

# Use of vapes (e-cigarettes) among young people in Great Britain

## Summary of key findings

This factsheet analyses how behaviour and attitudes to vapes (e-cigarettes) among young people have changed over time. The ASH Smokefree GB Youth Survey analysis is based on data concerning young people aged 11-18 collected by YouGov for ASH and is carried out in the Spring each year. The survey began in 2013, and this update includes the results of the 2024 survey (n=2,596) carried out in February and March 2024. Unless stated otherwise, this factsheet reports results for 11–17-year-olds, under the legal vaping age (n=2,336).

The rates of vaping among 11–17-year-olds appear to have stabilised after a period of increase. The proportion of young people aged 11-17 who have ever vaped has not significantly changed between 2023 (20%) and 2024 (18%) (Figure 1). Current vaping among 11–17-year-olds, which includes vaping less than once a month, is 7.2% (Figure 2), and has not significantly increased since 2022. Those experimenting with vaping (trying once or twice) has not significantly changed between 2023 (11.6%) and 2024 (9.5%) (Figure 3). For more detail about vaping and smoking definitions, see Appendix 3.

In 2024, the 18% of 11–17-year-olds who have tried vaping amounts to around 980,000 children. Over half of these (53% of ever vapers, or 9.5% of all youth) had only tried once or twice (520,000 children), with 3.0% of all youth vaping less than once a week (160,000 children), 4.2% more than once a week (230,000 children), and the remainder (1.3%) saying they no longer vape.

Exposure to vape promotion remains high, having increased between 2022 and 2023 (Figure 21). In 2024, 72% of 11–17-year-olds who are aware of vapes report they were exposed to some form of vape promotion, the main sources being in shops (55%) and online (29%).

### Patterns of use

- In 2024, 18% of youth aged 11-17 had tried vaping, amounting to 980,000 children, which isn't significantly different from the rate in 2023 (20%) (Figure 1). Over half of these (53% of ever vapers, or 9.5% of all youth) had only tried once or twice (520,000 children aged 11-17), with 3.0% of all youth vaping less than once a week (160,000 children), 4.2% more than once a week (230,000 children), and the remainder (1.3%) saying they no longer vape. (Figure 3)

- Ever and current vaping increases with age. Among 11–15-year-olds 14% have ever tried vaping, compared to 28% of 16–17-year-olds and 34% of 18-year-olds (Figure 4). The figures for current use are 4.6% among those aged 11-15, 14% for 16-17 and 17% for 18-year-olds. (Figure 5)
- The proportion of never smokers who have tried vaping has declined from 11.5% in 2023 to 8.7% in 2024 (Figure 6, 380,000 children). However, as the vast majority of children don't smoke, never smokers make up four in ten (39%) children aged 11-17 who have ever tried vaping.
- In 2024, 7.2% (390,000 children aged 11-17) currently vaped compared to 5.1% (280,000 children) who currently smoked. There have been more children vaping than smoking since 2021 (Figure 7). In 2024, 2.8% (150,000 children) are dual users, who both vape and smoke. Ever smoking has increased significantly since 2023 and is now the same as ever vaping at 18%. Smoking rates are now back up to pre-pandemic levels after seeing a decline during lockdowns.
- Most (76%) of those who have never smoked but have vaped have only tried vaping once or twice.

### Reasons for vaping

- Half of never smokers who vape (51%) say they vape 'just to give it a try' compared to a quarter of those who have ever smoked (24%) (Figure 11). Among never smokers the next most popular reasons for vaping were 'other people do it so I join in' (18%) and 'I like the flavours (11%)'. Stress or mental health was the main reason given for vaping by a higher proportion of ever smokers (10%) than never smokers (2.8%).
- For the second year in a row most children aged 11-17 (58%) wrongly believe that vaping is about the same or more harmful than smoking (Figure 13). This includes nearly half (46%) of those who have tried vaping, so believing vaping is harmful does not appear to be putting children off trying vaping. (Figure 14)

### Main source and type of product used

- The most frequent source of vapes by current vapers is being given them (54%), followed by shops (48%) and informal purchase (27%) (Figure 15). Multiple options were allowed, and 13% gave the internet as a source.
- In 2024, 54% said the most frequently used device was a disposable (single use) vape, much higher than in 2021 (7.7%), but down from 69% in 2022 (Figure 17). The most popular brand was Elf Bar. (Figure 18)
- As with adults, the most popular flavours are fruit (adults 47%, children 59%), but children are more likely than adults to choose sweet flavours (16%) and less likely to choose tobacco (2.7%) and mint/menthol flavours (6.9%) (Figure 19)

### Awareness of vaping promotion

- There has been a significant growth in awareness of e-cigarette promotion over recent years, with more than half of all children aged 11-17 who were aware of

vapes being aware of promotion in shops (55%) up from 37% in 2022 (Figure 20). Three in ten children who were aware of vapes were aware of online promotion (29%). Only one in five (19%) say they never see e-cigarettes being promoted, down from 31% in 2022.

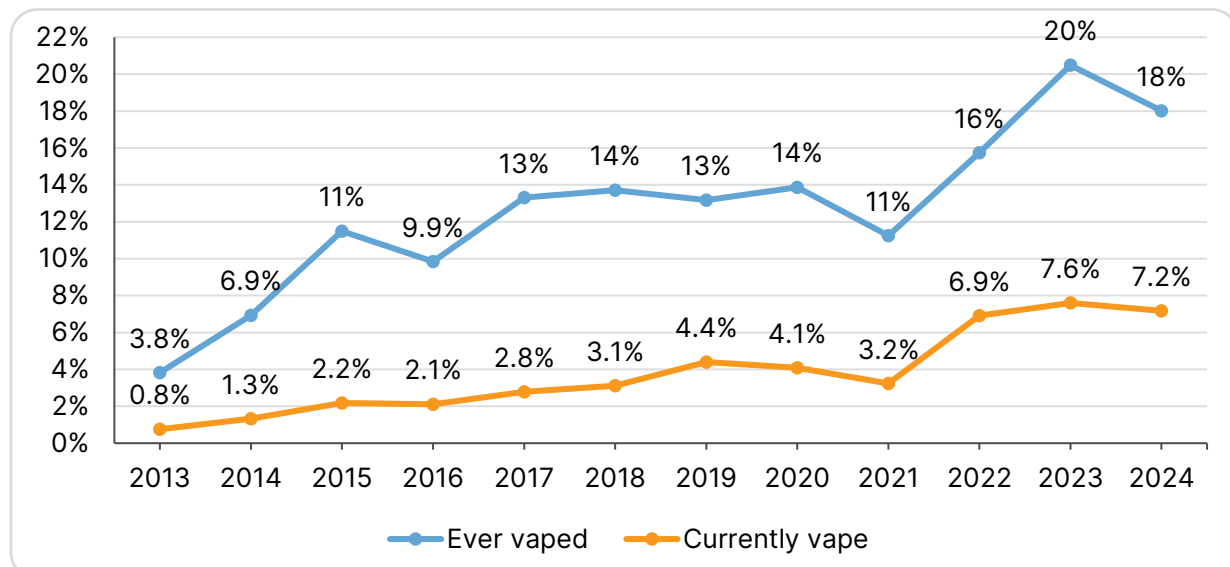
- Although selling nicotine vapes to children is illegal, giving them out for free is currently still legal, and it is of concern that 2.9% of children aged 11-17 who have ever tried vaping report that their first vape was given them by an e-cigarette company. (Figure 16)

In conclusion, although our survey suggests the rapid rise in youth (aged 11-17) vaping since the pandemic has stabilised in 2024, it is not yet clearly declining. And although the vast majority (81%) of children aged 11-17 have never tried vaping, over a third of those who have tried vaping have never smoked. Furthermore, children’s awareness of promotion continues to rise. The big increase in the use of disposable products has happened concurrently with higher levels of youth use from 2021 to 2023.

## Introduction

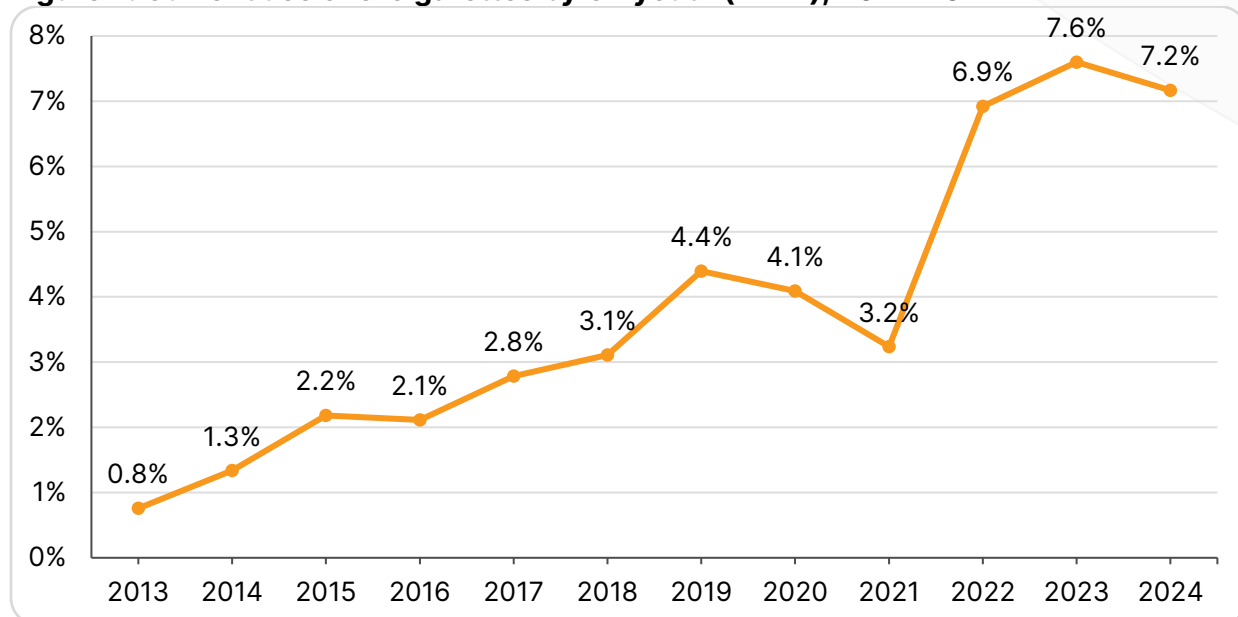
The survey of smoking and vaping attitudes and behaviour among 11–18-year-olds, has been carried out annually in Spring each year by YouGov for ASH since 2013. The methodology is set out in Appendix 2. This factsheet largely presents the results for those aged 11-17 as it is illegal to sell vapes to children under 18. For information on adult vaping see our fact sheet on adult use.<sup>1</sup> For a summary of regulations on e-cigarettes see Appendix 1. For detail about vaping and smoking definitions, see Appendix 3.

