

Headline results ASH Smokefree GB adults and youth survey results 2023

Overview

This is an overview of key data from the ASH Smokefree GB adult and youth surveys for 2023. The full fact sheets with all the published data will be available shortly. A description of survey methodologies and participant counts is at the end of this briefing.

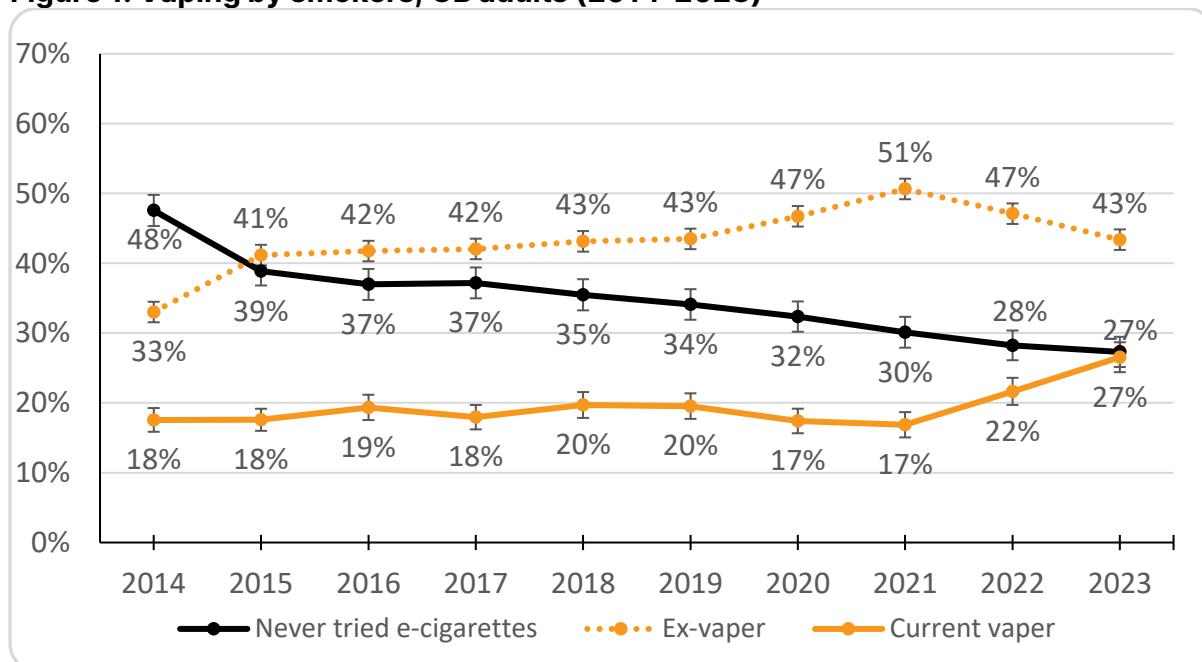
The 2023 ASH surveys find:

- No significant change between 2022 and 2023 in the proportion of 11-17 year olds currently vaping or smoking.
- However, trying vaping once or twice is up by 50% on last year.
- Disposable (single use) e-cigarettes are the vape of choice for children currently vaping.
- Corner shops are the main source of purchase and child awareness of instore promotion has grown significantly since last year.

Adult vaping

This first set of graphs highlights key results among those aged 18+ in Great Britain. Figure 1 shows that current vaping has grown among adult smokers between 2021 and 2023. However, there remains a sizable group of smokers who report never having tried an e-cigarette (27% in 2023).

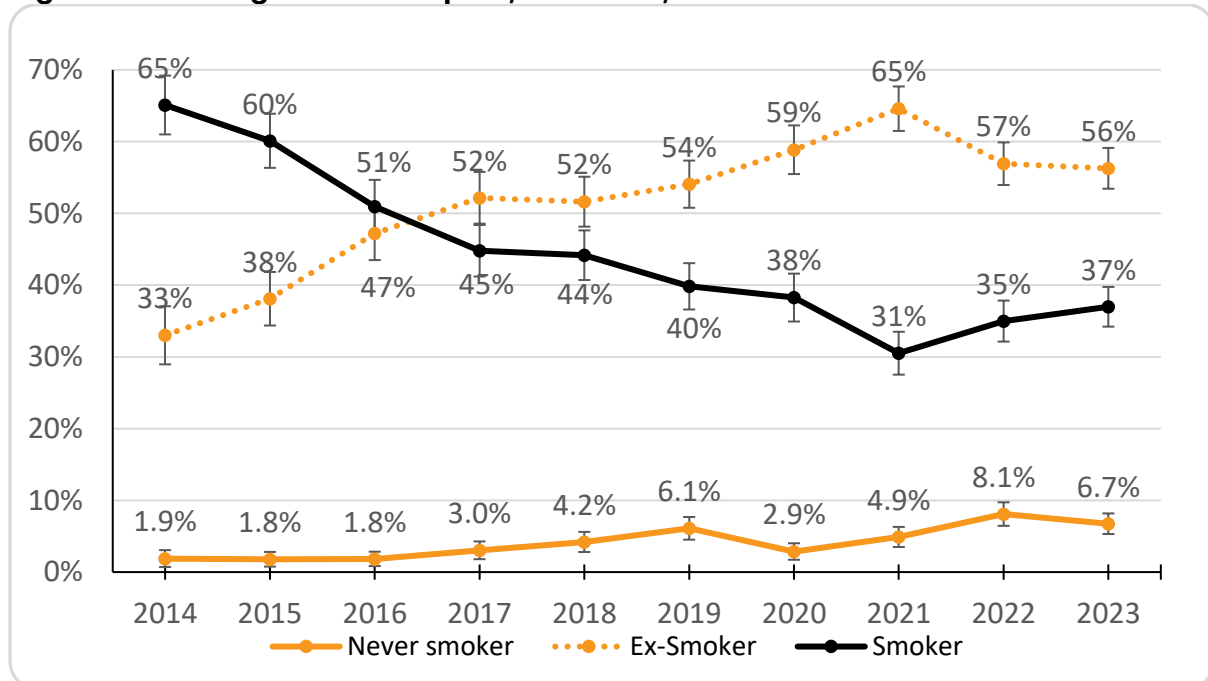
Figure 1. Vaping by smokers, GB adults (2014-2023)



ASH Smokefree GB Adult Surveys 2014-2023. Unweighted base: Adult current smokers (2014=1,776, 2015=2,037, 2016=1,704, 2017=1,632, 2018=1,633, 2019=1,777, 2020=1,694, 2021=1,512, 2022=1,751, 2023=1,517)

Figure 2 shows the smoking status of vapers between 2014 and 2023. Between 2021 and 2022 the proportion of adult vapers who were ex-smokers fell but it has not significantly changed between 2022 and 2023. The proportion of vapers who are smokers has grown between 2021 and 2023. The proportion of never smokers who report vaping is fairly stable ranging between 5% and 8% of all vapers over the last three years (but only around 1% of never smokers who are now a large majority of the adult population).

