on vaping. The chance of spending weekly on vaping increased with age, however by ages 16 to 17 years 51% of those who vape are still

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spending nothing on doing so. Overall, 45.9% of girls indicated that they did spend on vaping weekly, more than boys who did at 21.6%.

When asked where or how they usually got their vapes, for those who had not indicated that they no longer vaped, the most popular answer overall was 'I buy them in a corner shop/news agent' with 29.7% of the responses. However, there were differences between ages with 23.6% of 11 to 15 year olds saying this, compared to 36.4% of 16 to 17 year olds. The second most popular source overall was 'Given to me from friends' with 18.2% of responses. Girls were more likely to be given vapes by either family members, friends, or other people (33.7%) than boys (26.9%) and were more likely to ask either family members or friends to buy for them (15.5%) than boys (9.3%).

## Vaping Frequency

### Vaping frequency compared to smoking and compared to vapers or smokers within households

For those who had never smoked or only smoked once or twice the directly standardised rate of having never tried vaping was 78.0% (with a rate of 3.0% unaware of what e-cigarettes were). For those who had never smoked the rate of those who had tried vaping was 22.0%, with 13.2% having only tried vaping once or twice

Current smokers were more likely to vape occasionally or regularly with 16.9% of current smokers stating they vaped occasionally and a further 73.6% of current smokers stating they vaped regularly

There was a similar percentage of survey responders who indicated there was no one in the household who vaped (62.3%) as there were with no one who smoked within the household (65.5%), however of those who did live with vapers it appeared that they were more likely to vape inside the house (23.2%) than outside the house (14.5%). This was the opposite to those who lived with a smoker where 26.1% would smoke outside the house compared to 8.4% who smoked inside the house.

Of the survey responders who had only tried vaping once or twice the chances decreased when a smoker was present in the household, and the chances of vaping occasionally or regularly increased. These were further affected when the smoker was smoking inside of the house.

When asked the order which they first vaped with regards to if they had never smoked before vaping, tried an e-cigarette first and then tried smoking, tried smoking first before trying an e-cigarette or if they didn't know which order, there was an increase with age in those who said they had tried smoking at some point, with a bigger increase in those who tried smoking first before trying an e-cigarette, especially in girls after the age of 14.

Those who said they tried smoking first before trying an e-cigarette were more likely to come from a household with a smoker present (57.0%), and those who had tried an e-cigarette but never tried smoking were more likely to come from a household with no smoker present (54.3%). However, those who tried an e-cigarette first and then tried smoking were more likely to come from a household with no smoker present (51.5%) showing that there are many other factors influencing take up of smoking.

There was also a decrease in the responses of those who had been vaping less than a year when there was either a vaper or a smoker in the household, as well an increase in those who had been vaping for

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more than a year (and other lengths of time). Again, there are many factors influencing this so it wouldn't be correct to sight this as the main cause. Factors like age heavily impacted the length of time people said they had been vaping.