**Figure 1. Use of e-cigarettes by GB youth (11-17), 2013-2024**



**ASH Smokefree GB Youth Surveys, 2013-2024.** *Unweighted base: All 11-17-year-olds (2013=1,895, 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, 2024=2,574).*

**Figure 2. Current use of e-cigarettes by GB youth (11-17), 2014-2024**



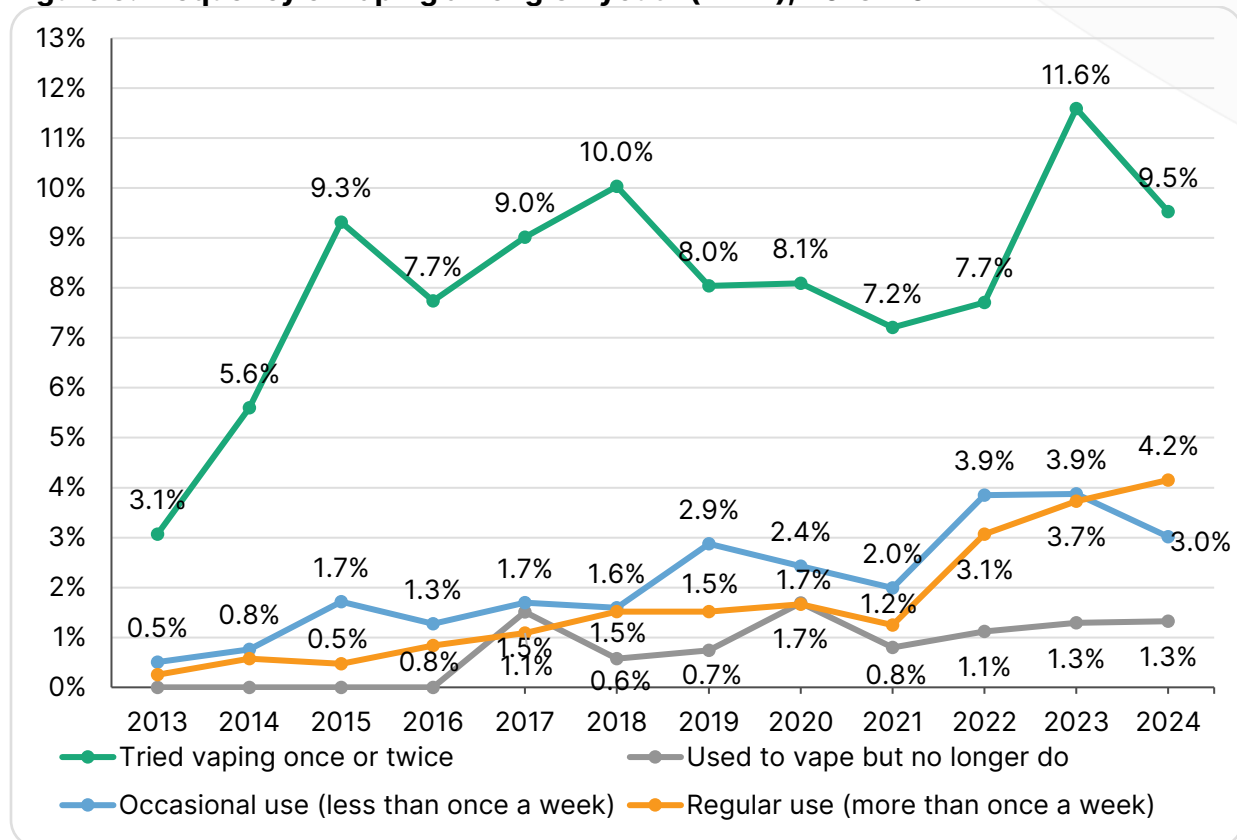
**ASH Smokefree GB Youth Surveys, 2013-2024.** *Unweighted base: All 11-17-year-olds (2013=1,895, 2014=1,817, 2015=1,834, 2016=1,735, 2017=2,151, 2018=1,807, 2019=1,982, 2020=2,029, 2021=2,109, 2022=2,111, 2023=2,028, 2024=2,574).*

In 2024, 18.0% had tried vaping. Ever vaping rates had increased significantly each year from 2021 (11.2%) to 2023 (20.5%), but this trend has not continued into 2024. The ever-vaping rate in 2021 was especially low, lower than in the previous 4 years. Data collection for 2020 was mainly prior to the first lockdown while data collection in 2021 followed almost a year of the pandemic, as we were beginning to emerge from the third lockdown. Lower levels of vaping in 2021 may therefore be associated with the impact of the pandemic on young people's lives (e.g. ability to access e-cigarettes).

Experimentation (trying once or twice) grew significantly from 7.7% in 2022 to 11.6% in 2023 (Figure 3). This increase has not continued into 2024 (9.5%). Most (76%) of those who have never smoked but have vaped have only tried vaping once or twice.

Current vaping than doubled between 2021 (3.2%) and 2022 (6.9%) and has remained fairly static since (7.2% in 2024). Regular use has increased in since 2021 (1.2%), with 4.2% of 11-17-year-olds vaping more than weekly in 2024.

**Figure 3. Frequency of vaping among GB youth (11-17), 2013-2024**

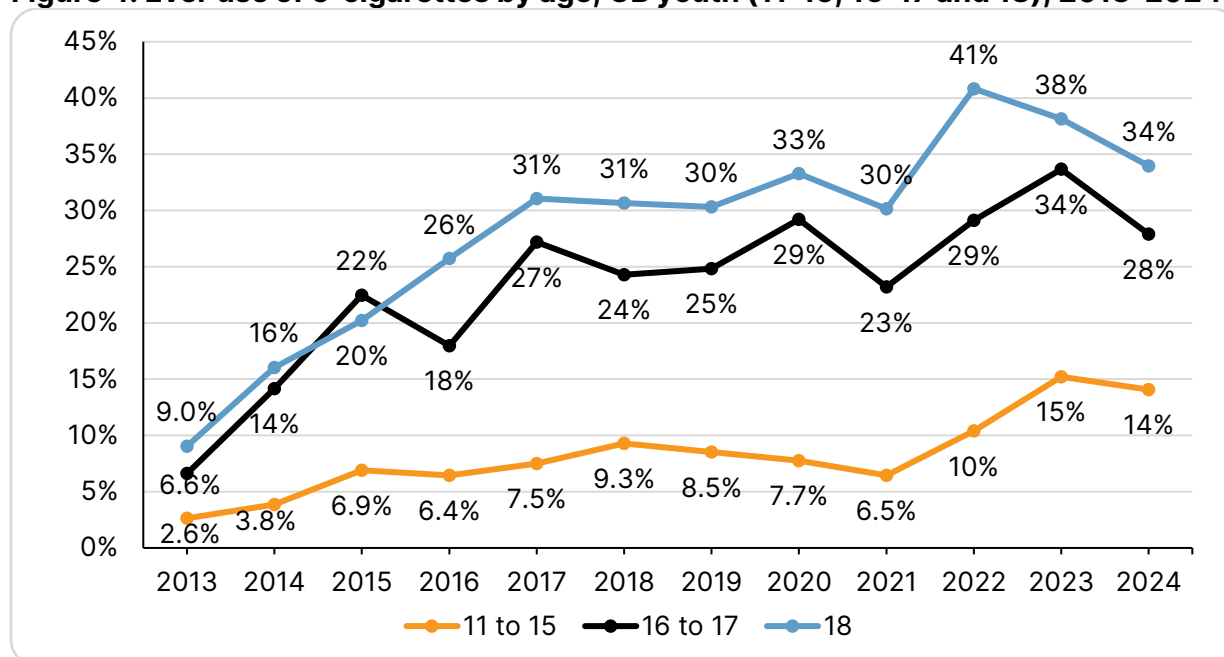


**ASH Smokefree GB Youth Surveys, 2013-2024.** *Unweighted base: All 11-17-year-olds (2013=1,895, 2014=1,817, 2015=1,834, 2016=1,735, 2017=2,151, 2018=1,807, 2019=1,982, 2020=2,029, 2021=2,109, 2022=2,111, 2023=2,028, 2024=2,574)*

## Age gradient in vaping

The prevalence of regular use and experimentation increases with age. Ever use is highest in the older age groups with 14% of 11-15-year-olds ever having vaped compared with 28% of 16-17-year-olds and 34% of 18-year-olds (Figure 4). The definition of 'ever use' includes using them in the past but no longer and 'once or twice' experimentation which, as can be seen in Figure 3, is the most common type of e-cigarette use in young people.

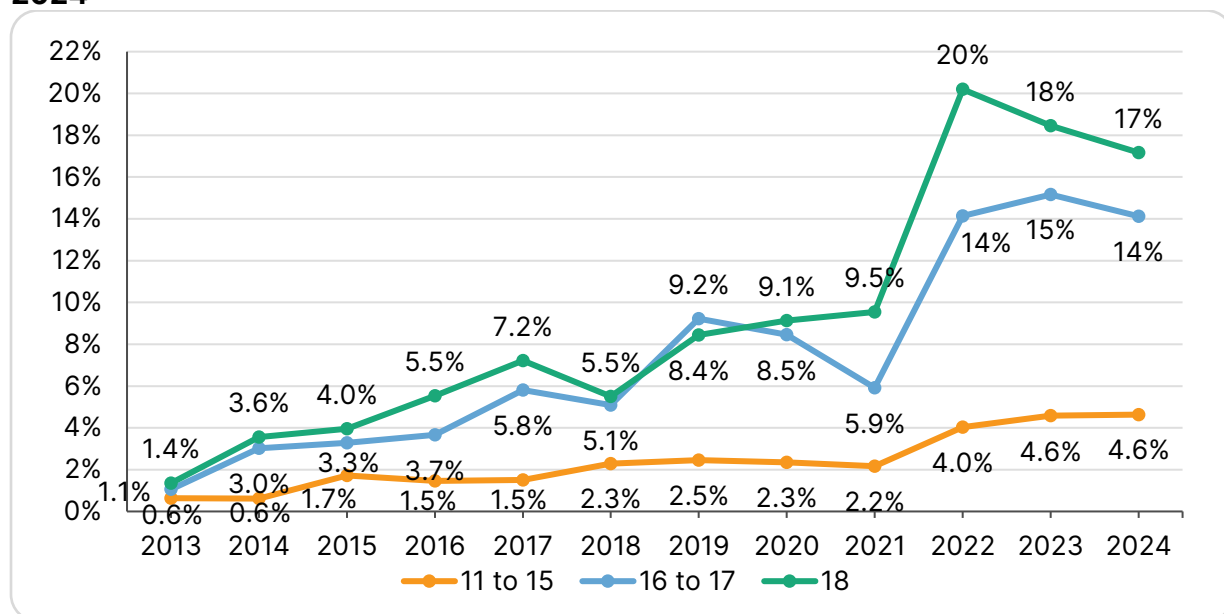
**Figure 4. Ever use of e-cigarettes by age, GB youth (11-15, 16-17 and 18), 2013-2024**



**ASH Smokefree GB Youth Survey, 2013 - 2024. Unweighted bases: All 11-18-year-olds (counts in Table 1 in Appendix 1).**

Of 11-15-year-olds only 4.6% currently use e-cigarettes compared to 14% of 16-17-year-olds (Figure 5).

**Figure 5. Current use of e-cigarettes by age, GB youth (11-15, 16-17 and 18), 2013-2024**



**ASH Smokefree GB Youth Survey, 2024. Unweighted bases: All 11-18-year-olds (counts in Table 1 in Appendix 1).**

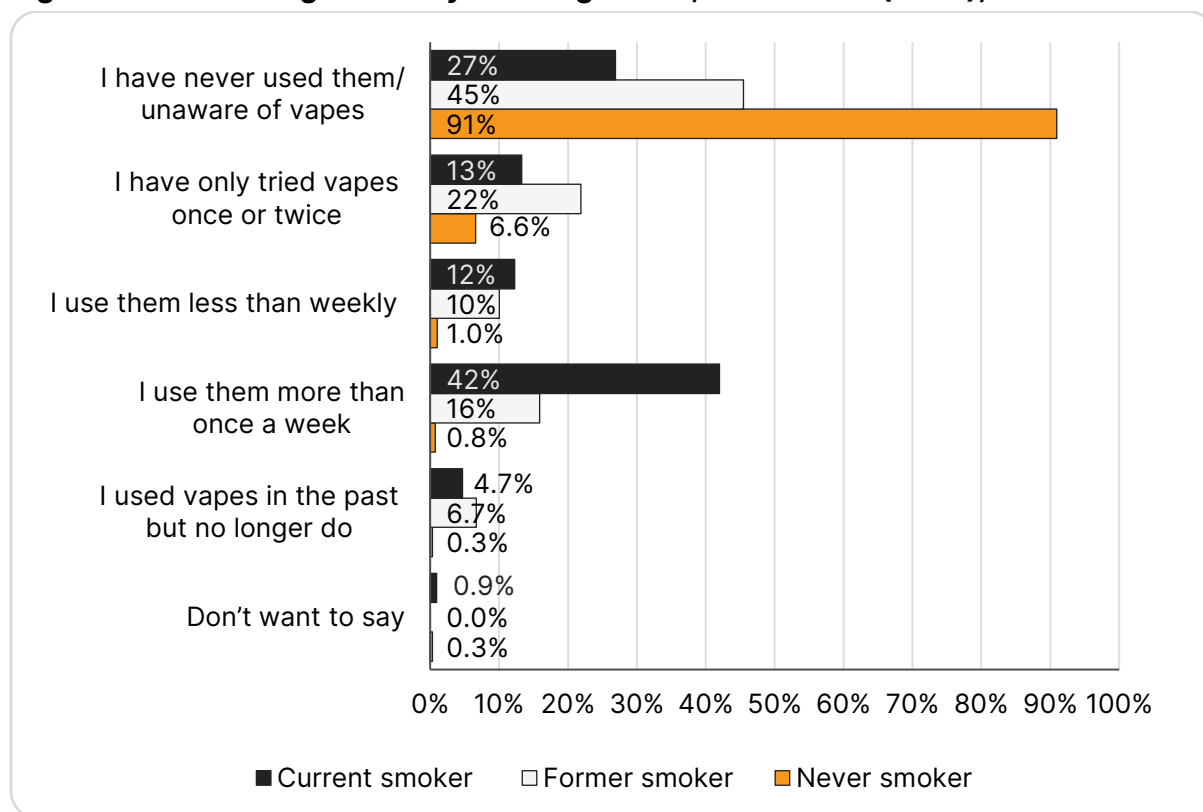
## Smoking and vaping

Use of vapes (e-cigarettes) remains much more common among current or former smokers with 90% of never smokers never having vaped, including those saying they are unaware of e-cigarettes. (Figure 6).