Figure 2. Smoking status of vapers, GB adults, 2014-2023



ASH Smokefree GB Adult Surveys 2014-2023. Unweighted base: Adult current vapers (2014=498, 2015=614, 2016=667, 2017=669, 2018=738, 2019=854, 2020=787, 2021=826, 2022=1,089, 2023=1,079)

Youth vaping

This section includes the key findings for the ASH youth survey. ASH surveys 11-18 year olds in its youth survey but most of the results are reported for 11-17 year olds as these are children and sales to children are prohibited.

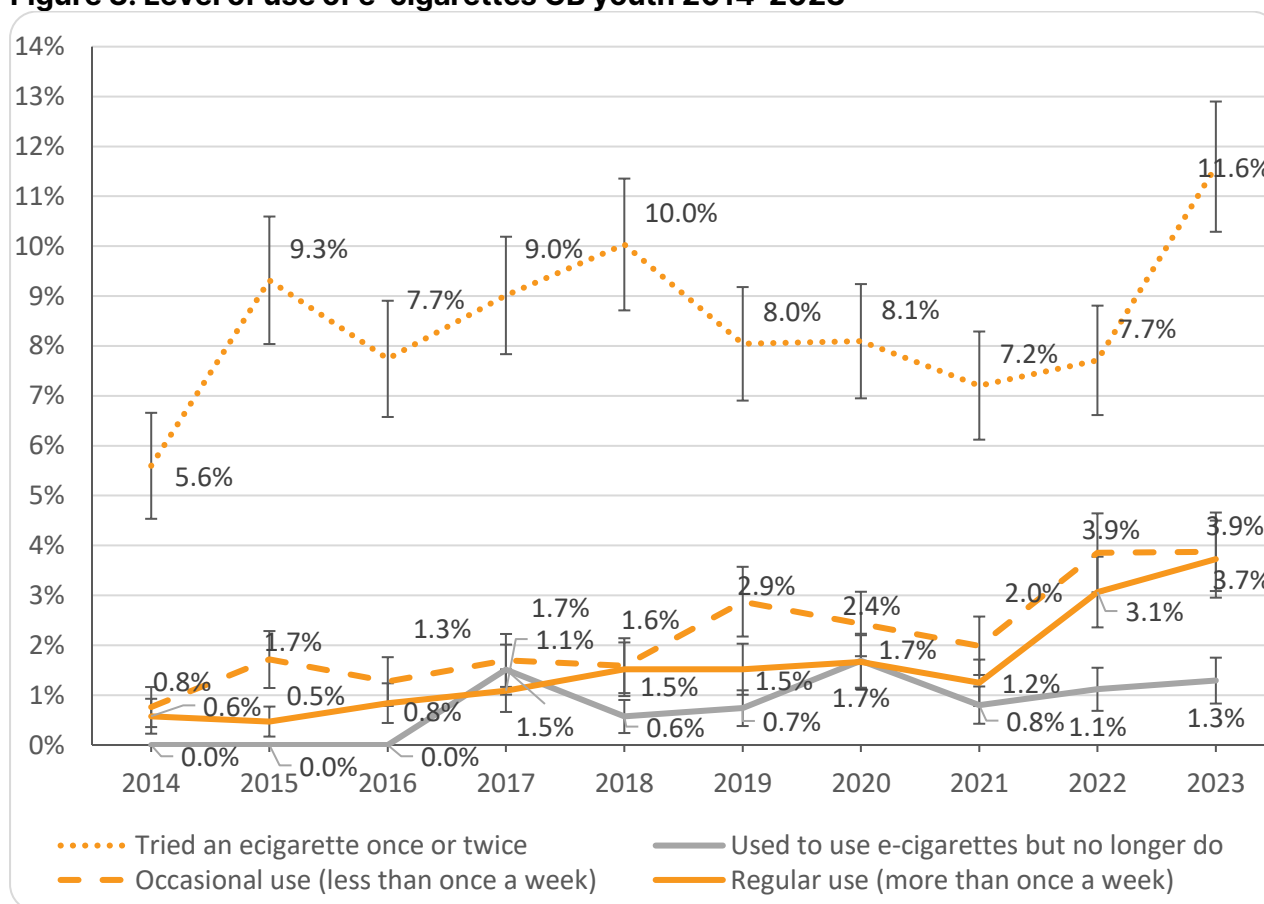
Figure 3 and Table 1 show the changes in vaping among children 11-17 years old over time broken down by frequency of vaping. They show a significant increase in experimentation (trying once or twice) between 2022 and 2023 continuing the trend from 2021. However, there has not been a significant increase in other types of vaping among 11-17 year olds between 2022 and 2023, while there was a significant increase between 2021 and 2022.

Table 1: Level of use of e-cigarettes GB youth 2014-2023

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Tried an e-cigarette once or twice	5.6%	9.3%	7.7%	9%	10%	8%	8.1%	7.2%	7.7%	11.6%
Occasional use (less than once a week)	0.8%	1.7%	1.3%	1.7%	1.6%	2.9%	2.4%	2%	3.9%	3.9%
Regular use	0.6%	0.5%	0.8%	1.1%	1.5%	1.5%	1.7%	1.2%	3.1%	3.7%
Used to use e-cigarettes but no longer do	0%	0%	0%	1.5%	0.6%	0.7%	1.7%	0.8%	1.1%	1.3%

ASH Smokefree GB Youth Surveys, 2014-2023. Unweighted base: All 11-17 year olds (2014=1,817, 2015=1,834, 2016=1,735, 2017=2,151, 2018=1,807, 2019 =1,982, 2020 =2,029, 2021=2,109, 2022=2,111, 2023=2,028).

