



You've got the power:

How the Government can use the Tobacco and Vapes Bill to tackle the rise in vaping and nicotine pouch use amongst young people



FUTURE
HEALTH

This research report from Future Health has been commissioned and funded by Kenvue* - the makers of Nicorette®**. The report was authored by Future Health and the final content is editorially independent.

December 2025

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*Kenvue (Kenvue UK Limited)

**Nicorette contains nicotine. Stop smoking and quit nicotine vaping aid. Requires willpower. Always read the label.

FOREWORD

Reducing smoking rates are a UK Government success story which has crossed the political divide.

In recent years one of the main enablers of these reductions has been the rise of credible and effective alternatives to help people quit smoking including nicotine replacement therapies and vapes.

The latest data from the ONS show that for the first time there are more people vaping than smoking in the UK, with the most significant drops in the smoking rate being seen in those aged 18-24.

There is however more work to do to keep smoking rates falling further and the Government's Tobacco and Vapes Bill provides significant new powers to deliver on this.

But as this report shows there is a need to ensure that we keep our eyes on the ball. The tobacco industry is constantly looking for the next business opportunity with which to addict a new generation to nicotine.

Nicotine pouches are still relatively new in the UK, but these unregulated products are being heavily pushed at younger people, whether it be through shop displays, social media or in partnerships with UK music festivals.

This is borne out in this research which shows high levels of awareness of nicotine pouches amongst younger people, with 1 in 10 saying they have tried them. Trading Standards has seen a surge in illicit pouches entering the UK market, raising concerns about the levels of nicotine they contain. There is no strong evidence that these pouches can help people quit smoking.

As a former Public Health Minister I know that all Governments struggle to keep up with such market moves from the industry, but the Tobacco and Vapes Bill gives the Government powers to get on top of this market.

Once the Bill is passed the Government should move quickly and use its new powers to restrict the sale, advertising and promotion of these products to young people. The young people spoken to through this research strongly support such moves.

This report sets out a series of measures that the Government should take forward as part of its efforts to continue to reduce the harms from tobacco and nicotine. Enacting them will help ensure that attempts by the tobacco industry to hook a new generation on nicotine are unsuccessful.

Steve Brine MP, Former Public Health Minister and Chair of the Health and Social Care Select Committee

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Smoking rates have fallen significantly in recent years, with the largest reduction in the last decade being seen amongst younger adults. Smoking prevalence decreased amongst 18-24 year olds, from 25.7% in 2011 to 8.1% in 2024.¹

At the same time rates of vaping have increased – according to the ONS 13% of 16-24 year olds use a vape either daily or occasionally.

Alongside this shift in behaviour has been the development by the industry of new novel nicotine products such as nicotine pouches. Nicotine pouches are small sachets designed to be placed in the mouth between the upper lips and gums to release nicotine. They do not contain tobacco and fall outside the existing regulations – with no restrictions on age of sale, marketing and packaging.

This research finds evidence that the industry has been deliberately marketing nicotine pouches to young people.

Three quarters of those aged 14-17 surveyed said they had heard of nicotine pouches and nearly half had seen them advertised. Shops and social media were the most common places to view such adverts.

13% of those surveyed said they had used a nicotine pouch, with a third of these users saying they used them at least once a week.

Young people appear strongly in favour of additional measures to restrict the sale and marketing of such products, with the most popular measure being a ban on their sale to minors.

The Government's Tobacco and Vapes Bill seeks to address this by giving Government powers to increase the regulation of such products. The powers include banning vaping products and nicotine pouches from being sold to under 18s, banning their free distribution, advertising, promotion along with sponsorship agreements and regulating flavours, packaging and displays.

Should the Bill as expected achieve Royal Assent, the Government should move quickly to exercise these powers to restrict access to and the use of nicotine pouches amongst young people.

In addition there needs to be investment in local Trading Standards to support enforcement action in relation to the powers within the Bill, funds for new research to build evidence on the potential harms of nicotine pouches, educational support for schools and teachers and the use of reforms in the Ten Year Health Plan to provide more co-ordinated support for those with nicotine addiction. At the national level a new public health policy on nicotine – similar to that on smoking – should be developed to support an effective co-ordinated response to novel nicotine products.

The message from young people is clear, the powers in the Tobacco and Vapes Bill provide a great platform for the Government to urgently act to tackle the promotion of nicotine pouches to young people and reduce recreational nicotine use.