In total, 72% of current smokers and 55% of ex-smokers have ever used vapes. The proportion of never smokers who have ever tried vaping is 8.7%. However, never smokers account for four in ten (39%) children who have ever tried vaping, as the vast majority of children (81%) have never smoked a cigarette.

Current use of e-cigarettes among 11–17-year-olds is considerably higher among current smokers (54%) than former smokers (26%) or never smokers (1.8%).

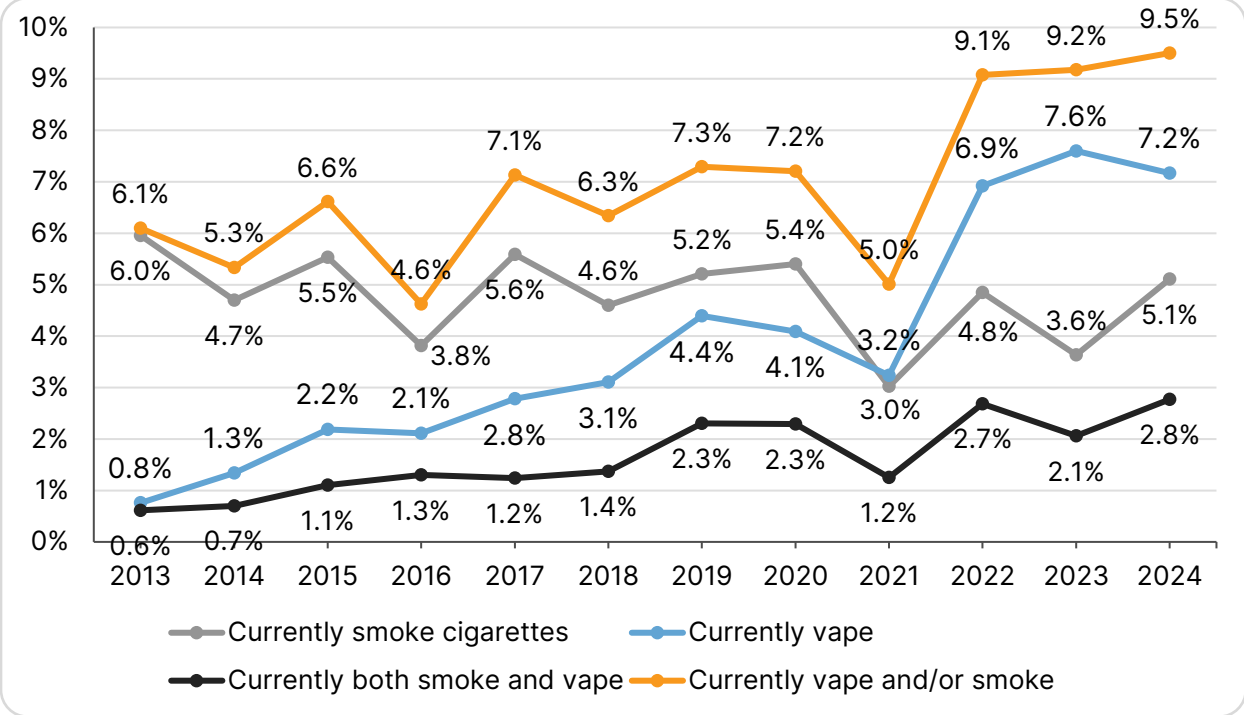
**Figure 6. Use of e-cigarettes by smoking status, GB children (11-17), 2024**



**ASH Smokefree GB Youth Survey, 2024.** Unweighted base: All 11–17-year-olds (never smokers=2,043, former smokers =121, current smokers =138)

Since 2021 the proportion of children currently vaping has been greater than those currently smoking (7.2% compared to 5.1% in 2024, Figure 7). In 2024, 2.8% of 11-17-year-olds are dual users of cigarettes and vapes and 9.5% use at least one of them.

**Figure 7. Current use of cigarettes and vapes over time, GB youth (11-17), 2013-2024**



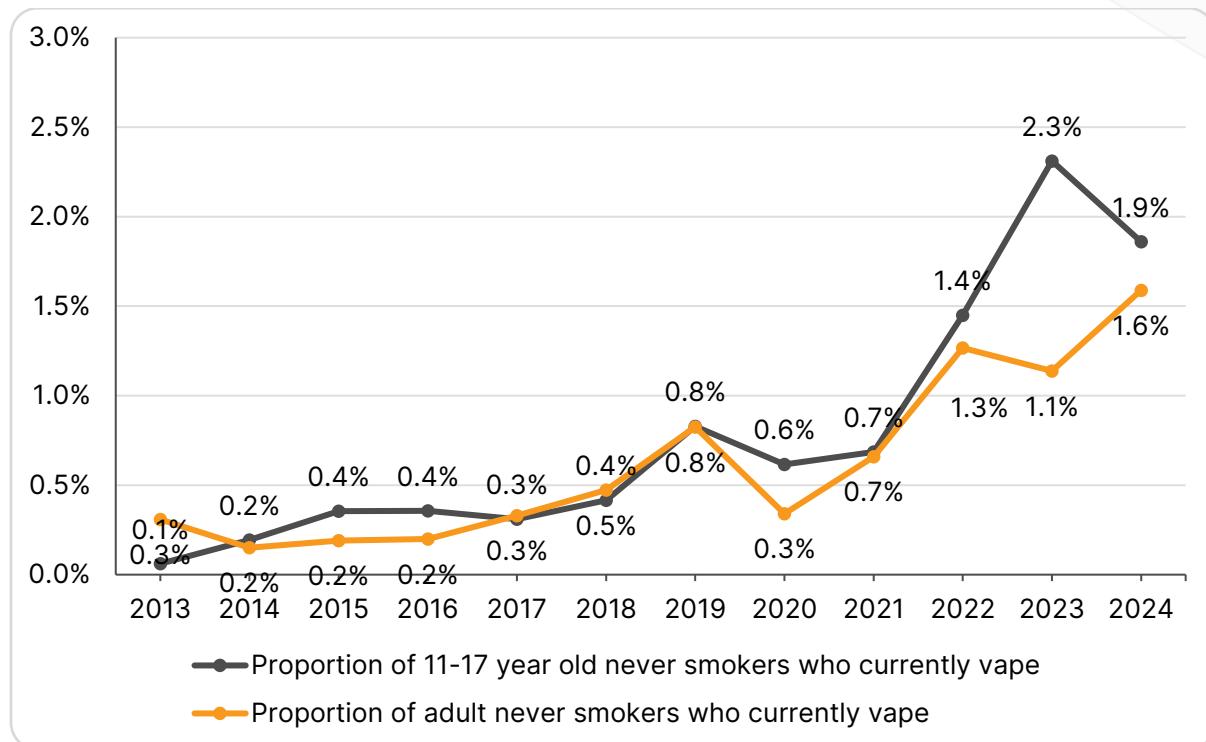
**ASH Smokefree GB Youth Surveys, 2013-2024.** *Unweighted base: All 11-17-year-olds (2013=1,895, 2014=1,817, 2015=1,834, 2016=1,735, 2017=2,151, 2018=1,807, 2019=1,982, 2020=2,029, 2021=2,109, 2022=2,111, 2023=2,028, 2024=2,574)*

Last year, a significantly higher proportion of youth never smokers vaped (2.3%) than adult never smokers (1.1%, Figure 8). In 2024, the estimates of adult and youth never smoker vaping rates were more similar (for more information, see the Appendix).

However, the rise in vaping among youth and adult never smokers remains a concern.



**Figure 8. Proportion of never smokers who currently vape, GB adult never smokers and youth never smokers (11-17), 2013-2024**

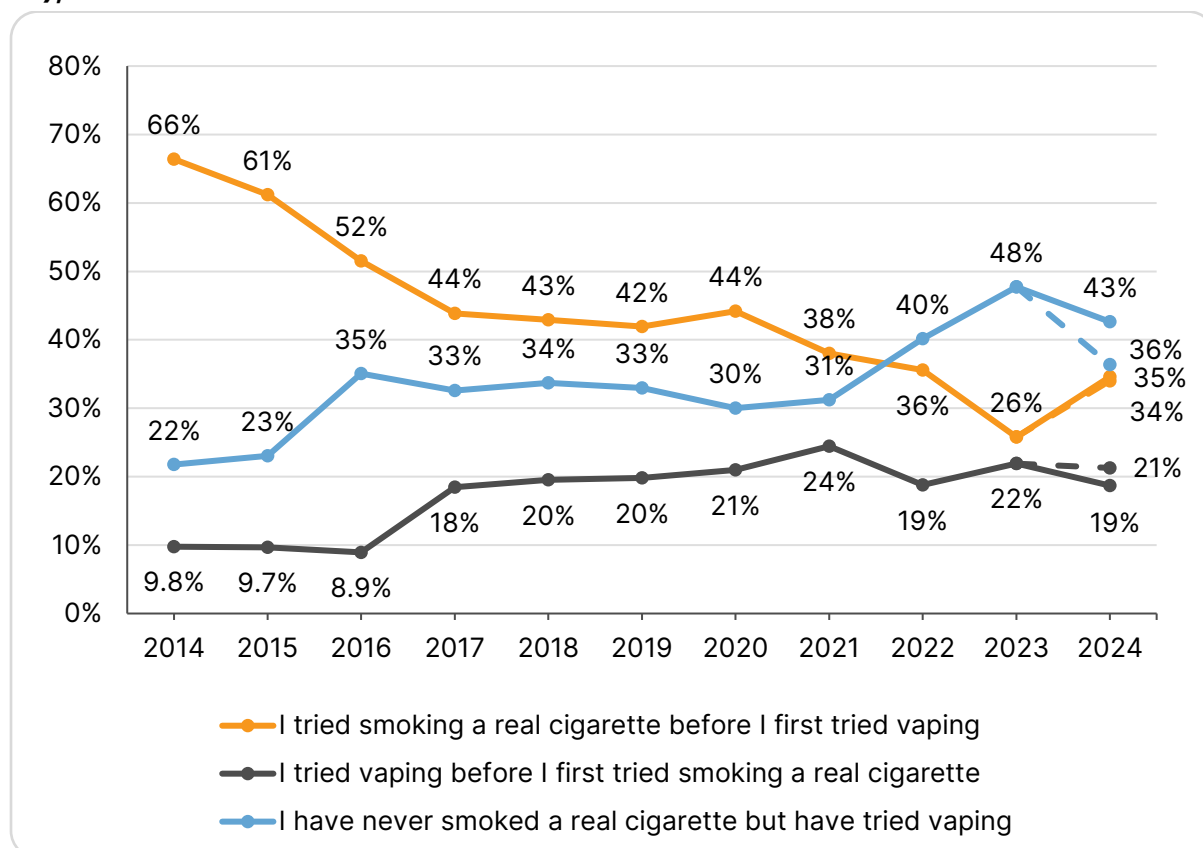


**ASH Smokefree GB Adult & Youth Surveys, 2024.** *Unweighted base: youth never smokers (2014=1,496, 2015=1,478, 2016=1,466, 2017=1,764, 2018=1,486, 2019=1,600, 2020=1,640, 2021=1,785, 2022=1,723, 2023=1,673, 2024=2,045), adult never smokers (2014=5,995, 2015=6,129, 2016=6,099, 2017=6,626, 2018=6,746, 2019=6,466, 2020=6,832, 2021=6,507, 2022=7,130, 2023=6,649, 2024=7,339)*

Children who have tried vaping may have no experience of cigarettes, or they might have tried a cigarette for the first time before or after first trying a vape. However, order of first use does not prove causality in either direction, and the relationship between smoking and vaping behaviours and their causes are complex. The proportion of ever vapers who tried smoking first declined from two thirds (66%) in 2013 to a quarter (26%) in 2023 (Figure 9). Meanwhile, the proportion of ever vapers who had never tried a cigarette and the proportion who tried a cigarette after vaping have both increased.