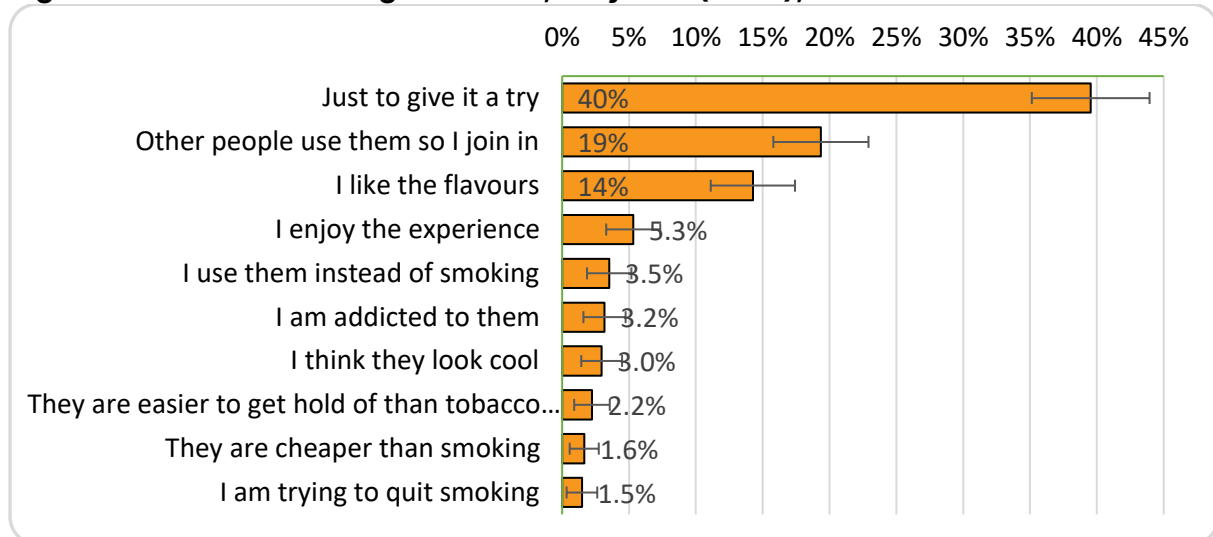
Figure 3: Level of use of e-cigarettes GB youth 2014-2023



ASH Smokefree GB Youth Surveys, 2014-2023. Unweighted base: All 11-17 year olds (2014=1,817, 2015=1,834, 2016=1,735, 2017=2,151, 2018=1,807, 2019 =1,982, 2020 =2,029, 2021=2,109, 2022=2,111, 2023=2,028).

Figure 4 shows the main reason given by 11-17 year olds for vaping is 'just to give it a try' (40%). The other two main reasons are 'others do it, so I join in' (19%); and 'I like the flavours' (14%).

Figure 4. Reasons for e-cigarette use, GB youth (11-17), 2023



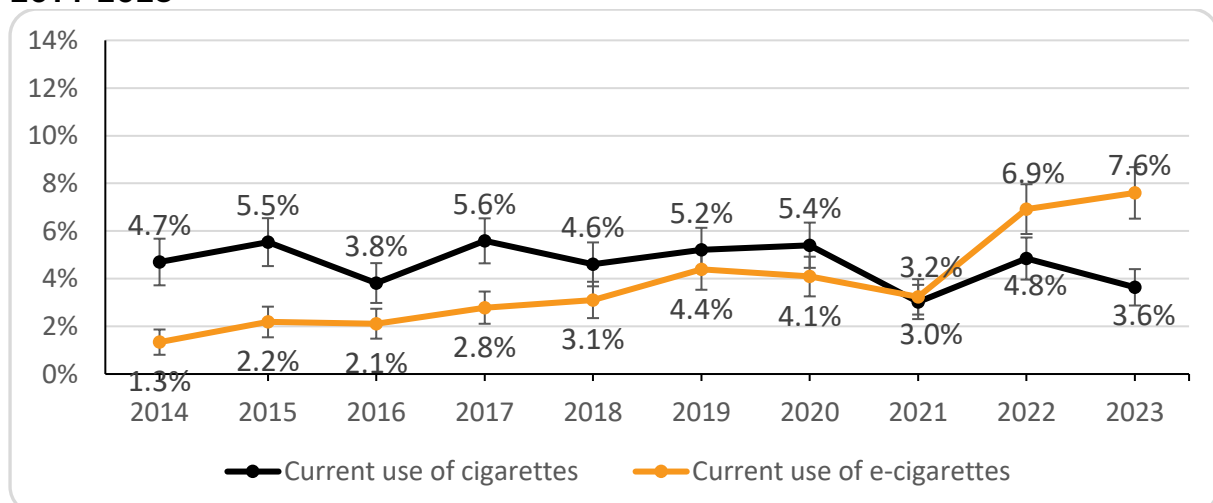
ASH Smokefree GB Youth Survey 2023. 11-17 year old respondents who have tried e-cigarettes (472)

The top three reasons among 11-17 never smokers who vape are the same, but more than half (54%) say mainly 'to give it a try'. The proportions of the other two main reasons are very similar to those for all young vapers, 'others do it so I join in' (18% compared to 19%); and 'I like the flavours' (12% compared to 14%).

Smoking and vaping

Current vaping has grown over the last three years (although not significantly between 2022 and 2023) but current smoking has not increased.