## Reasons for those currently vaping

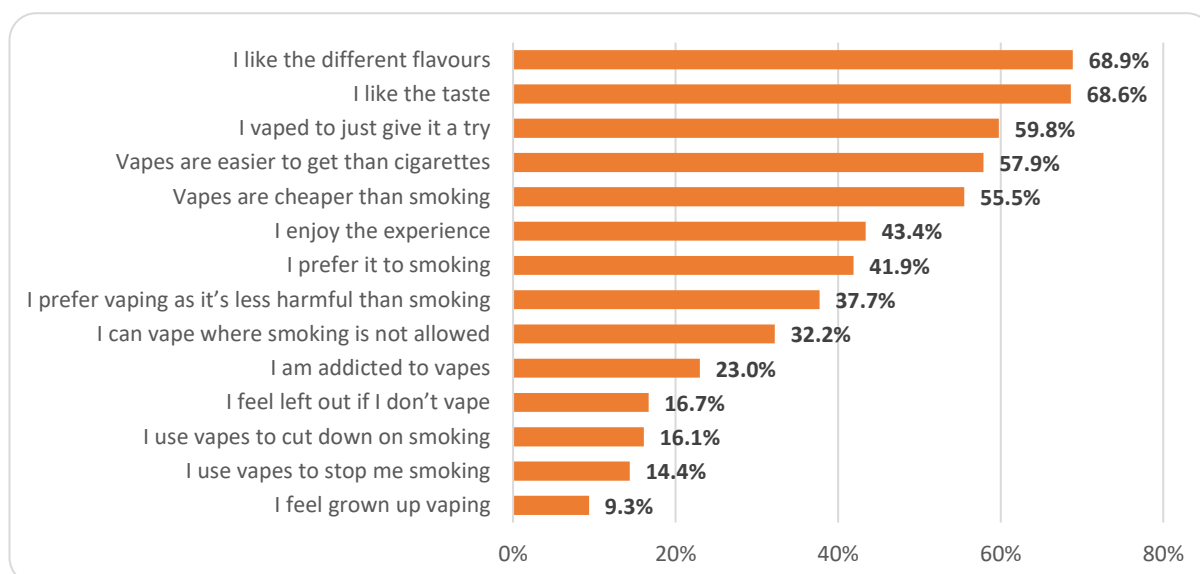
Those who currently vape were asked how much they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements on the reasons they vape. Looking at the percentages of those who ever agreed or strongly agreed with a statement the two most popular answers were 'I like the different flavours' (68.9%) and 'I like the taste' (68.6%) with over two thirds either agreeing or strongly agreeing. Those aged 16 to 17 years were more likely to agree with liking the different flavours (76.2%) than those under 16 (64.5%).

The next most popular answer responders either agreed or strongly agreed with was 'I vaped to just give it a try' with 59.8% agreeing, showing that a lot of vape use is experimental.

There were also popular statements where more than half of the survey responders either agreed or strongly agree with 'Vapes are easier to get than cigarettes' (57.9%) and 'Vapes are cheaper than smoking' (55.5%).

The statements the survey responders either disagreed or strongly disagreed with largely followed the same order as the agreed with statements in reverse, with no real significant differences.

There were also differences in the reasons agreed with for those who smoked. For those who had never smoked or only smoked once or twice the most popular reason they either agreed or strongly agreed with was 'I vaped to just give it a try' (65.4%) however, this was relatively low with those who were also either occasional or regular smokers (43.4%) and these were more likely to agree or strongly agree with 'I



like the taste' (87.4%), 'I like the different flavours' (85.9%), and 'I enjoy the experience' (72.8%).

**Figure 1: Percentage of those currently vaping who agreed or strongly agreed with statements about why they vape**

## Feelings around vaping

Those who responded that they have ever craved a vape or felt irritable if they haven't vaped for a while increased with their frequency of vaping with 11.7% of those who had only tried vaping once or twice reporting some sort of craving compared to 43.0% of those who vaped occasionally and over three quarters (77.3%) of those who vape regularly.

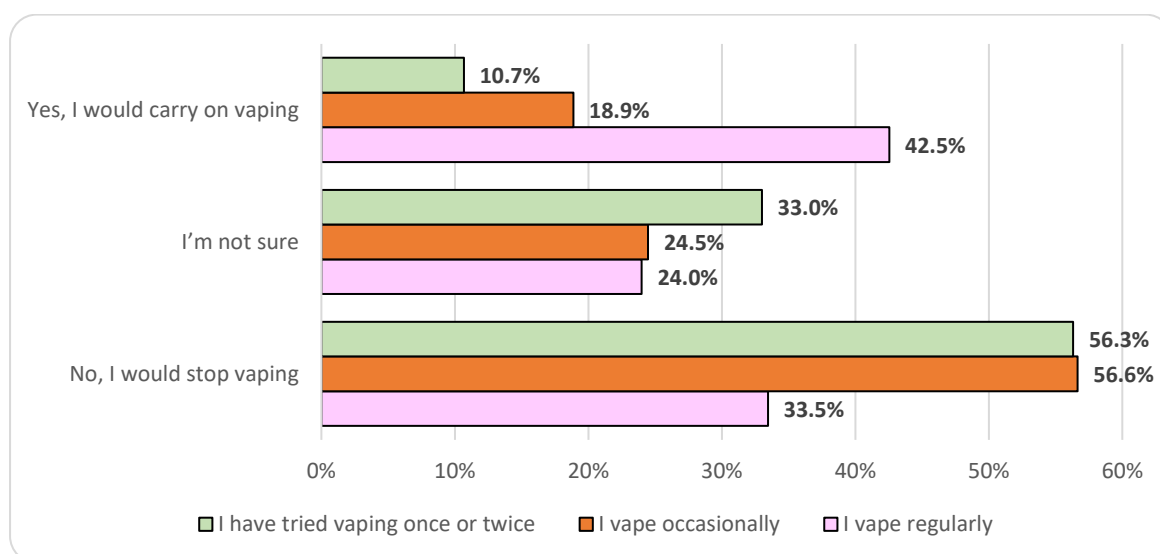
There was also a higher response of those stating they had felt cravings from those who said they smoke either occasionally or regularly (72.4%) compared to those who said they vape either occasionally or regularly (64.4%).