1 <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/healthandlifeexpectancies/bulletins/adultsmokinghabitsingreatbritain/2024>

KEY FINDINGS: AWARENESS AND USAGE OF NICOTINE POUCHES AMONGST YOUNG PEOPLE

To understand the awareness and attitudes of young people to nicotine pouches Future Health commissioned Deltapoll to poll 500 14-17 year olds across Great Britain on issues relating to nicotine pouches.²

The following summarises the main findings from the polling:

- 13% of respondents said they had personally used a nicotine pouch with 85% saying they had not
- Of those who said they had used nicotine pouches 30% said they used them once a week or more, with 68% saying that they used them less than once a week
- Nearly three quarters of those surveyed said they had heard of nicotine pouches, with just 24% saying they had not
- The numbers of 16 and 17 year olds saying they had heard of nicotine pouches was 8% higher than those aged 14-15 years old (77% vs 69%)
- 50% of respondents said they felt they knew either 'a great deal' or 'a fair amount' about nicotine pouches. With 44% saying that they knew 'not very much' and 5% saying they knew 'nothing at all'
- The most common way for respondents to access nicotine pouches (66%) was through friends. This was three times higher than those directly buying pouches through shops (22%)
- 46% of respondents said they had seen nicotine pouches advertised, whilst 48% said they had not. In terms of where advertisements had been seen, the most common places were in shops (57%) and social media (49%). Online (outside of social media) and television also recorded response rates of over a quarter (28 and 26% respectively)
- 51% of respondents felt that nicotine pouches were either 'much safer' or a little safer' than cigarettes
- 43% felt nicotine pouches were 'much safer' or 'a little safer' than vaping. 24% felt similarly when nicotine pouches were compared to snus
- In comparison 16% felt that nicotine pouches were 'a little more dangerous', and 19% 'much more dangerous' than cigarettes. 19% said vaping was 'a little more', or 'more dangerous' than nicotine pouches, with 10% saying the same for snus
- 73% of respondents said that there should be more restrictions on the advertising, sale and use of nicotine pouches, with just 15% saying that there should not
- The most popular restrictions were in restricting access to and use of products by age (they should be illegal for minors to buy and they should be illegal for minors to use). 59% also said there should be health warnings on the products. Maximum strength limits, branding restrictions and withdrawing shop displays were all supported by over 30% of respondents

² Deltapoll interviewed 514 GB 14-17 year olds in total online between 15th to 22nd October 2025. The data have been weighted to be representative of the GB 14-17 year old population as a whole

RECOMMENDATIONS

National policy

- The Government should develop a public health policy on nicotine use that can be used to inform a coherent and co-ordinated policy response to nicotine pouches and other novel nicotine products
- The Government should move quickly to use the powers in the Tobacco and Vapes Bill to ban the promotion, marketing and sale of vapes and nicotine pouches to under 18s, eliminate shop and online promotions, along with sponsorship agreements with events and brands. The powers in the Bill should also be used to restrict the range of flavour descriptors used to market vapes and nicotine pouches

Local action and enforcement

- The Government should continue to increase investment in Trading Standards to build capacity to respond to the illicit market in nicotine pouches and vapes. The introduction of a tobacco and vaping licensing scheme will also help act as a lever to support enforcement action against non compliant business and actors
- Local authorities and local trading standards agencies should publish clear annual data on their levels of investment in tackling illicit market nicotine and vaping products, along with enforcement action taken

Health research and health services

- The National Institute for Health Research should commission studies both that understand (a) the clinical impacts of novel nicotine products such as nicotine pouches and (b) strategies and approaches that can best support young people to quit their nicotine use
- The NHS should use the role out of neighbourhood health services to improve access to co-ordinated support for young people that can help reduce youth vaping and novel nicotine use. Local health services and local authorities should use Government funding for Stop Smoking Services to support the evolution of such services from supporting people to go smokefree to nicotine free
- The Government and Royal Colleges working alongside partners such as the National Centre for Smoking Cessation and Training should publish materials supporting improvements in clinical education on smoking, vaping and nicotine addiction. Similar evidence-based guidelines for service planners should be rolled out across local authorities and the NHS

Schools

- The Department for Education should develop guidance for schools setting out information and evidence on novel nicotine products, including nicotine pouches, to help raise awareness amongst teachers and staff
- Questions examining nicotine dependence should be incorporated into relevant mental health and neurodiversity assessments of young people in schools

INTRODUCTION

There are 5.3 million smokers in the UK, with the smoking rate of 10.6% being the lowest rate on record.³ The largest reductions in the smoking rate in recent times have been seen in younger age groups. Those aged 18-24 saw a 17.6% reduction from 2011 to 2024. Over 10% reductions were also recorded in the 25-34 and 35-44 age groups.⁴

The decline in the smoking rate is driven by a range of factors. One is the increased access and availability of licensed smoking cessation therapies, like nicotine replacement therapy (NRT), to support people in quitting smoking while another is the rise of unlicensed recreational nicotine products like vapes and nicotine pouches.