In 2024, the wording of this question was changed for a random half of the cohort, from “real cigarette” to “tobacco cigarette”. The solid lines on the graph show the results for “real cigarette” and the dashed lines for “tobacco cigarette”.<sup>1</sup>

**Figure 9. Pattern of vaping and smoking among GB children who have tried vaping (11-17), 2014-2024**



**ASH Smokefree GB Youth Surveys, 2014-2024.** *Unweighted base: 11-17-year-old respondents who said they have tried vaping (2014=118, 2015=210, 2016=168, 2017=279, 2018=254, 2019=301, 2020=327, 2021=266, 2022=390, 2023=472, 2024 'real cigarette' = 262, 2024 'tobacco cigarette'=266). The solid lines show “real cigarette” wording, while the dashed lines show “tobacco cigarette” wording.*

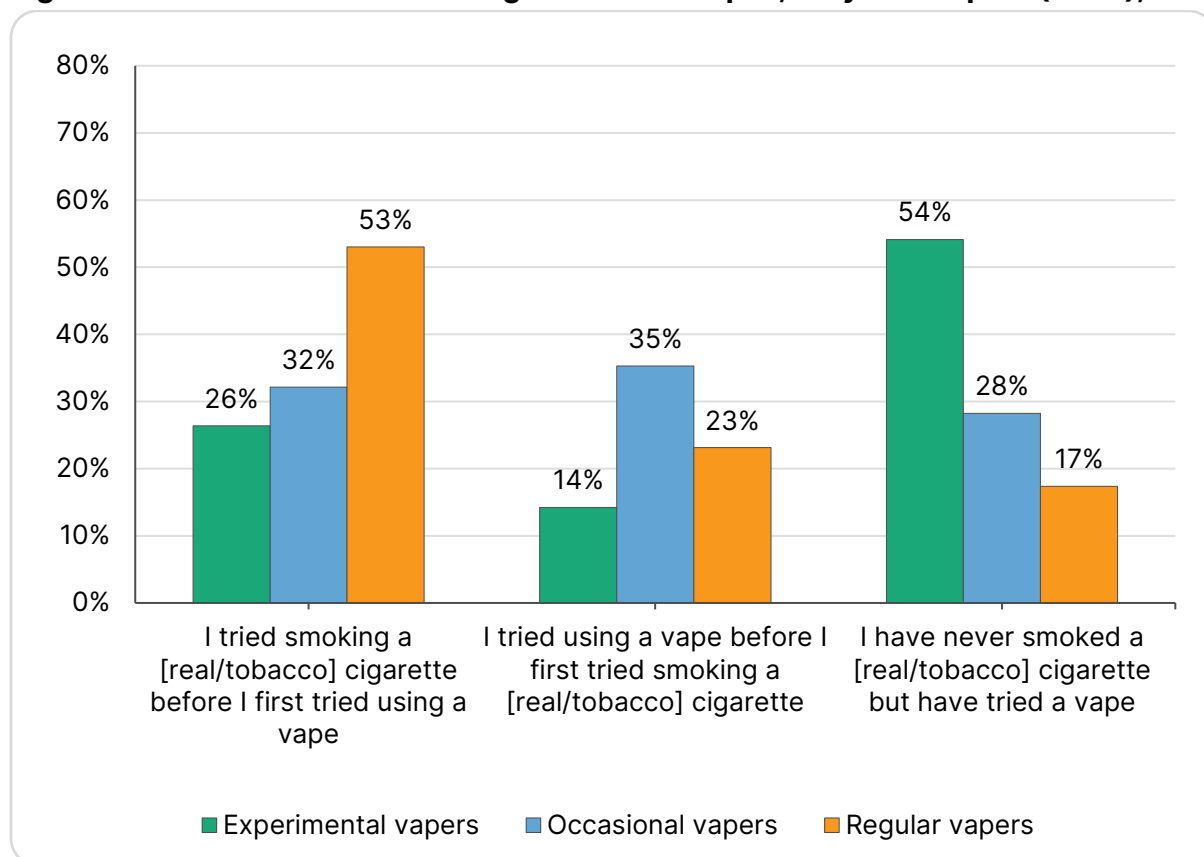
Figure 10 shows how the order of use of cigarettes and vapes by different degrees of vaping. Those who said ‘I have only tried a vapes (e-cigarettes) once or twice’ had most often never tried cigarettes (54%). Their next most likely experience was to try a cigarette

<sup>1</sup> Before 2024, the wording was “real cigarette”. Due to concern that “real cigarette” implied that vapes were a type of cigarette, in 2024, the sample was split, with a random assignment to either the “real cigarette” wording or “tobacco cigarette” wording.

before a vape (26%). These experimental vapers had rarely gone on to try a cigarette after first trying a vape (14%).

Regular vapers, those who used vapes weekly or more, were most likely to have tried smoking first (53%), and less likely to have tried vaping first (23%) or never tried smoking at all (17%).

**Figure 10. Order of use between cigarettes and vapes, GB youth vapers (11-17), 2024**



**ASH Smokefree GB Youth Survey, 2024.** Unweighted base: 11-17 year old respondents: experimental (once or twice) vapers=274, occasional vapers (less than weekly)=92, regular vapers (more than weekly)=121. Note: in 2024, wording was split to compare "real cigarette" and "tobacco cigarette". Results are combined in this graph. Analysis by ASH not verified by YouGov.

## Reasons for vaping

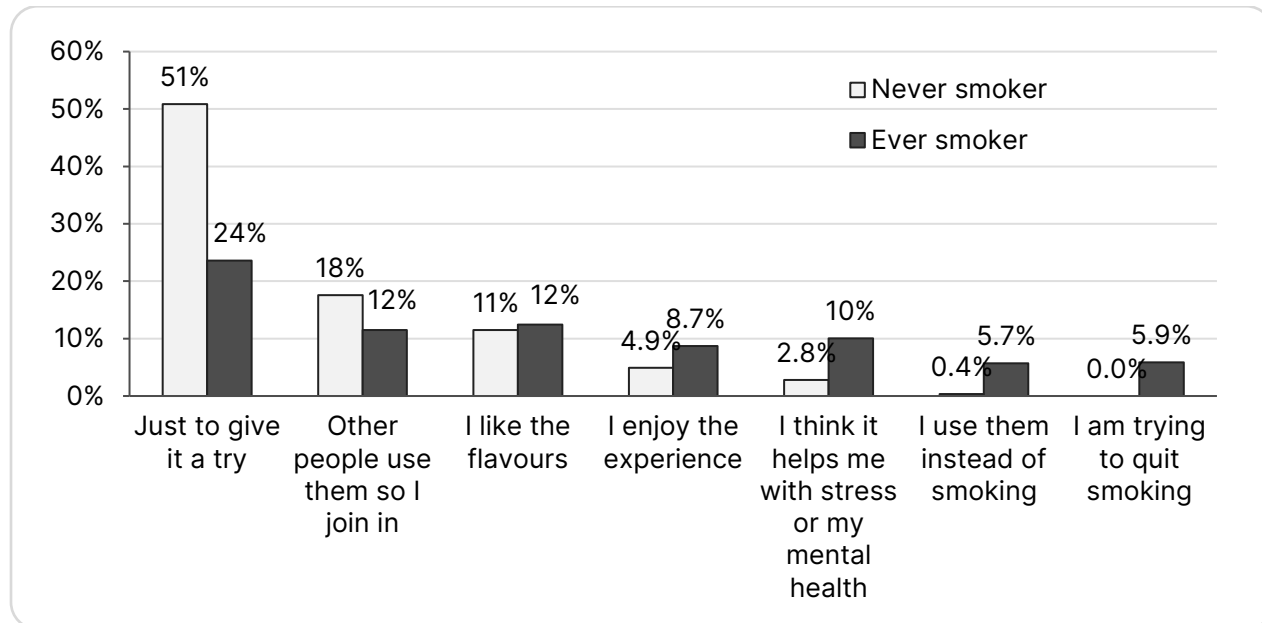
Respondents who had ever used an e-cigarette (including current, ex-users and those who had tried them at least once) were asked what reason best described why they use or used an e-cigarette. Overall, the most common reason was 'Just to give it a try' (35%), followed by 'Other people use them so I join in' (14%) and 'I like the flavours' (12%).

Two new options for the main reason for vaping were introduced in 2024: 'I think it helps me with stress or my mental health' (7.3%) and 'I think it helps me control my weight' (1.0%). These options were included as they were issues of concern, but their introduction means that comparisons with previous years aren't exactly like-for-like. However, 'Just to give it a try' and 'Other people use them so I join in' were the two most common reasons in 2023 and remain so in 2024.

The most frequent reason chosen by 11–17-year-old never smokers was 'Just to give it a try' (51% - Figure 11). The next most common reasons were 'Other people use them so I join in' (18%) and 'I like the flavours' (11%).

Ever smokers gave more diverse reasons for using e-cigarettes, although 'Just to give it a try' (24%) was still the most common. Other reasons included liking the flavours (12%), joining in with others (12%), stress relief (10%) and enjoying the experience (8.7%). Stress or mental health was the main reason given for vaping by a higher proportion of never smokers (10%) than ever smokers (2.8%).

**Figure 11. Reasons for vaping, GB youth (11-17), 2024**



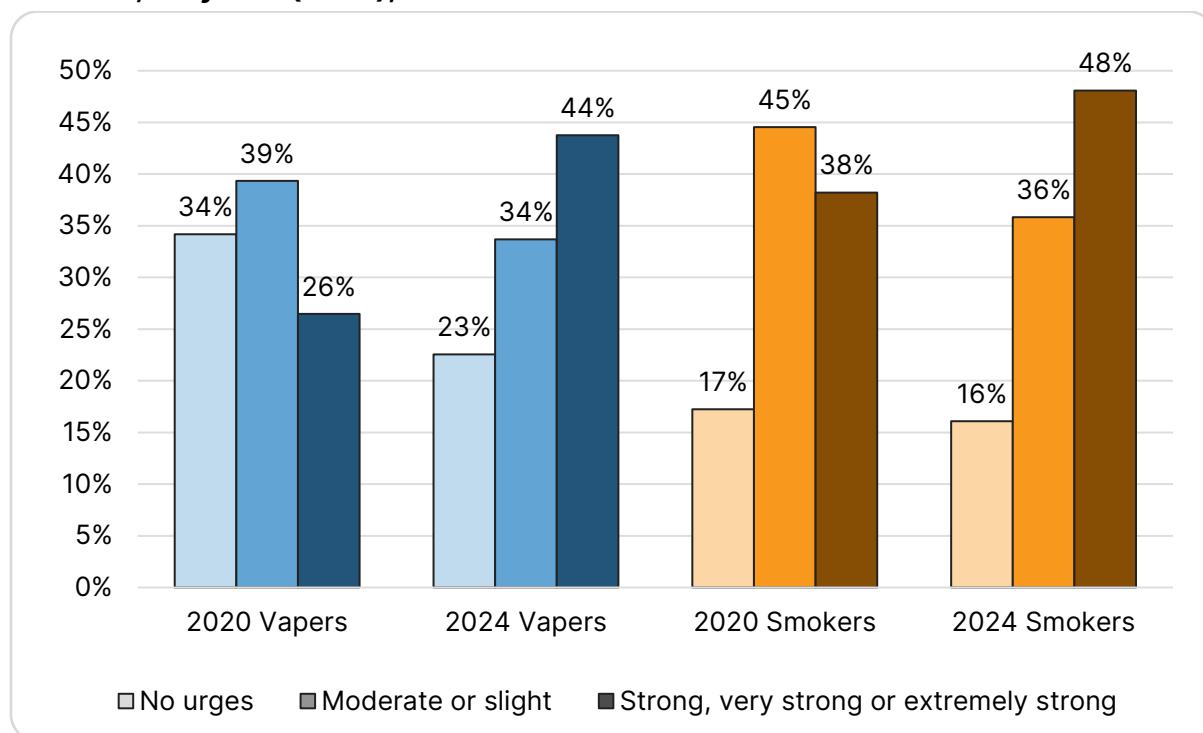
**ASH Smokefree GB Youth Survey 2024.** 11–17-year-old respondents who have tried vaping (Unweighted bases: Never smokers = 210, Ever smokers, including those who have tried them once = 302)

## Indicators of dependence

As the number of young smokers and vapers are quite small, it is quite difficult to draw many conclusions about patterns in their behaviour. However, there is reason to think vapers are becoming more dependent on vapes than they have reported a few years ago. Figure 12 shows that 26% of vapers reported strong, very strong or extremely strong urges to vape in 2020, compared with 44% in 2024 (Figure 12). The increase is significant (see note in Appendix 1).