When asked if they had ever missed lunch or going out with friends to afford to buy vapes those who responded yes increased with age and was more prevalent in girls, however, as was seen earlier, the younger ages were less likely to spend money on vaping so this will have also been a factor in the responses here. Almost a quarter of those who said they vaped regularly (24.4%) also answered yes to this question.

According to the overall responses the majority thought that their parents or carers knew they vaped with 53.6% of 11 to 13 year olds saying they thought their parents knew, 60.5% of 14 to 15 year olds and 62.9% of 16 to 17 year olds. However, there were differences in whether they were not happy about it, although this decreased with age.

When asked if they would carry on vaping if vapes were only available in tobacco flavour of those who said they vape regularly, less than half (42.5%) said they still would, however this was a lot more than those who only vaped occasionally (18.9%) and those who had only vaped once or twice (10.7%). More than half of those who had only vaped once or twice (56.3%) and those who vaped occasionally (56.6%) said that they would stop vaping, compared to 33.5% of those who vaped regularly. Unsurprisingly, there was a significant difference between those who were either occasional or regular smokers with 62.3% saying they would carry on vaping compared to only 9.0% of those who had never smoked or only smoked once or twice who said they would also carry on (with 59.9% saying they would stop).

**Figure 33: Vaping continuation percentages if tobacco flavour was the only available by vaping status**



## What Do You Know About Vaping?

The final question asked everyone who had not already indicated that they were unaware of what vapes/e-cigarettes were, what statement best described them in relation to vaping. When the responses were directly standardised, the rate for those who don't vape and never will was 72.4%. The rate of those who don't vape but may when they're older was 15.8%. This was higher for girls (17.9%) than it was for boys (13.8%). The rate of those who said they vape was 11.8%, with a rate of 5.5% for those that would like to give up.

Girls who didn't vape but may do when they're older were more likely to say so in the age groups of 11 to 15 years (22.0%) than boys (16.3%) however, by ages 16 to 17 years the response from girls (7.7%) was similar to boys (8.8%).

The survey responders who didn't vape but may when they're older were more likely to say so if there was someone who vapes within their household (25.4%) compared to when there wasn't (11.8%). The same was also seen with those who had someone who smokes within their household (23.5%) compared to when there wasn't (13.3%).

### **Local research via focus groups**

Initial local research via focus groups was carried out between August and September 2022 with 33 young people from various locations across Hull with an age range of 11 to 16 years. The findings included:

- 8 of the 33 vaped every day and 8 every week
- 10 had tried vaping and 7 hadn't
- The 8 who said they vaped everyday said they would class themselves as addicted
- All knew someone who vaped and thought around 60% - 80% of young people vaped
- The young people didn't know where they could go to get help to quit
- When asked the reason for vaping the most common answer was the variety of flavours, accessibility and it is considered cool. "I actually carry one that's dead so that it looks like I'm vaping when I'm actually not, just so people don't say anything to me"
- The young people believed that vaping products are mainly created for and marketed towards them
- When asked about links between vaping and smoking there were mixed responses; some thought vaping was a great way to quit smoking whilst others believed most young people never smoked in the first place
- Young people stated that it was easy to purchase vapes
- Mixed responses on how schools deal with vapers, and said no information was given on the dangers or how to quit
- Comments on tackling youth vaping rates included: help, advice and information on vaping and nicotine addiction. Less appealing packaging and flavours and displays at tills