Recent ONS data found that 10% of adults in Great Britain vape, which is the equivalent to approximately 5.4 million people.⁵ A survey by Action on Smoking and Health (ASH) in September 2025 found that the highest recorded usage of e-cigarettes daily or occasionally was amongst the 16-24s, with a recorded rate of 15.8%. The lowest recorded rate was in the over 60s with just 4.6%.⁶ Daily vaping is most commonly recorded amongst the 35 to 49 year old age group.⁷

Future Health's previous research report *Endgame: can the disposable vapes ban take us to a smokefree future?* explored the rise in youth vaping and policy opportunities for tackling it, linked in particular to the disposable vapes ban and the Government's Tobacco and Vapes Bill.⁸

This research report does include further discussion and proposals for tackling youth vaping through powers in the Tobacco and Vapes Bill. However, the main focus for this paper is on the awareness and attitudes of young people to nicotine pouches and recommendations for action to be taken in light of the proposed powers in the Tobacco and Vapes Bill.

3 <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/healthandlifeexpectancies/bulletins/adultsmokinghabitsingreatbritain/2024>

4 <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/healthandlifeexpectancies/bulletins/adultsmokinghabitsingreatbritain/2024>

5 <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/healthandlifeexpectancies/bulletins/adultsmokinghabitsingreatbritain/2024#e-cigarette-use-in-great-britain>

6 <https://ash.org.uk/uploads/Use-of-vapes-among-adults-in-Great-Britain-2024.pdf?v=1730387868>

7 <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/healthandlifeexpectancies/bulletins/adultsmokinghabitsingreatbritain/2024#e-cigarette-use-in-great-britain>

8 <https://www.futurehealth-research.com/site/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/Endgame-140525-FINAL.pdf>

What are nicotine pouches?

First introduced in the UK in 2019, nicotine pouches are small sachets designed to be placed in the mouth between the upper lips and gums to release nicotine.⁹ They do not contain tobacco and are not recommended as a tool to quit smoking by the NHS.^{10 11} According to Browse et al 'nicotine pouches do not fit neatly into existing regulations and for example in Great Britain (GB), they fall outside the regulation for tobacco and related products, as they do not contain tobacco, and outside of medical regulation, as no medicinal claims are made. Currently, there is no minimum age of sale or restrictions on packaging or marketing.'¹²

Survey data from ASH and YouGov found that recorded use of nicotine pouches had more than doubled amongst UK adults from 2.6% in 2020 to 5.4% in 2024. Regular use had risen at a similar rate from 0.5% to 1%.¹³ The age group with the highest rate of current usage was the 18-24 age group (2.53%) with usage declining as age increased.¹⁴ Male usage was nearly four times higher than female usage (1.57% to 0.40%) and higher rates of usage were recorded in London when compared to the rest of England, Scotland and Wales.¹⁵

Amongst 11-17 year olds, current usage of nicotine pouches was recorded as 1.2%, with 3.3% saying they had tried them. The number of 16-18 year olds who said they had tried nicotine pouches was over 5%, whereas amongst 11-15 year olds it was 2.3%.¹⁶

A subsequent survey in 2025 from ASH found a 5% increase in awareness of nicotine pouches (from 38% to 43% between 2024 and 2025) amongst 11-17 year olds. 4% of those teenagers surveyed said that they had tried nicotine pouches, the equivalent of 210,000 children.¹⁷

The market is growing. In 2024, Velo and Nordic Spirit grew by 96% and 75%. Another popular brand, Zyn, grew by 161% in 2024. The whole nicotine pouch sector has grown by 82% compared to the previous year, to a total market volume of £131m.¹⁸ A report by Loughborough University found that 18% of professional footballers surveyed across the Premier League and Football League were using snus or nicotine pouches.¹⁹

9 <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/health-fitness/parenting/children/nicotine-snus/>; <https://academic.oup.com/ntr/advance-article/doi/10.1093/ntr/ntae295/7930315?searchresult=1&login=false>

10 <https://academic.oup.com/ntr/advance-article/doi/10.1093/ntr/ntae295/7930315?searchresult=1&login=false>

11 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/clygyyzzr10o>

12 <https://academic.oup.com/ntr/advance-article/doi/10.1093/ntr/ntae295/7930315?searchresult=1&login=false>

13 <https://academic.oup.com/ntr/advance-article/doi/10.1093/ntr/ntae295/7930315?searchresult=1&login=false>

14 <https://academic.oup.com/ntr/advance-article/doi/10.1093/ntr/ntae295/7930315?searchresult=1&login=false>