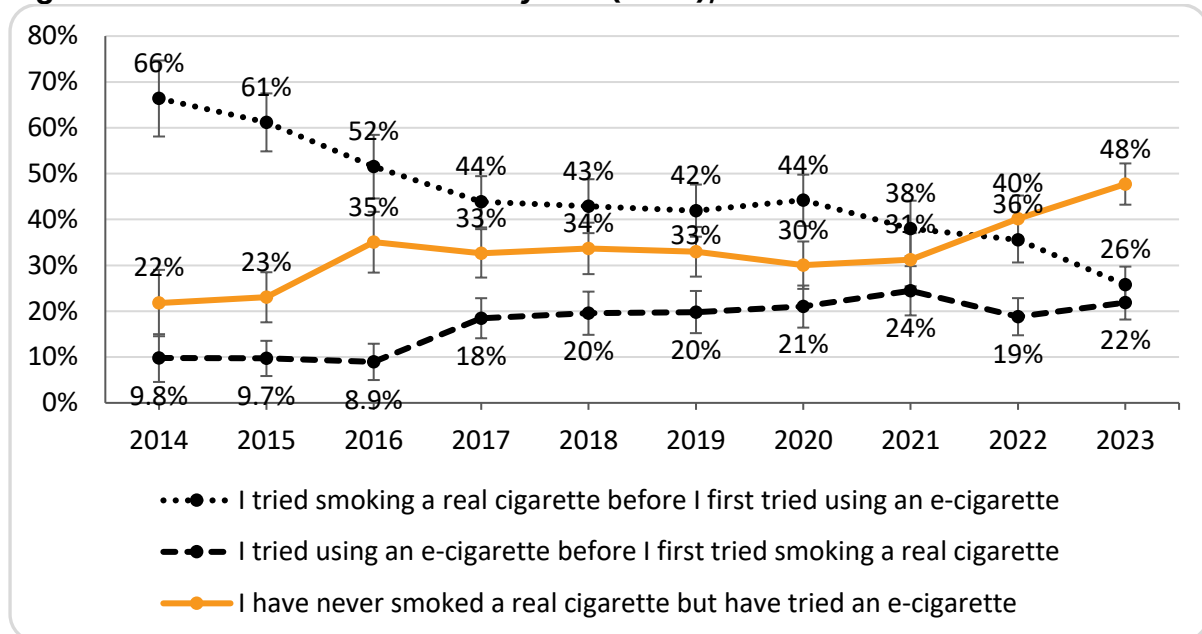
Figure 5. Current use of cigarettes and e-cigarettes over time, GB youth (11-17), 2014-2023



ASH Smokefree GB Youth Surveys, 2014-2023. Unweighted base: All 11-17 year olds (2014=1,817, 2015=1,834, 2016=1,735, 2017=2,151, 2018=1,807, 2019 =1,982, 2020 =2,029, 2021=2,109, 2022=2,111, 2023=2,028).

Figure 6 shows the order in which 11-17 year olds report having smoked or vaped. Over time, there has been a change in order of use. Over the last three years there has been an increase in never smokers trying vaping which means they now account for nearly half (48%) of 11-17 year olds who have tried vaping.

Figure 6: Order of use over time GB youth (11-17), 2014-2023



ASH Smokefree GB Youth Survey, 2014-2023. Unweighted base: 11-17 year old respondents who said they have tried an e-cigarette (2014=118, 2015=210, 2016=168, 2017=279, 2018=254, 2019=301, 2020=327, 2021=266, 2022=390, 2023=472).

Table 2 looks at the order of use comparing those who currently vape with those who have only vaped once or twice. The majority of vapers who have only tried vaping once or twice have never smoked (62%), while the majority of current vapers have tried smoking (70%). Youth who have tried both vaping and smoking are around equally likely to have tried vaping first or smoking first.

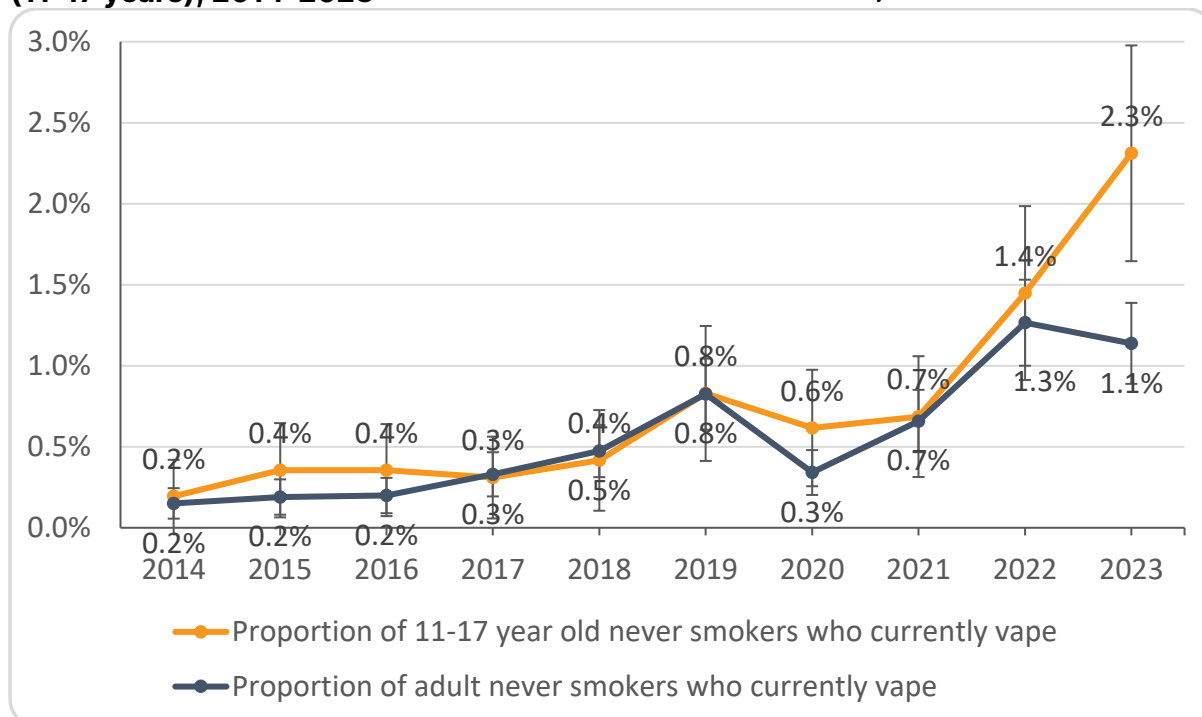
Table 2. Order of use between tobacco cigarettes and e-cigarettes, experimental vs current e-cigarette users, GB youth (11-17), 2023

	Tried vaping once or twice/experimental vaper	Current vapers
I have never smoked	62%	26%
I have tried smoking/ever-smoker	34%	70%
<i>I tried smoking a real cigarette before I tried an e-cigarette</i>	18%	38%
<i>I tried smoking an e-cigarette before I tried a real cigarette</i>	15%	32%

ASH Smokefree GB Youth Survey, 2023. Unweighted base: 11-17 year old respondents who either said they had tried e-cigarettes once or twice=252, 11-17 year old respondents who said they currently use e-cigarettes=187

Current vaping is infrequent among never smokers though more common among 11-17 year olds than among adults. Figure 7 shows the level of current vaping for both adults and 11-17 year olds who don't smoke.