In 2020, vapers were significantly more likely to report no urges to vape (34%) than smokers were to report no urges to smoke (17%) (Figure 12). However, in 2024, the distribution of vapers' urges to vape is very similar to smokers' urges to smoke.

**Figure 12. Reported urge to vape among vapers and reported urge to smoke among smokers, GB youth (11-17), 2020 & 2024**



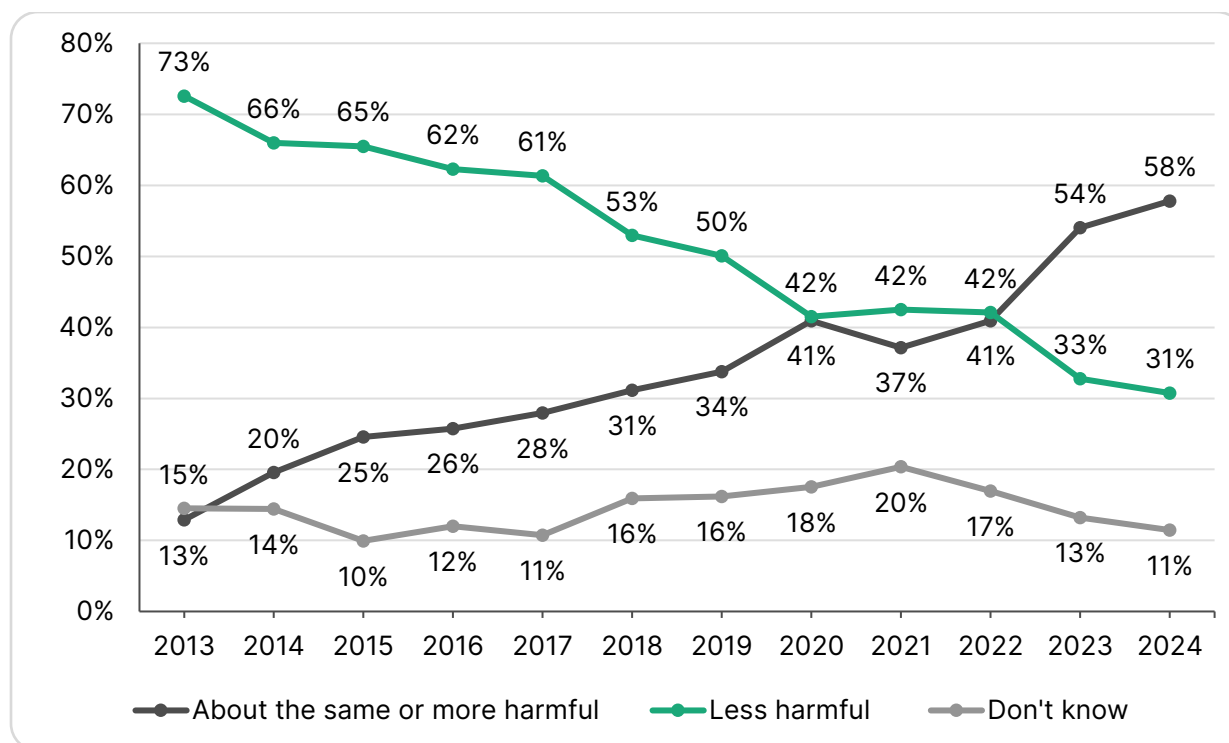
**ASH Smokefree GB Youth Survey, 2024.** *Unweighted base: 11-17-year-olds, (current vapers 2020=94, current vapers 2024=213, current smokers 2020=76, current smokers 2024=138)*

## Impact of perceptions of harm on vaping

Since 2013 there has been a steady fall in the number of young people who correctly identify vaping as being relatively less harmful than tobacco smoking. In 2013, 73% of young people correctly said that e-cigarettes were less harmful than smoking, falling to only a third (31%) in 2024 (Figure 13).

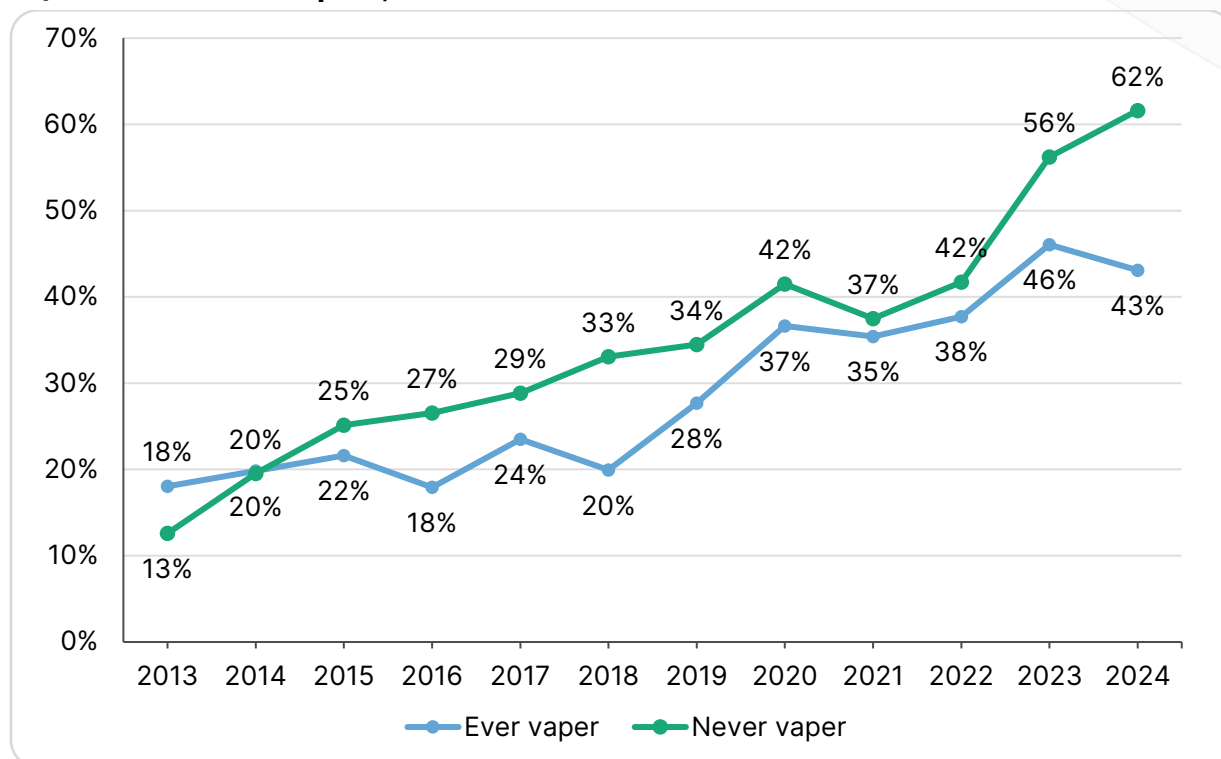
The proportion of young people incorrectly saying that e-cigarettes are more or equally harmful as tobacco cigarettes has grown from 13% in 2013 to well over half (58%) in 2024. This includes nearly half (43%) of those who have tried vaping (Figure 14), so believing vaping is at least as harmful as smoking does not appear to be putting children off trying vaping. There are similar misconceptions among adults, with half (50%) of GB adults believing that vaping is equally, more or much more harmful than smoking.

**Figure 13. Perceptions of harm of e-cigarettes compared to smoking, GB youth (11-17), 2013-2024**



**ASH Smokefree GB Youth Surveys 2013-2024.** *Unweighted base: 11-17-year-olds aware of vapes (2013=1,190, 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, 2024=2,336)*

**Figure 14. Misperceptions of harm of e-cigarettes compared to smoking, GB youth (11-17) ever and never vapers, 2013-2024**



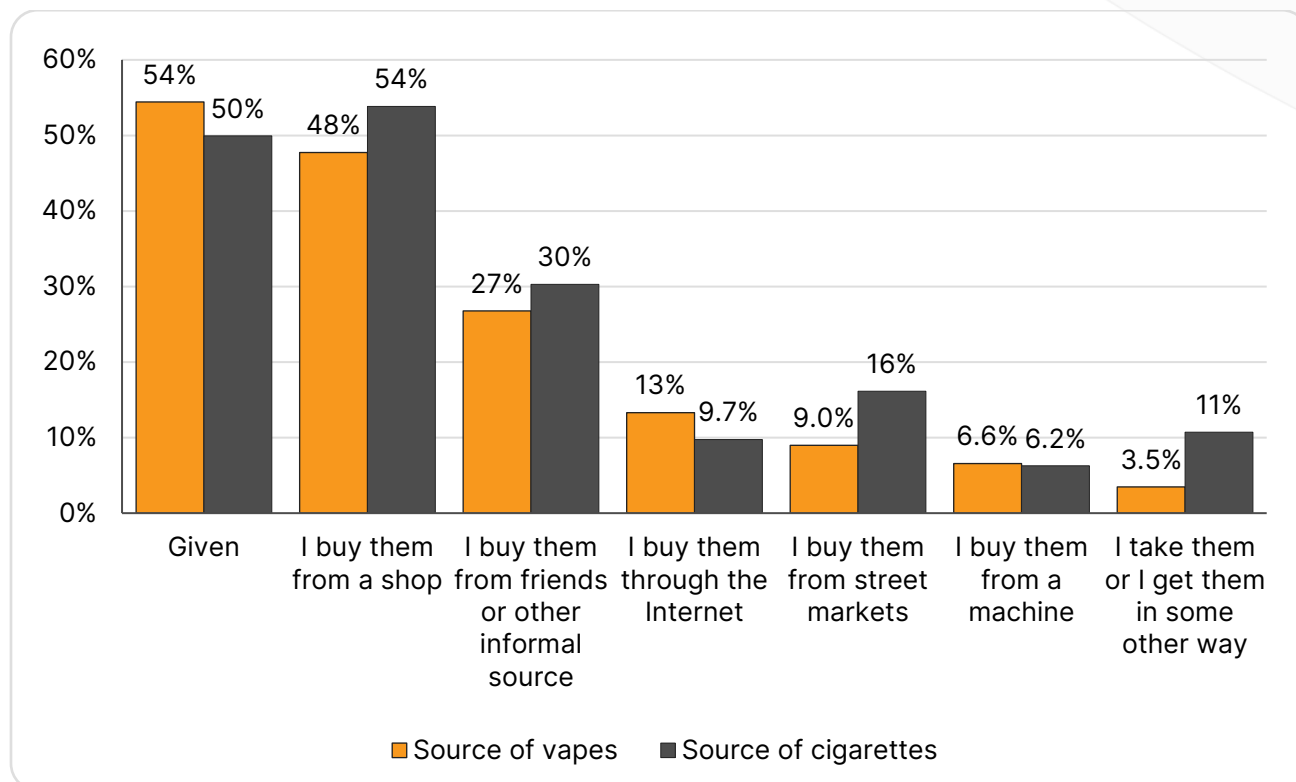
**ASH Smokefree GB Youth Surveys 2013-2024. The proportion of ever/never vapers who believe that vaping is equally or more harmful compared with smoking**  
*Unweighted base: Ever and never vapers (counts in Table 2 in Appendix 1)*

## How underage users access vapes and cigarettes

The sale of tobacco and e-cigarettes to people under the age of 18 is an offence, however purchase from shops is common with 48% of 11–17-year-olds who currently vape purchasing from shops, and 54% of smokers (Figure 15). A significant proportion of current vapers buy from an informal source (27% for vapes and 30% for cigarettes) even though proxy purchase, buying on behalf of someone else, is also illegal.