15 <https://academic.oup.com/ntr/advance-article/doi/10.1093/ntr/ntae295/7930315?searchresult=1&login=false>

16 <https://academic.oup.com/ntr/advance-article/doi/10.1093/ntr/ntae295/7930315?searchresult=1&login=false>

17 <https://ash.org.uk/media-centre/news/press-releases/ash-calls-for-swift-legislation-on-nicotine-pouches-as-new-data-shows-surge-in-youth-awareness>

18 <https://ashscotland.org.uk/briefing/nicotine-pouches/#:~:text=A%202024%20UK%20market%20analysis,market%20volume%20of%20%C2%A3131m>

19 <https://www.lboro.ac.uk/media/media/london/images/news/2024/snus-use-in-english-professional-football.pdf>

The rise in usage, high profile and visible marketing campaigns – particularly targeting young people – and lack of regulation have led to health and safety concerns. Data obtained by ITV News found a 112% increase in nicotine pouch seizures by Trading Standards between 2024 and 2025.²⁰ Teams in Oxford, Berkshire and Dorset have made 1500 seizures in the past year.²¹

Health concerns have to date focused on oral health issues such as: a dry mouth, gum lesions or blisters, unusual jaw sensations and receding gums.²² Studies have also raised concerns that 30 mg nicotine pouches have led to a higher nicotine uptake compared with cigarettes and increased arterial stiffness.²³

20 <https://www.itv.com/news/2025-04-17/health-warnings-as-high-strength-illicit-nicotine-pouches-flood-the-uk>

21 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cm291pl297jo#:~:text=High%20strength%20nicotine%20pouches%20that,advertising%2C%20strength%20or%20age%20restrictions>

22 <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC11297755/>

23 <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC11150668/pdf/fphar-15-1392027.pdf>

A photograph of three young women sitting on the ground in a field of flowers. They are all smiling and appear to be in conversation. The woman in the center is wearing a red and white striped shirt and blue jeans. The woman on the left is also wearing a striped shirt. The woman on the right is wearing a denim jacket. The background is filled with various flowers, including red and pink ones. The entire image has a blue tint and a white curved graphic element on the right side.

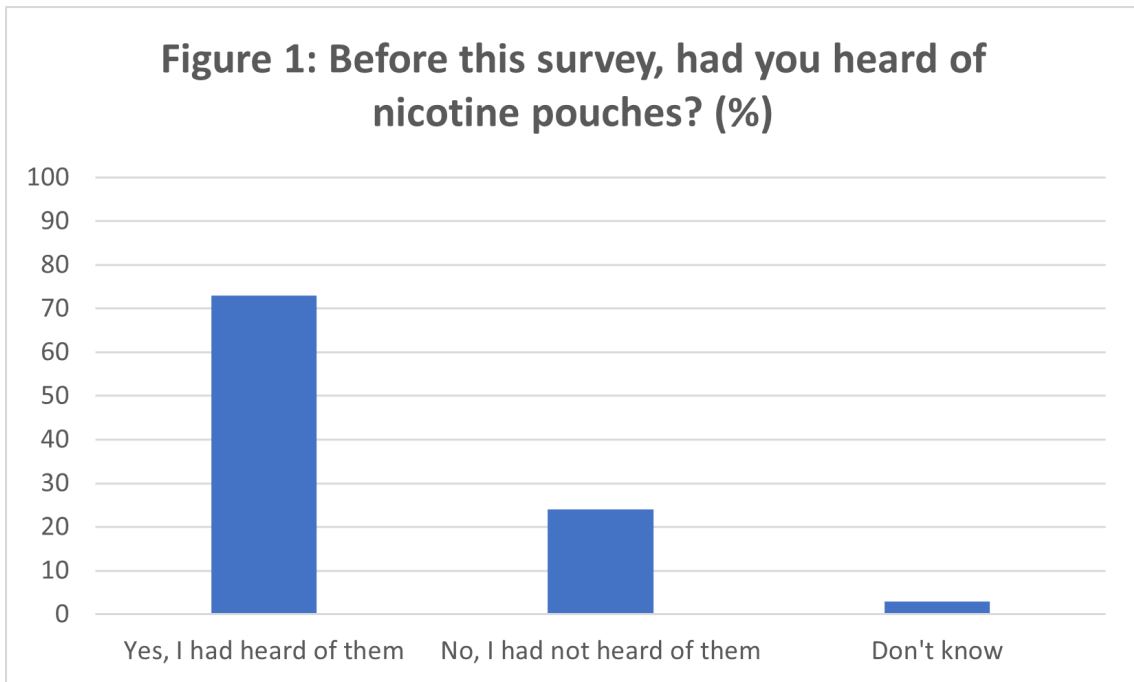
**UNDERSTANDING ATTITUDES,
AWARENESS AND USAGE
OF NICOTINE POUCHES
AMONGST YOUNG PEOPLE**

To better understand the awareness and attitudes of young people to nicotine pouches Future Health commissioned Deltapoll to poll 500 14-17 year olds across Great Britain on issues relating to nicotine pouches.²⁴

Future Health also asked Youth Options, a charity focused on making a difference in the lives of local children, young people, and their families to speak to their Youth Ambassadors to gather first person accounts and views on nicotine pouches.²⁵

The following summarises the research findings.