Figure 7: Types of vaping and smoking experience compared, GB adults & GB youth (11-17 years), 2014-2023



ASH Smokefree GB Adult & Youth Surveys, 2023. Unweighted base: youth never smokers, adult current smokers, counts in methodology below

Access to vapes

There are differences between where adult vapers and 11-17 year old vapers access their vaping products. Table 3 shows where people purchase vapes from, there were also options besides buying, which are not included in this table While 11-17 year olds are more likely than adult vapers to buy products from newsagents, adults are more likely to purchase online.

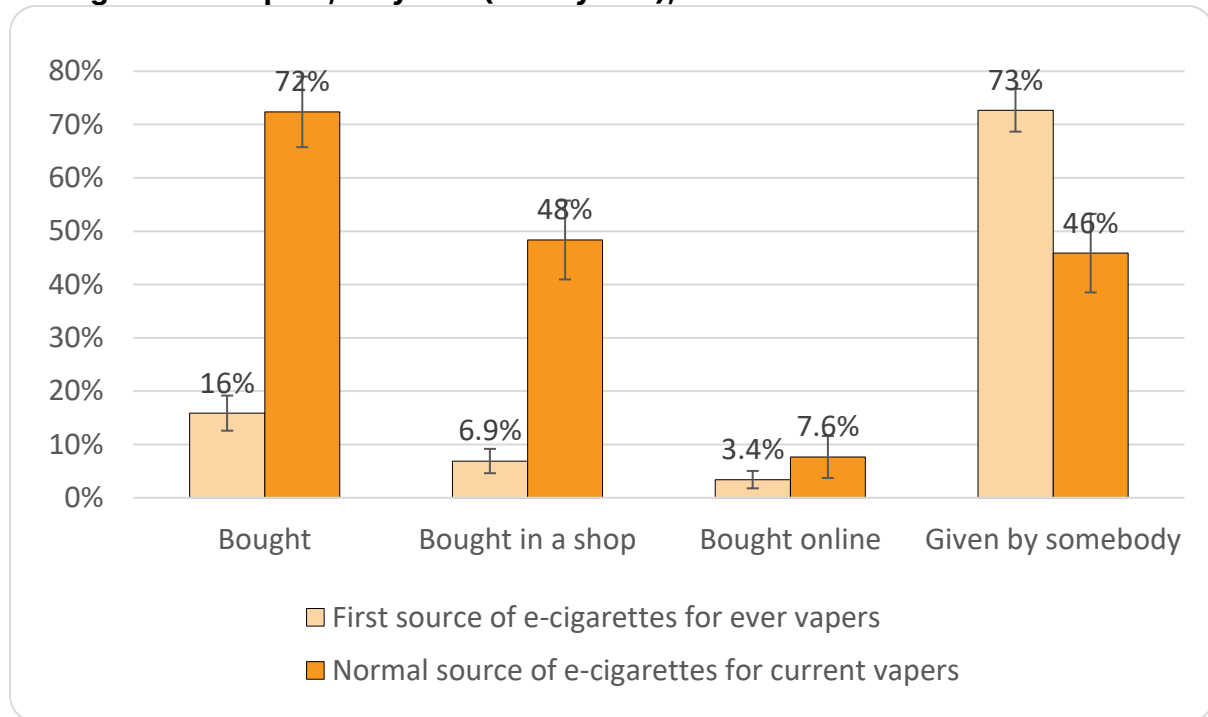
Table 3. Where e-cigarettes are purchased, GB adults & GB youth (11-17 years), 2023

	Adults	Youth 11-17
I buy them from a newsagent, a corner shop or an off license	18%	26%
I buy them through the Internet	36%	7.6%
I buy them from a supermarket	11%	7.2%
I buy them from a petrol station or garage shop	2.9%	9.4%
I buy them from some other type of shop	19%	15%
I buy them from street markets	1.5%	5.8%
I buy them from a machine	0.6%	2.4%

ASH Smokefree GB Adult & Youth Surveys, 2023. Unweighted base: adults who currently use e-cigarettes: 1,042, 11-17 year olds who currently use e-cigarettes: 187. Respondents allowed to tick more than one box if more than one usual source.

There are differences between where 11-17 year olds first access vapes from and where current vapers access products from. Figure 8 shows that the first source for most young ever vapers is to be given a vape. Those who currently vape are more likely to buy e-cigarettes from formal or informal sources but just under half (46%) continue to access products by being given them by others.

Figure 8. First source of e-cigarettes compared with usual source(s) of e-cigarettes among current vapers, GB youth (11-17 years), 2023