Online purchases are much less frequent, with 13% of current vapers citing this as a source and 9.7% of smokers.

**Figure 15. Sources of cigarettes and e-cigarettes among current users aged 11-17, 2024**

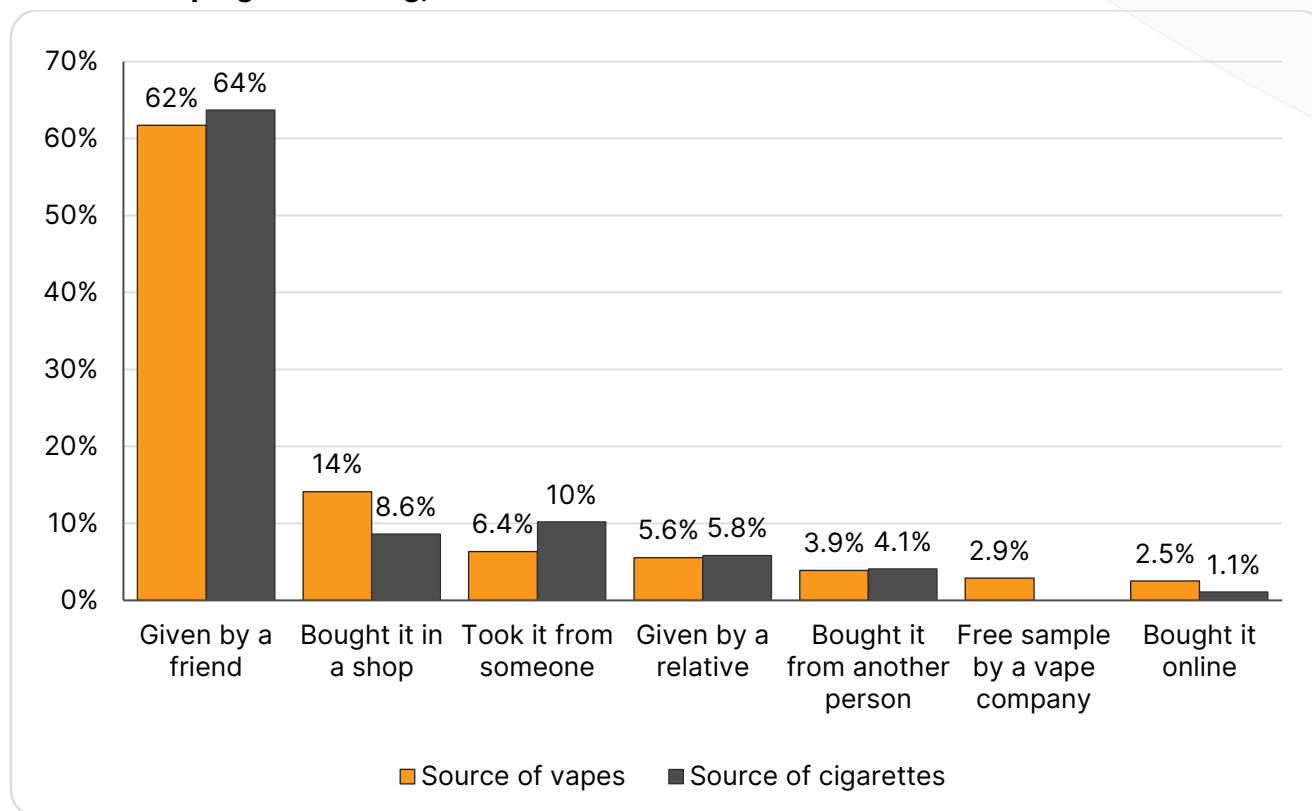


**ASH Smokefree GB Youth Survey, 2024.** *Unweighted base: 11–17-year-olds who currently smoke or vape (respondents who currently smoke: 138, respondents who currently vape: 213). Respondents allowed to tick more than one box if more than one usual source. There was also a ‘Don’t want to say’ option, chosen by 2.6% of vapers and 1.9% of smokers.*

Children are most likely to be given their first cigarette (70%) and e-cigarette (70%), primarily by friends (Figure 16). Around one in 35 (2.9%) of ever vapers say they were given their first vape by an e-cigarette company. At the current time, unlike selling vapes to children, giving them vapes is not illegal whatever their age.



**Figure 16. First source of e-cigarettes or cigarettes for children aged 11-17 who have ever tried vaping or smoking, 2024**



**ASH Smokefree GB Youth Survey, 2024.** Unweighted base: 11-17-year-olds who have ever tried cigarettes: 485; 11-17-year-olds who have ever tried vapes: 528. There was also a 'Can't remember/ don't want to say' option, chosen by 2.6% of vapers and 5.4% of smokers.

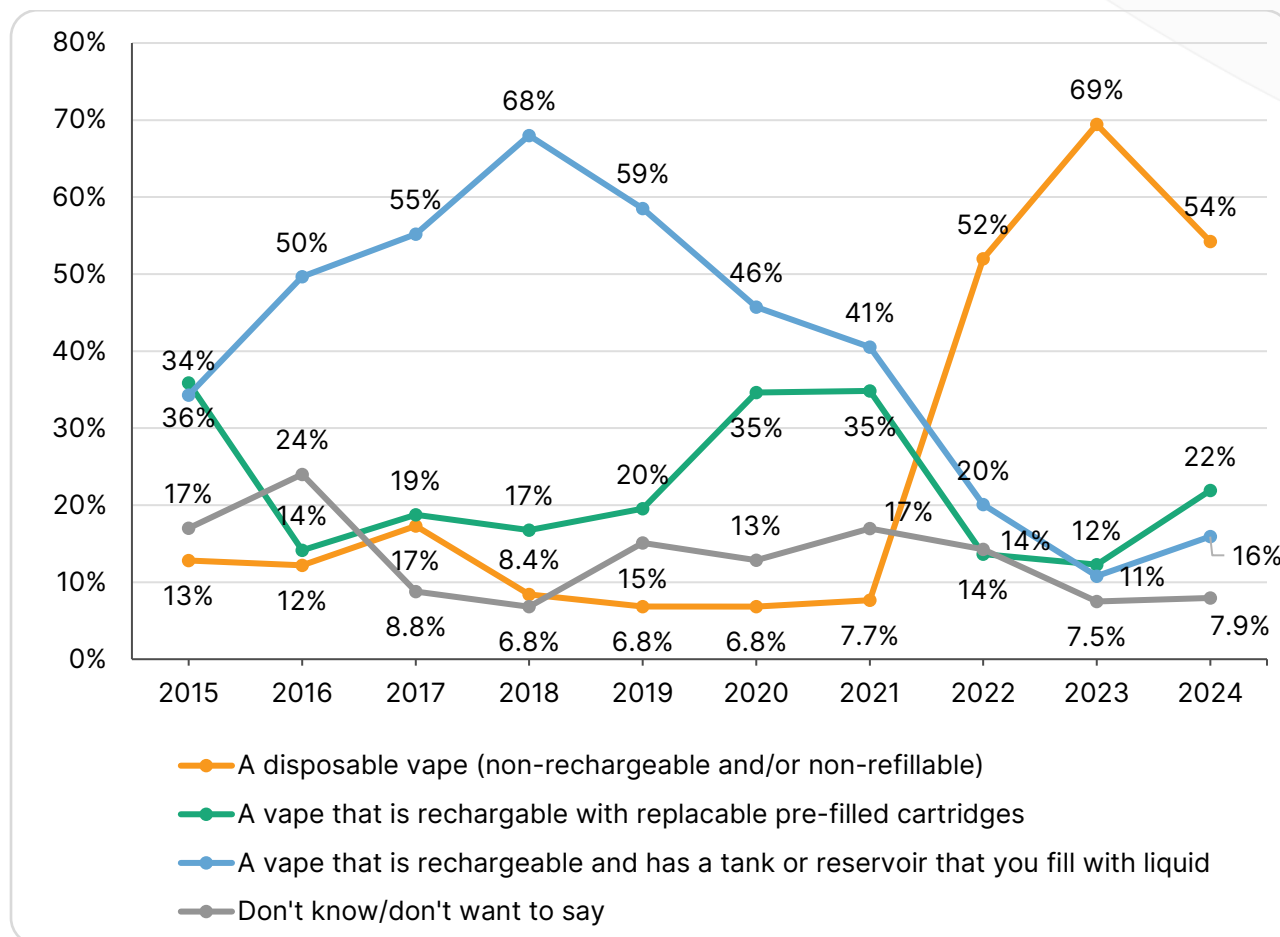
## Types of products used

### Devices

The most frequently used device has changed significantly over time. In 2024, over half of current vapers (54%) aged 11-17 chose the disposable type (Figure 17). This is a decrease since 2023 (69%). Before 2021, disposable vapes were much less popular. There was more than a 7-fold increase between 2020 and 2022.

A disposable vape ban is due to come fully into force by April 2025 with a six-month runup period, so there are likely to be significant changes in the types of products being used by next year, which we will be monitoring.

**Figure 17. Most frequently used vapes by device type, GB youth (11-17) current vapers, 2015-2024**



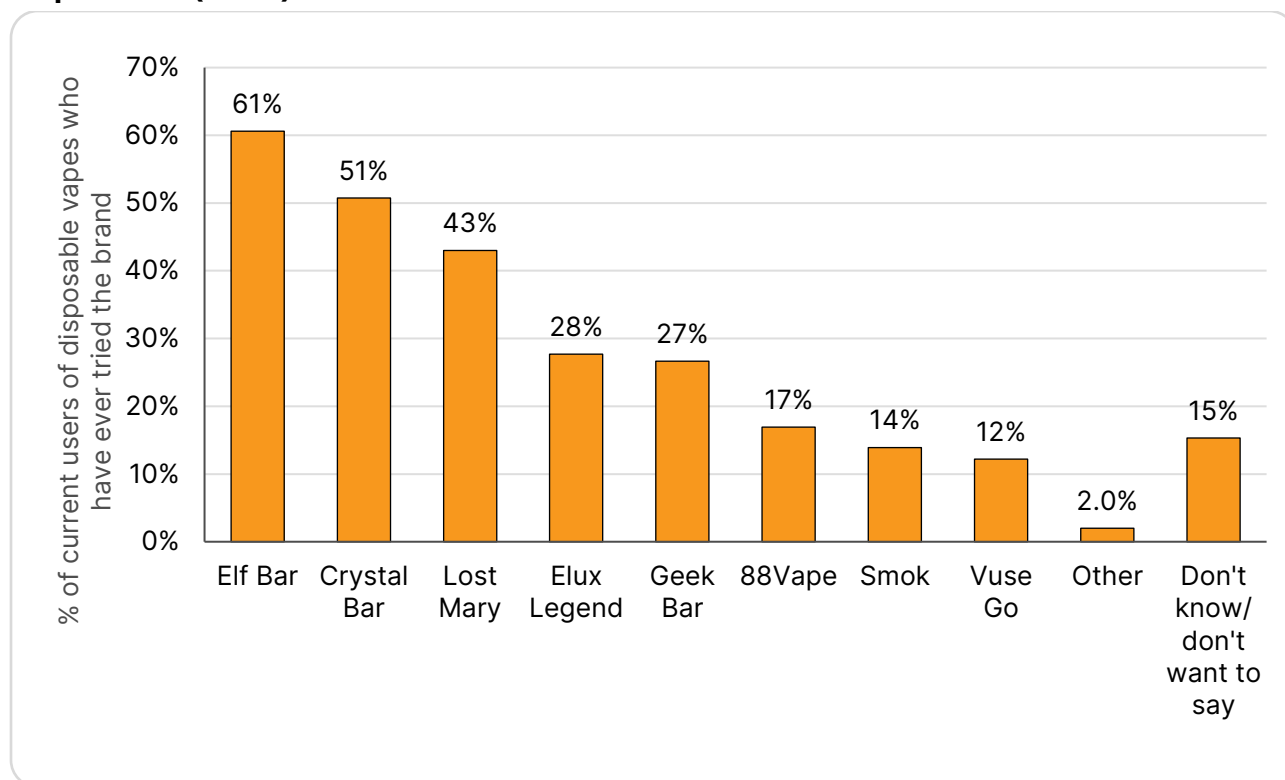
**ASH Smokefree GB Youth Surveys 2015 - 2024.** *Unweighted base: 11–17-year-olds who are current vapers (2015=41, 2016=36, 2017=60, 2018=59, 2019=94, 2020=94, 2021=76, 2022=172, 2023=187, 2024=213)*