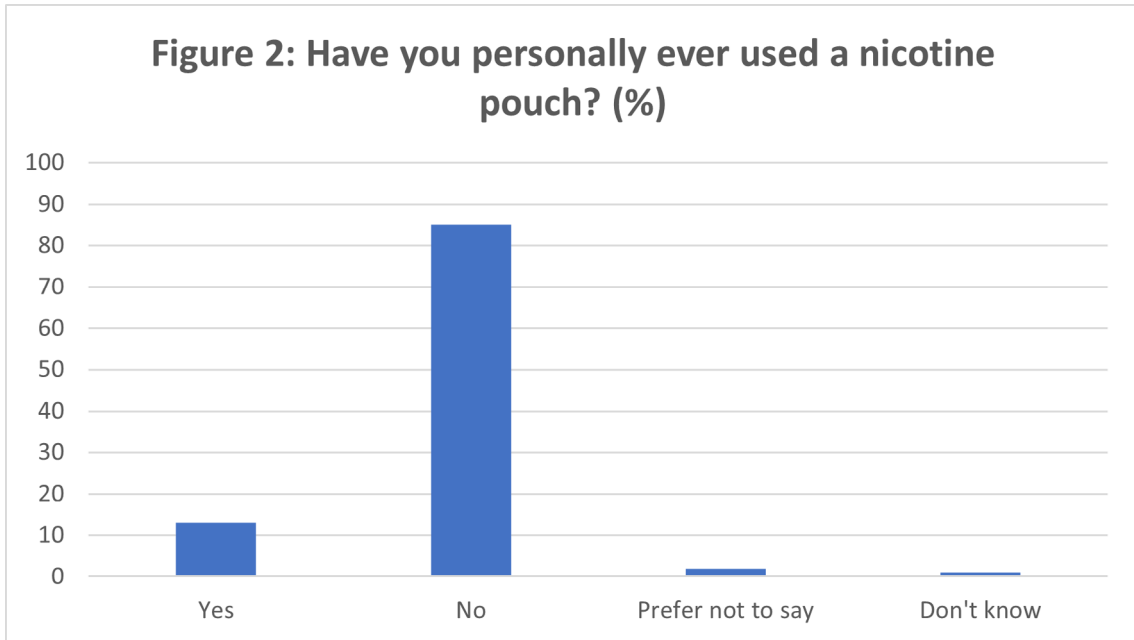
Nearly three quarters of those surveyed said they had heard of nicotine pouches, with just 24% saying they had not. The numbers of 16 and 17 year olds saying they had heard of nicotine pouches was 8% higher than those aged 14-15 year olds (77% vs 69%). In addition, 50% of respondents said they felt they knew either 'a great deal' or 'a fair amount' about nicotine pouches. With 44% saying that they knew 'not very much' and 5% saying they knew 'nothing at all'.