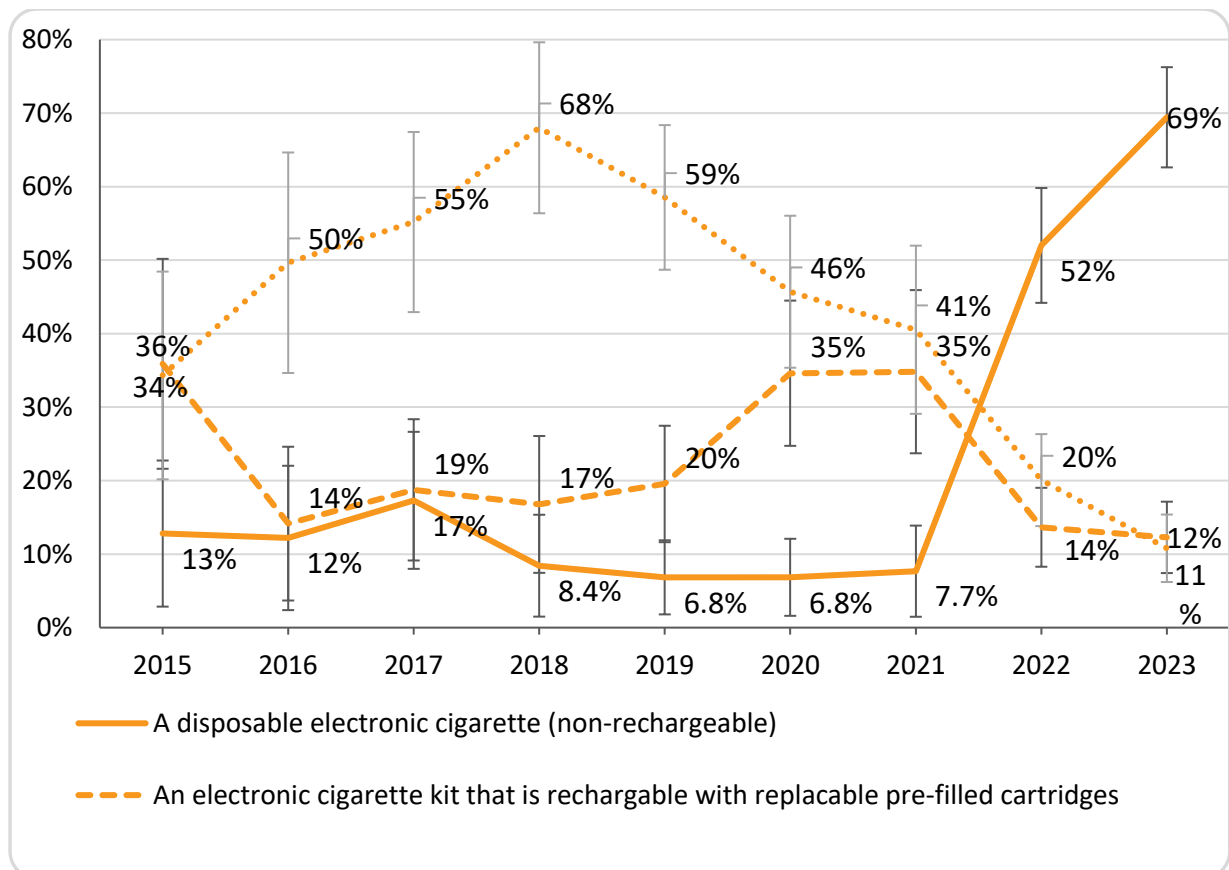


ASH Smokefree GB Youth Survey, 2023. Unweighted base: 11-17 year olds who have ever tried e-cigarettes: 472; 11-17 year olds who currently vape = 187

Type of device

Figure 9 shows that the use of single use disposable vapes among 11-17 year olds which became the most popular product among 11-17 year olds in 2022 has continued to grow. Just under 70% of all young vapers report most frequently using a disposable type device.

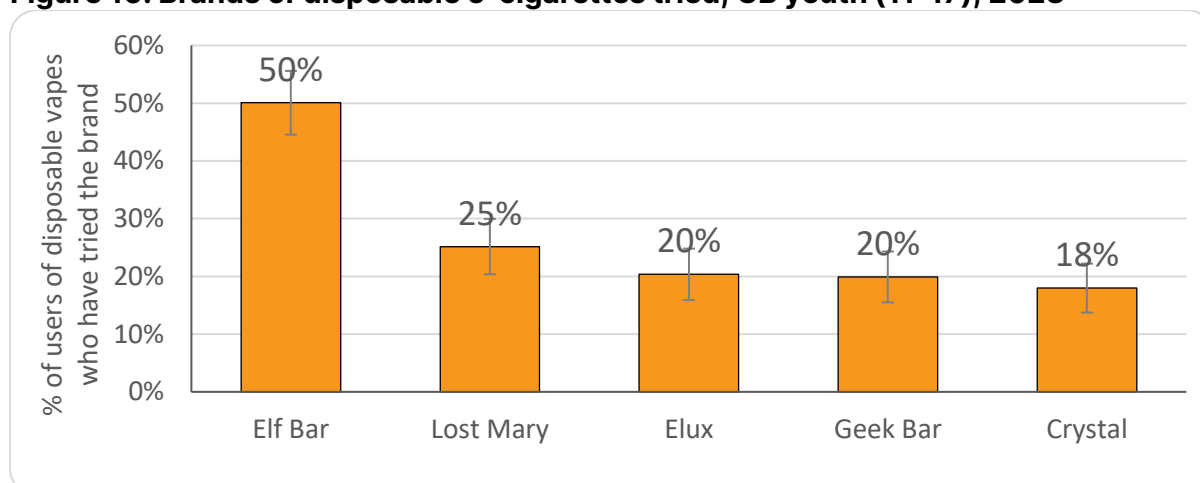
Figure 9. Most frequently used e-cigarette by device type, current GB youth (11-17) users of e-cigarettes, 2015-2023



ASH Smokefree GB Youth Surveys. Unweighted base: 11-17 year olds who are current users of e-cigarettes (2015 = 41, 2016=36, 2017=60, 2018=59, 2019=94, 2020=94, 2021=76, 2022=172, 2023=187)

Figure 10 shows the top five disposable brands used by 11-17 year olds (respondents who had ever vaped were asked to identify every brand they had used). By far the most popular is Elf Bar with half of users citing this as a brand they have used. Other individual brands have not been listed as they were used by 6.7% or less of 11-17 year olds.

Figure 10. Brands of disposable e-cigarettes tried, GB youth (11-17), 2023



ASH Smokefree GB Youth Survey, 2023. Unweighted base: 11-17 year old respondents who had ever used disposable e-cigarettes; 317. Respondents asked to select every brand they have used.

Promotion of vaping

Table 4 shows how the awareness of vaping promotion has grown among 11-17 year olds between 2022 and 2023 in shops and online. There has been a significant increase in awareness of promotion in shops and online over these two years.