### E-liquids

As in the previous few years, among youth aged 11-17 who vape disposable models the most popular brand of disposable vape is Elf Bar (61% of current vapers have tried, Figure 18). The next most popular are Crystal Bar (51%) and Lost Mary (43%). Crystal Bar is more popular than last year, when only 27% of current vapers had tried the brand. None of the main products on the market are made by tobacco companies, which have been late to the market with their own brand of modern disposable vapes. It was only in 2022 that BAT launched Vuse Go,<sup>2</sup> Imperial the Blu Bar disposable vape,<sup>3</sup> and PMI its Veeba disposable. Our surveys show that 12% of current vapers aged 11-17 had tried Vuse Go.

There was no explicit option for Blu Bar or Veeba, but neither were ever entered in the 'Other' option.

**Figure 18. Brand of devices ever tried by GB 11–17-year-olds who currently vape disposables (2024)**



**ASH Smokefree GB Youth Survey, 2024.** *Unweighted base: 11–17-year-old respondents who currently use disposable vapes (192). Respondents asked to select every brand they have used.*

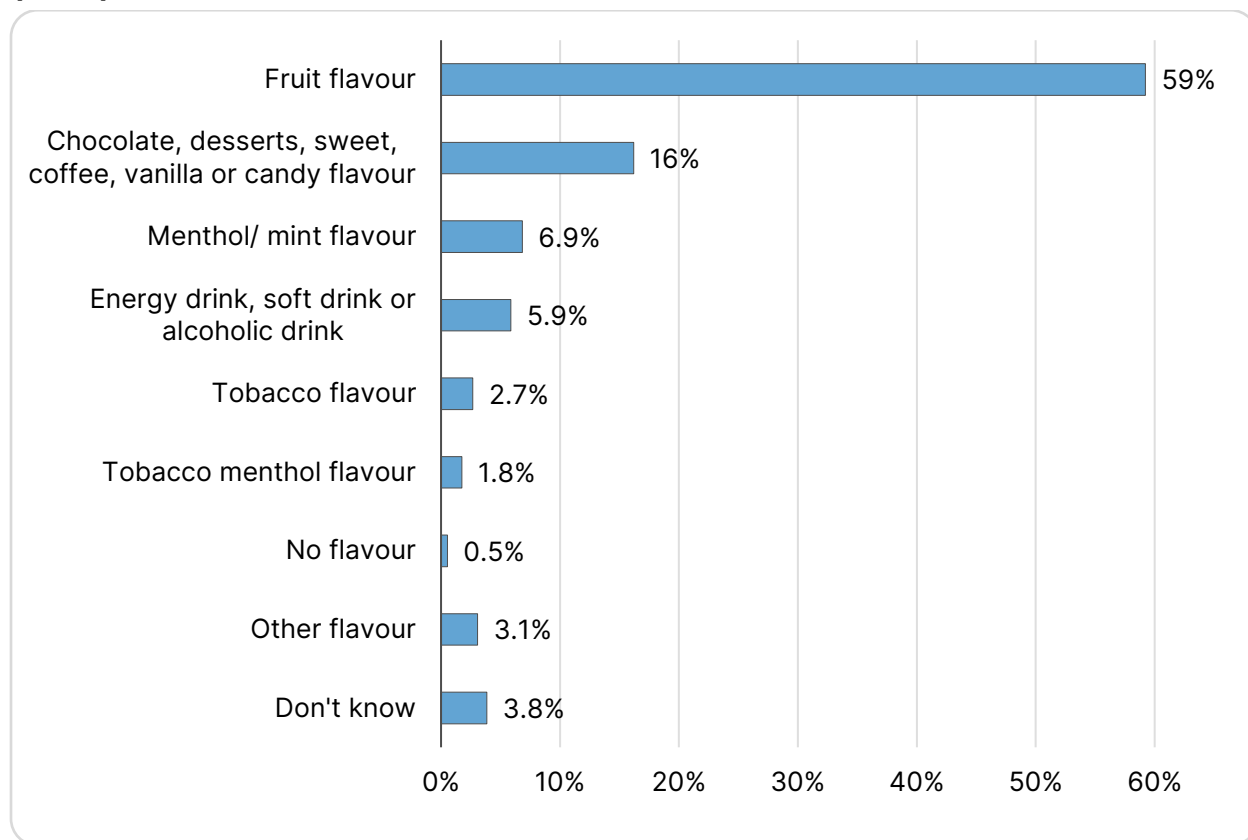
### Indicators of dependence

In 2024, 5.3% of current vapers said they usually use nicotine-free vapes. A quarter (27%) used vapes below the maximum nicotine strength legal for adults (20mg/ml or 2%), another quarter (24%) used vapes at that limit and 12% report using vapes above the limit. The remaining 31% didn't know or didn't want to say their usual vape strength.

The most frequently used e-cigarette flavouring for young people is 'fruit flavour' chosen by 59% of current e-cigarette users. The next most popular are sweet flavours, including chocolate, candy, coffee and vanilla flavours, chosen by 16%. No other flavour is cited by more than 10% of current child vapers. (Figure 19).

Fruit is also the most popular flavour among adults (47%), but children are more likely than adults to choose sweet flavours (16% children, 8.8% adults) and less likely to choose tobacco (2.7% children, 16% adults) and mint/menthol flavours (6.9% children, 17% adults).

**Figure 19. Most frequently used vape liquid flavour, current GB youth (11-17) vapers, (2024)**

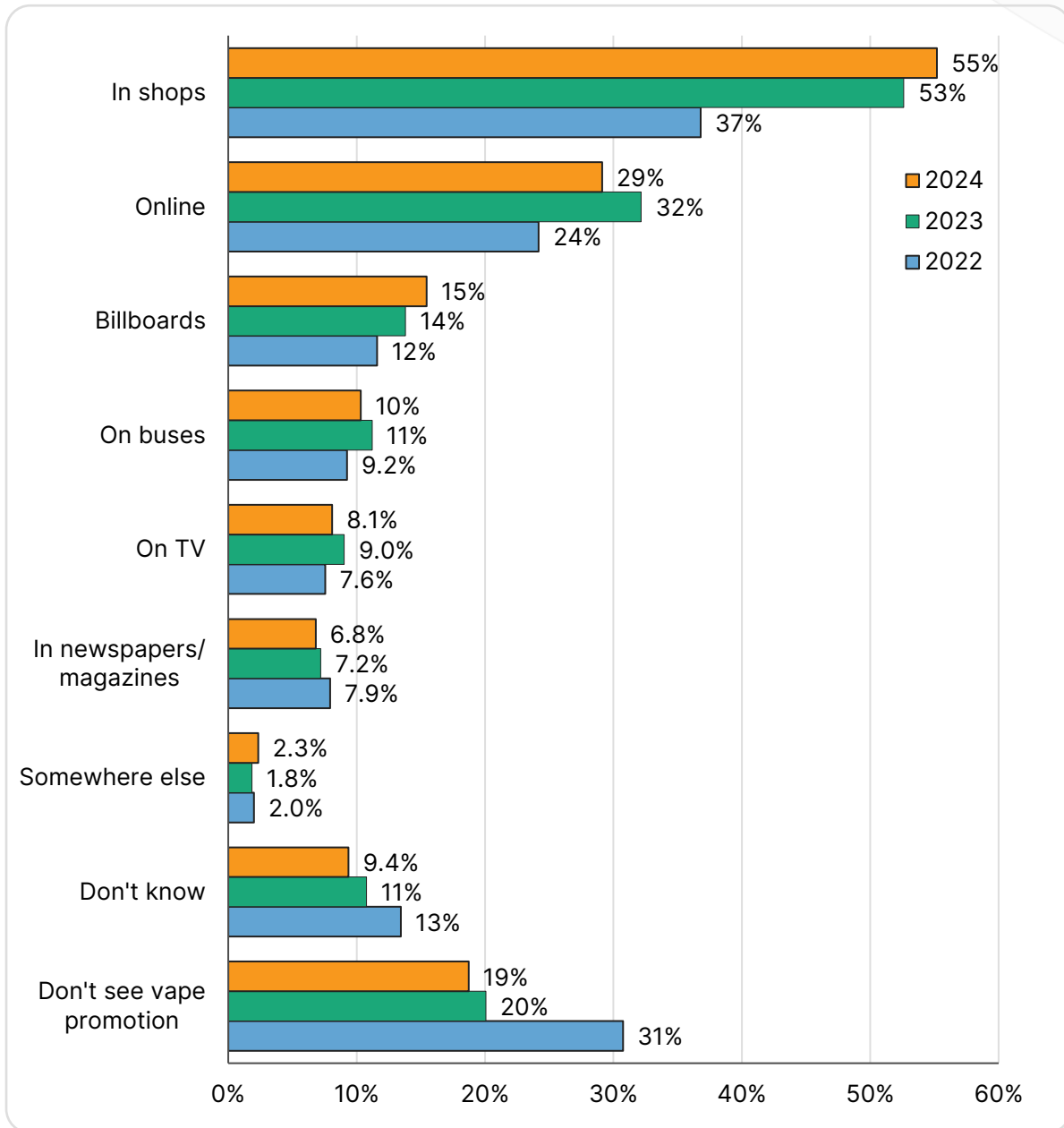


**ASH Smokefree GB Youth Survey 2024.** *Unweighted base: 11-17-year-old current vapers: 213*

## Awareness of vaping promotion

Figure 20 shows how the awareness of vaping promotion has grown among 11-17-year-olds between 2022 and 2024. There has been a significant increase in awareness of promotion in shops and online over these years and a decline in those saying they don't see e-cigarettes being advertised. In 2024, 72% of 11-17-year-olds who were aware of vapes report they were exposed to some form of vape promotion, the most common type being in shops (55%) and online (29%).