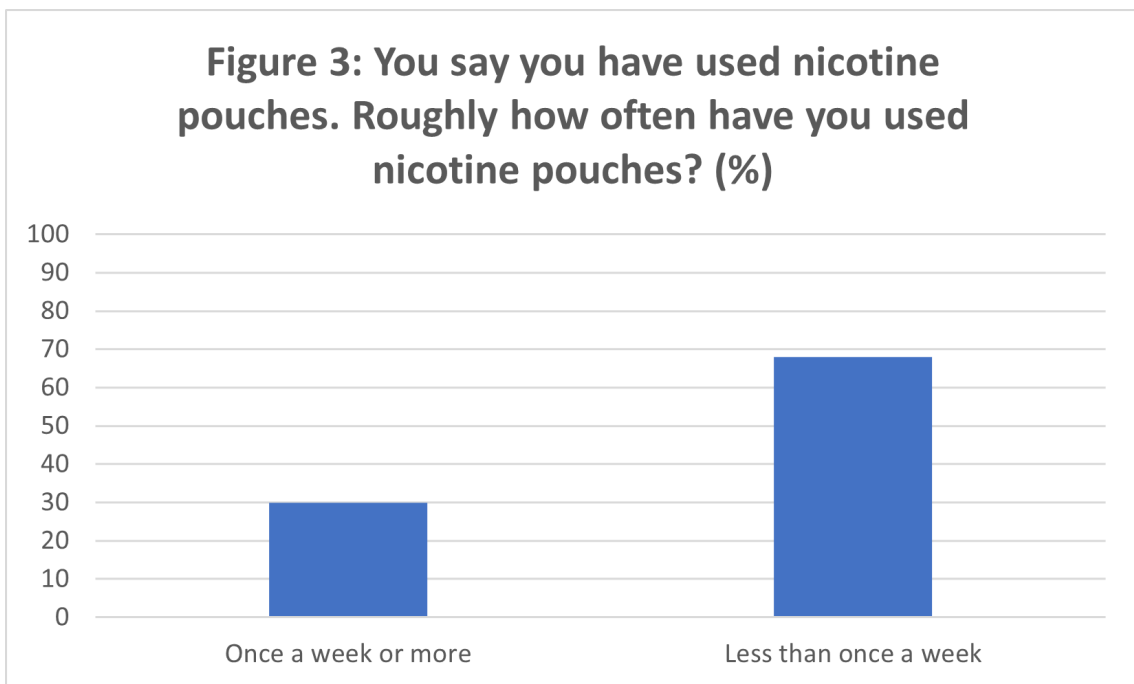
²⁴ In total Deltapoll interviewed 514 GB 14-17 year olds online between 15th to 22nd October 2025. The data have been weighted to be representative of the GB 14-17 year old population as a whole

²⁵ Interviews with Youth Options Ambassadors held in October 2025 by Youth Options Support worker. Quotes anonymised and approved for sharing with Future Health

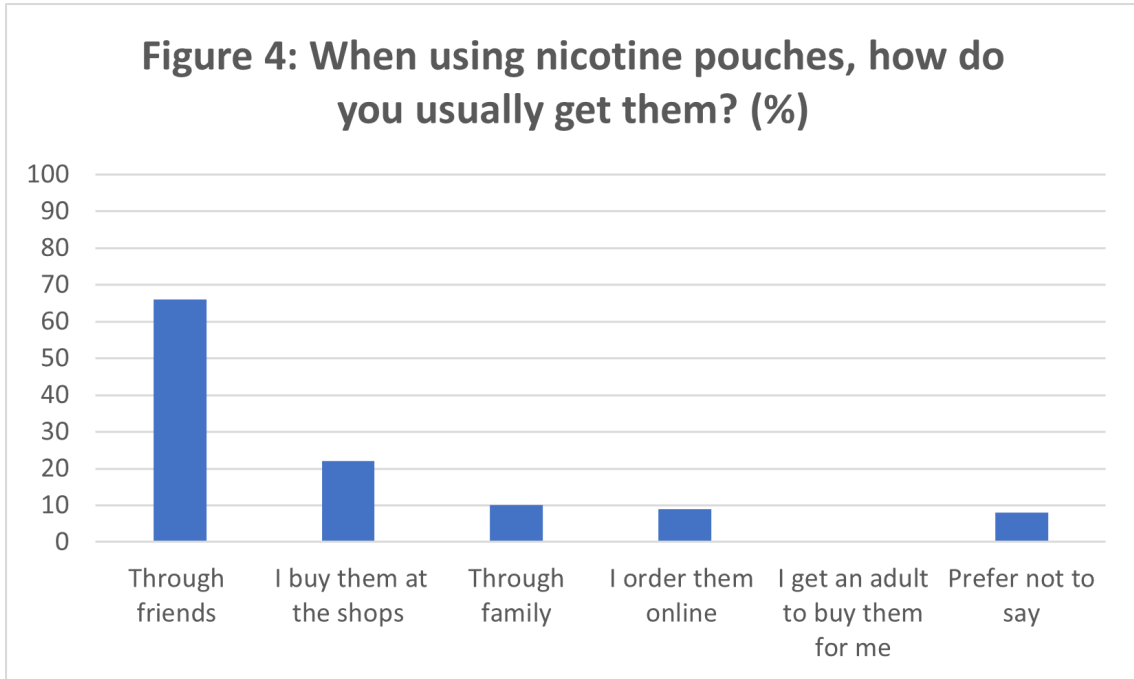
13% of respondents said they had personally used a nicotine pouch with 85% saying they had not.