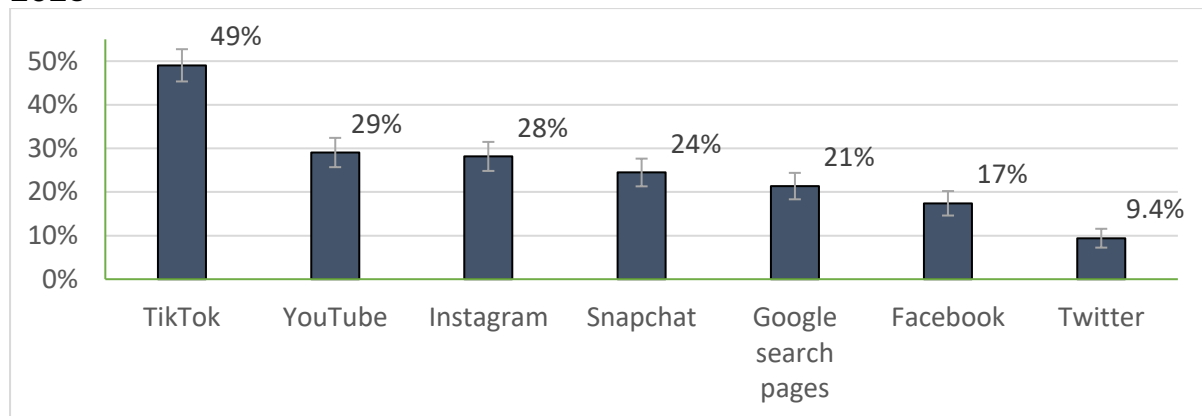
Table 4. Awareness of e-cigarette promotion, GB youth (11-17 years), 2023

	2022	2023
In shops	37%	53%
Online	24%	32%
Billboards	12%	14%
On buses	9.2%	11%
On TV	7.6%	9.0%
In newspapers/magazines	7.9%	7.2%
Somewhere else	2.0%	1.8%
I don't see e-cigarettes being advertised	31%	20%

ASH Smokefree GB Youth Survey, 2023. Unweighted base: All 11-17 year olds aware of e-cigarettes (2022=1,916, 2023=1,917)

Looking more closely at those exposed to online promotion in Figure 11 just under half (49%) of those who report online promotion of vaping have been exposed via TikTok, followed by YouTube (29%) and Instagram (28%).

Figure 11. Experience of types of online promotion of e-cigarettes, GB youth (11-17), 2023



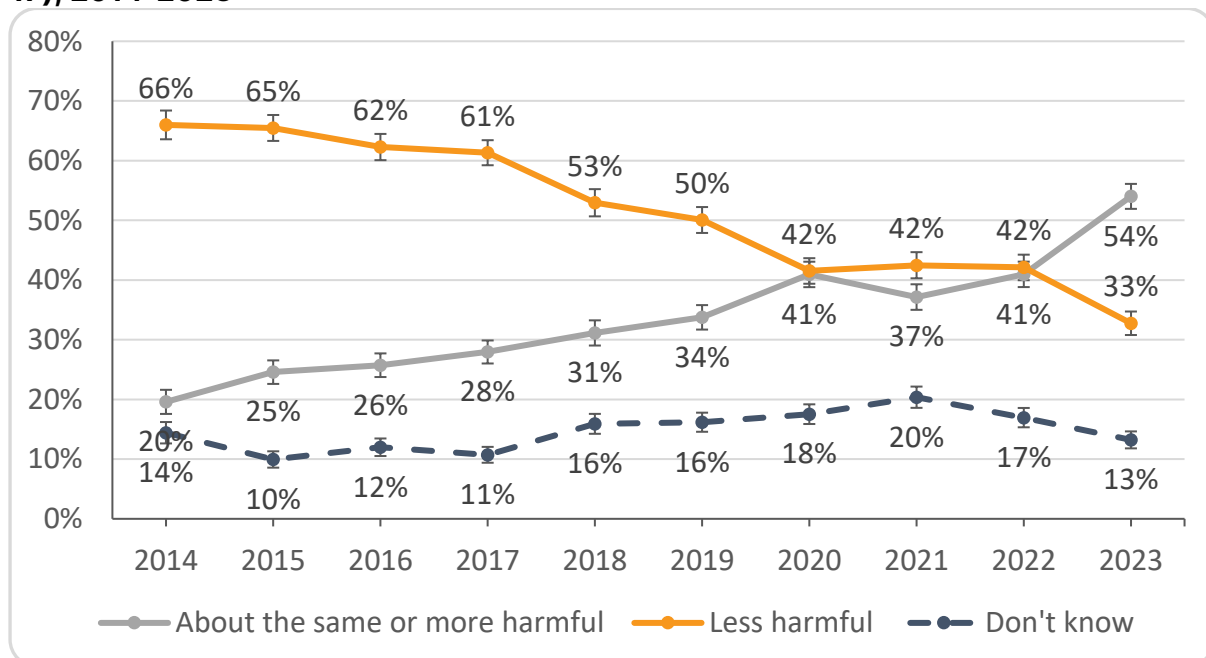
ASH Smokefree GB Youth Surveys 2023. Unweighted base: 11-17 year olds aware of e-cigarettes who have seen them promoted online (n=640)

Perceptions of harm

The following two figures show the changes in the perception of harms from vaping compared to smoking in 11-17 year olds and adult smokers. In both groups perceptions are more inaccurate than at any point in the history of the surveys. Figure 12 shows that for the first time more than half of 11-17 year olds are likely to inaccurately think that vaping is as or more harmful than smoking (54%).