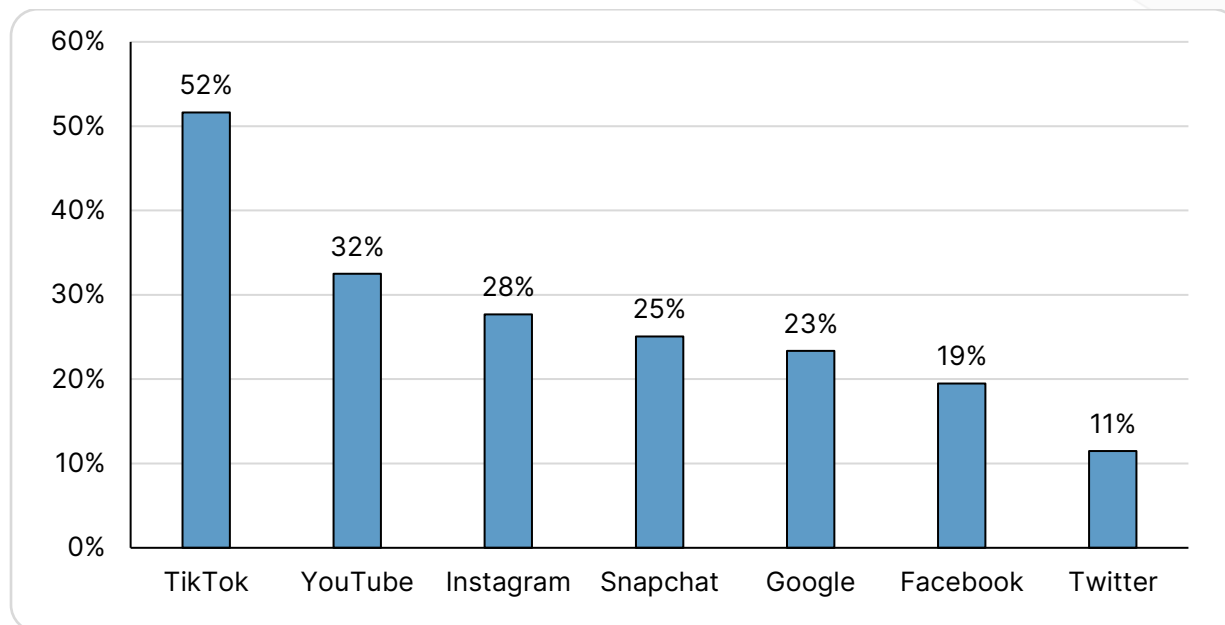
**Figure 20. Awareness of vape promotion among GB youth (11-17) who are aware of vapes, 2022-2024**



**ASH Smokefree GB Youth Surveys 2022-2024.** *Unweighted base: 11-17-year-olds aware of vapes (2022=2,111, 2023=1,917, 2024=2,336)*

Of those who reported seeing e-cigarettes promoted online the most common place was on TikTok (52%), followed by YouTube (32%) and Instagram (28%). (Figure 21)

**Figure 21. Location of online promotion of vapes, GB youth (11-17) who have seen it online, 2024**



**ASH Smokefree GB Youth Surveys 2024.** *Unweighted base: 11-17-year-olds aware of e-cigarettes who have seen them promoted online (n=713)*

### **Experiment to evaluate the impact of standardising vape packaging**

In the 2021 survey,<sup>4</sup> images of different e-cigarette starter packs were shown to 11-18-year-old respondents to our survey who were asked to tell us which packs they would be interested in trying. Respondents were randomly allocated either to packs with their usual brand imagery or packs with the brand imagery removed, but the brand name retained. The experiment sought to assess if young people were more likely to be interested in packs with brand imagery than those without.

Among those shown the branded packs 40% expressed a preference for one of the brands. Among those shown packs without brand imagery 32% expressed a preference – a statistically significant difference. Among the children who had never tried an e-cigarette the difference was slightly larger with 37% expressing a preference when shown the fully branded packs and 27% expressing a preference when shown the packs without brand imagery.

We showed the same packs to respondents in our survey of adult (18+ years). Among current smokers there was no statistically significant difference in trying an e-cigarette starter pack whether it had brand imagery (31%) or not (27%). Smokers who had never vaped were less likely to express a preference for packs with brand imagery removed

than smokers who had tried vaping (13% compared to 36%). However, again there was no statistically significant difference between packs with brand imagery (14%) and those without (12%).

These findings suggest that removing brand imagery could have an impact in reducing the appeal of e-cigarettes to young people without compromising their appeal to adult smokers.

## Appendix 1

The ASH Smokefree GB Youth Survey is an annual survey of young people in Great Britain ages 11-18 which has been running since 2013. The survey is carried out online by YouGov and is commissioned by Action on Smoking and Health (ASH) and funded by a combination of the British Heart Foundation, Cancer Research UK and the Department of Health and Social Care.

Since 2021, the analysis in the factsheet focuses on 11–17-year-olds as it enables a clear picture to be presented of underage use (since 2015 it has been illegal to sell e-cigarettes to anyone under the age of 18). With no legal distinctions in tobacco or e-cigarette usage within this age bracket, the relative group homogeneity allows greater analysis power.

Results have been weighted and are representative of GB children aged 11 to 17. As the survey is cross sectional, it does not prove causality in any direction. This year's survey was carried out online in 2024 and relevant comparisons with previous years are covered in this briefing. Calculations of the total number of children who vape are by ASH. In each of the years we applied the proportions of e-cigarette use in the YouGov survey to the most recent available ONS mid-year GB population estimates for 11–17-year-olds at the time the YouGov data was gathered.<sup>5</sup> In 2023 and 2024 the 2022 population estimate was used. Percentages in this report are given to the nearest whole number, or to one decimal place if under 10%. As a result, some sums may appear out by  $\pm 0.1$  percentage points due to rounding error.

### Confidence intervals

Where 95% confidence intervals overlap, the differences could be due to chance. Not reaching significance means 'differences are uncertain, not 'difference proven not to be real'.

**Table 1 - ASH Smokefree GB Youth Survey Participant Counts**

Year	Age 11-15	Age 16-17	Age 11-17	Age 18	All ages 11-18	Dates
2024	1644	930	<b>2574</b>	298	2872	21 <sup>st</sup> March – 18 <sup>th</sup> April
2023	1280	748	<b>2028</b>	628	2656	21st March - 18th April
2022	1335	776	<b>2111</b>	502	2613	1st – 29th March
2021	1347	762	<b>2109</b>	404	2513	25th March – 16th April
2020	1295	734	<b>2029</b>	476	2505	11th – 31st March
2019	1243	739	<b>1982</b>	541	2523	12th March – 3rd April
2018	1288	519	<b>1807</b>	484	2291	28th February – 17th March
2017	1538	613	<b>2151</b>	472	2623	10th March – 5th April
2016	1326	409	<b>1735</b>	596	2331	11th March – 10th April
2015	1291	543	<b>1834</b>	457	2291	6th -22nd March
2014	1348	469	<b>1817</b>	251	2068	21st March - 1st April

**Table 2 – Counts for Figure 14**

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
<b>Ever vaper</b>	72	118	210	168	279	254	301	327	266	390	472	528
<b>Never vaper</b>	1113	1361	1478	1434	1677	1423	1543	1567	1626	1514	1427	1788

## Appendix 2

From October 2015 a minimum age of sale for e-cigarettes of 18 was introduced in England and Wales, making it illegal to sell e-cigarettes containing nicotine to under 18s or to purchase them on behalf of under 18s.<sup>6</sup> However, a loophole in the law does not make it illegal to give free samples of e-cigarettes to under 18s. Scotland implemented their own age of sale and proxy purchasing regulations in April 2017,<sup>7</sup> and Northern Ireland in February 2022.<sup>8</sup>



From 20th May 2016, a regulatory framework for e-cigarettes was introduced in the UK under the EU Tobacco Products Directive (TPD).<sup>9</sup> From that date, the advertising or promotion, directly or indirectly, of electronic cigarettes and re-fill containers on a number of media platforms, including on television, radio, newspapers and magazines, was prohibited. The only advertising still allowed is at point of sale and other local advertising such as billboards. Scotland is currently in the process of consulting on whether to tighten its regulations to further limit the way vape products can be advertised and promoted.<sup>10</sup>

The new product rules under the TPD for e-cigarettes introduced a notification process for manufacturers and importers in May 2016.<sup>11</sup> Non-compliant stock was allowed on sale for a further year until 20th May 2017.

The regulations are due to be updated and strengthened following a review in 2023, but the timescale and content of the revised regulations has still to be decided at time of publication of this factsheet. See below for a summary of the key product standards as at date of publication of this fact sheet:

### **Nicotine strength of e-liquid**

- Electronic cigarettes which contain up to 20 mg per ml of nicotine are regulated as consumer products.
- Products containing over 20mg per ml of nicotine are not legal unless they have a medicinal licence.<sup>12</sup>
- Zero nicotine products are not covered by the TPD and do not require a medicinal licence. They are covered by general product safety rules.

### **Quantity of e-liquid**

- Disposable electronic cigarettes, cartridges and tanks can contain a maximum of 2ml of e-liquid, while dedicated refill containers can contain up to 10ml.

### **Safety**

- Products must be child-resistant and tamper evident.

### **Health warnings**

- The pack must carry a health warning covering 30% of the surfaces of the unit packet and any outside packaging stating '*This product contains nicotine which is a highly addictive substance.*'

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) is the competent authority for the notification scheme for e-cigarettes and refill containers in the UK. Consumers and healthcare professionals can report side effects and safety concerns with e-cigarettes or refill containers to the MHRA through the Yellow Card reporting system.<sup>13</sup>

They can also report products suspected to be defective or non-compliant to their local Trading Standards service or to [TPDsafety@mhra.gov.uk](mailto:TPDsafety@mhra.gov.uk).

The MHRA assesses all reports received in associated with nicotine-containing e-cigarettes and works with local Trading Standards teams to investigate as needed.

ASH uses its annual online survey to ask e-cigarette users questions about the type of product they use to inform our understanding of the impact of the current regulations and how the market for e-cigarettes is evolving.

## Appendix 3

### Vaping

Vaping is assessed in two parts:

Part 1:

**Have you heard of vapes, also called electronic cigarettes or e-cigarettes?**

Yes, I have

No, I haven't

Don't know

Those who answer 'Yes I have' are then asked Part 2:

**Which ONE of the following is closest to describing your experience of vapes (e-cigarettes)?**

- 1) I have never used a vapes (e-cigarettes)
- 2) I have only tried a vapes (e-cigarettes) once or twice
- 3) I used vapes (e-cigarettes) in the past but no longer do
- 4) I use vapes (e-cigarettes) sometimes, but no more than once a month
- 5) I use vapes (e-cigarettes) more than once a month, but less than once a week
- 6) I use vapes (e-cigarettes) more than once a week but not every day
- 7) I use vapes (e-cigarettes) every day
- 8) Don't want to say

Current vaping

4), 5), 6) or 7)

Ever vaping

2), 3), 4), 5), 6) or 7)

Never vaping

Answered 'No I haven't' or 'Don't know' to part 1 or 1) to part 2

## **Smoking**

**Which ONE of the following BEST applies to you?**

1. I have never smoked cigarettes, not even a puff or two
2. I have only ever tried smoking cigarettes once
3. I used to smoke sometimes but I never smoke cigarettes now
4. I sometimes smoke cigarettes now but less than one a week
5. I usually smoke between one and six cigarettes a week
6. I usually smoke more than six cigarettes a week
7. Don't want to say

Current smoking

4), 5), or 6)

Ever smoking

2), 3), 4), 5) or 6)

Never smoking

1)

## References

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<sup>1</sup> 2024 ASH Smokefree GB Adult Survey. Total sample size was 13,266 respondents. The online survey was undertaken between 29th February – 18th March 2024. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all GB adults.

<sup>2</sup> [Vuse Go](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Blu Bar](#)

<sup>4</sup> Taylor E, Arnott D, Cheeseman H, et al. [Association of Fully Branded and Standardized e-Cigarette Packaging With Interest in Trying Products Among Youths and Adults in Great Britain](#). *JAMA Netw Open*. 2023

<sup>5</sup> ONS. [Estimates of the population for the UK, England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland](#). Mid-2022 dataset.

<sup>6</sup> [The Nicotine Inhaling Products \(Age of Sale and Proxy Purchasing\) Regulations 2015](#)

<sup>7</sup> Scottish Government. [E-cigarette restrictions](#). April 2017.

<sup>8</sup> NI Department of Health. [New smoking and e-cig regulations are important to protect children](#). December 2021.

<sup>9</sup> [Article 20\(5\), Tobacco Products Directive](#) Scottish Government. [Tightening rules on advertising and promoting vaping products](#). Consultation closed 29 April 2022.

<sup>10</sup> Medicines and Healthcare products regulatory Agency. [E-cigarettes: regulations for consumer products](#). 2019

<sup>11</sup> [Tobacco and Related Products Regulations 2016](#)

<sup>12</sup> Medicines and Healthcare products regulatory agency. [Licensing procedure for electronic cigarettes as medicines](#). 2017

<sup>13</sup> [Yellow Card, MHRA](#)