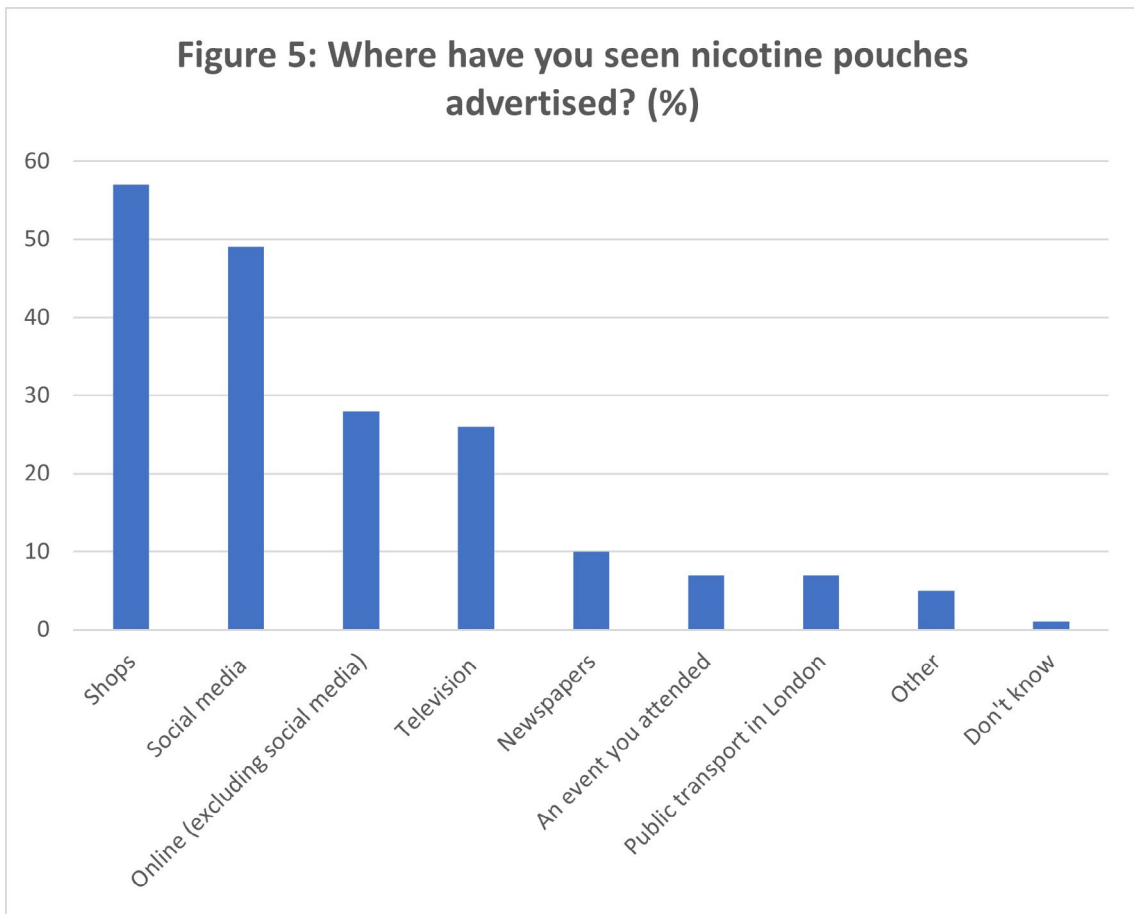
Of the 66 who said they had used nicotine pouches 30% said they used them once a week or more, with 68% saying that they used them less than once a week. 40% said their nicotine pouch use had gone down in the last 12 months, while 41% said it had stayed the same. 13% said it had increased.



The most common way for respondents to access nicotine pouches (66%) was through friends. This was three times higher than those directly buying pouches through shops (22%).