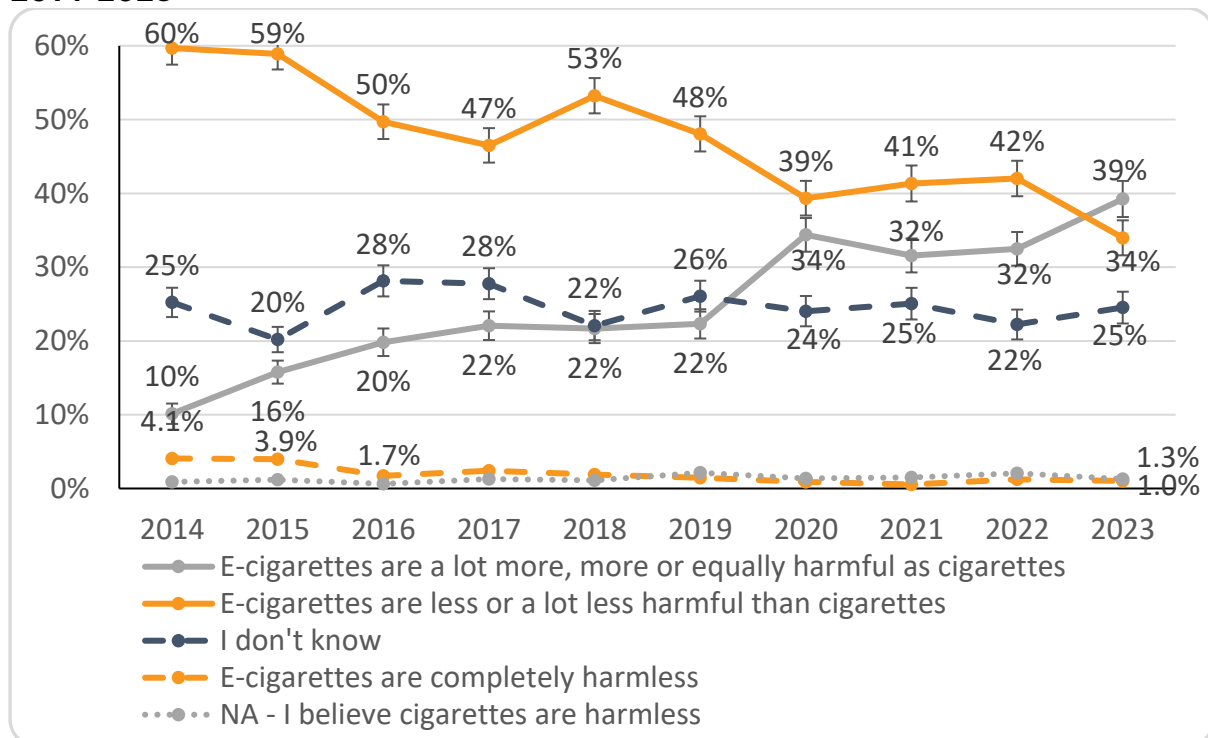
Among adult smokers, perceptions are also increasingly inaccurate. Figure 13 shows that 39% believe vaping is as or equally harmful compared to smoking and only around a third accurately identify that vaping is less or a lot less harmful than smoking.

Figure 12. Perceptions of harm of e-cigarettes compared to smoking, GB youth (11-17), 2014-2023



ASH Smokefree GB Youth Surveys 2014-2023. Unweighted base: 11-17 year olds aware of e-cigarettes (2014=1,483, 2015=1,700, 2016=1,607, 2017=1,968, 2018=1,687, 2019=1,863, 2020=1,909, 2021=1,905, 2022=1,916, 2023=1,917).

Figure 13. Perceptions of harm of e-cigarettes compared to smoking, GB adults 2014-2023



ASH Smokefree GB Adult Surveys 2014-2023. Unweighted base: Adult current smokers who have heard of e-cigarettes (2014=1,705, 2015=1,945, 2016=1,639, 2017=1,569, 2018=1,566, 2019=1,679, 2020=1,599, 2021=1,438, 2022=1,641, 2023=1,426)

Methodology

Online surveys carried out for ASH by YouGov for adults since 2008 and for youth 11-18 since 2013. The figures have been weighted and are representative of the population.

Smokefree GB Youth survey 2023. Total sample size was 2,656 children. Fieldwork was undertaken between 21st March - 18th April 2023. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all GB children aged 11 to 18, but the majority of the results in this release have been filtered by 11-17, under the legal age of purchase of e-cigarettes.

Smokefree GB Adult survey 2023. Total sample size was 12271 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 22nd February - 15th March 2023. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all GB adults (aged 18+).

Error bars

Where the error bars on the graphs overlap, the 95% confidence intervals overlap, meaning that the differences could be due to chance. For example, in Figure 5, the apparent changes in current vaping and current smoking in young people between 2022 and 2023 may be due to chance because the error bars overlap.

Not reaching significance means 'difference not *proven* to be real', not 'difference proven *not* to be real'.

ASH Smokefree GB Youth Survey Participant Counts

Year	Age 11-15	Age 16-17	Age 11-17	Age 18	All ages 11-18	Dates
2023	1,280	748	2,028	628	2656	21st March - 18th April
2022	1,335	776	2,111	502	2613	1st – 29th March
2021	1,347	762	2,109	404	2513	25th March – 16th April
2020	1,295	734	2,029	476	2505	11th – 31st March
2019	1,243	739	1,982	541	2523	12th March – 3rd April
2018	1,288	519	1,807	484	2291	28th Feb– 17th March
2017	1,538	613	2,151	472	2623	10th March – 5th April
2016	1,326	409	1,735	596	2331	11th March – 10th April
2015	1,291	543	1,834	457	2291	6th -22nd March
2014	1,348	469	1,817	251	2068	21st March - 1st April
2013	1,422	473	1,895	283	2178	21st - 28th March

ASH Smokefree GB Adult survey participant counts

Year	Sample Size	Dates
2023	12,271	22 nd February – 15 th March
2022	13,088	16 th February – 21 st March
2021	12,247	18 th February – 18 th March
2020	12,809	17th February – 11th March
2019	12,393	12 th February – 10 th March
2018	12,767	8 th February – 6 th March
2017	12,696	16 th February – 19 th March
2016	12,157	2 nd – 23 rd March
2015	12,055	26 th February – 12 th March
2014	12,269	5 th – 14 th March
2013	12,171	1 st – 19 th February
2012	12,436	27 th February – 16 th March
2010	12,597	17 th – 22 nd March
2009	13,075	25 th – 30 th March
2008	3,329	20 th – 25 th February

Sample sizes for never smokers in Figure 7

Year	Youth never smokers	Adult never smokers
2014	1,496	5,995
2015	1,478	6,129
2016	1,466	6,099
2017	1,764	6,626
2018	1,486	6,746
2019	1,600	6,466
2020	1,640	6,832
2021	1,785	6,507
2022	1,723	7,130
2023	1,673	6,649