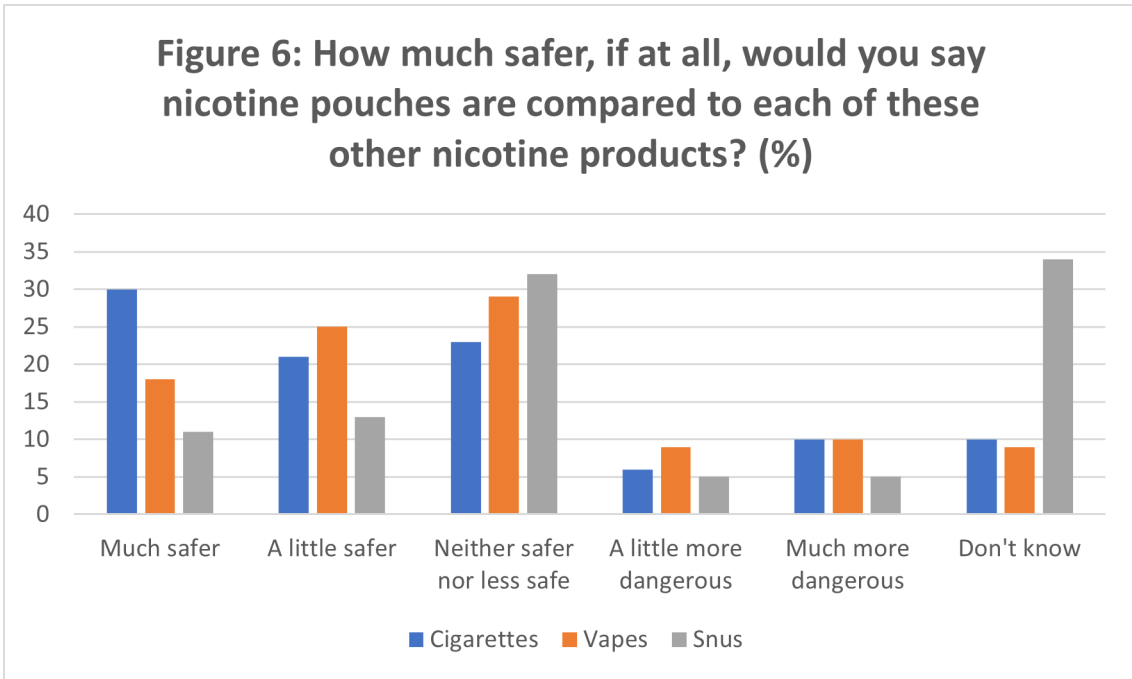


46% of respondents said they had seen nicotine pouches advertised, whilst 48% said they had not. In terms of where advertisements had been seen. The most common places were in shops (57%) and social media (49%). Online (outside of social media) and television also recorded response rates of over a quarter (28 and 26% respectively).



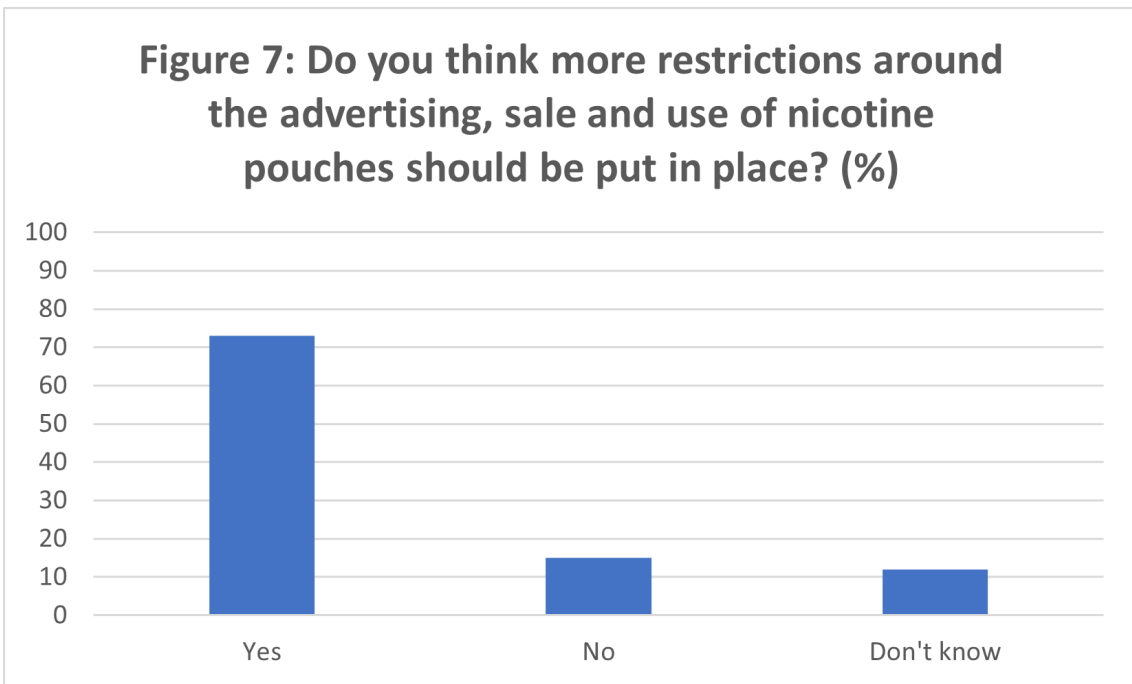
Youth Options Ambassador quote: "I've seen them advertised on TikTok but I've never seen them and I don't know where you'd buy them."

51% of respondents felt that nicotine pouches were either 'much safer' or a little safer' than cigarettes. The numbers for vaping were 43% and for snus 24%. By comparison 16% felt that nicotine pouches were 'a little more dangerous' and 19% 'much more dangerous' than cigarettes. 19% said vaping was a 'little more', or 'more dangerous' than nicotine pouches, with 10% saying the same for snus.



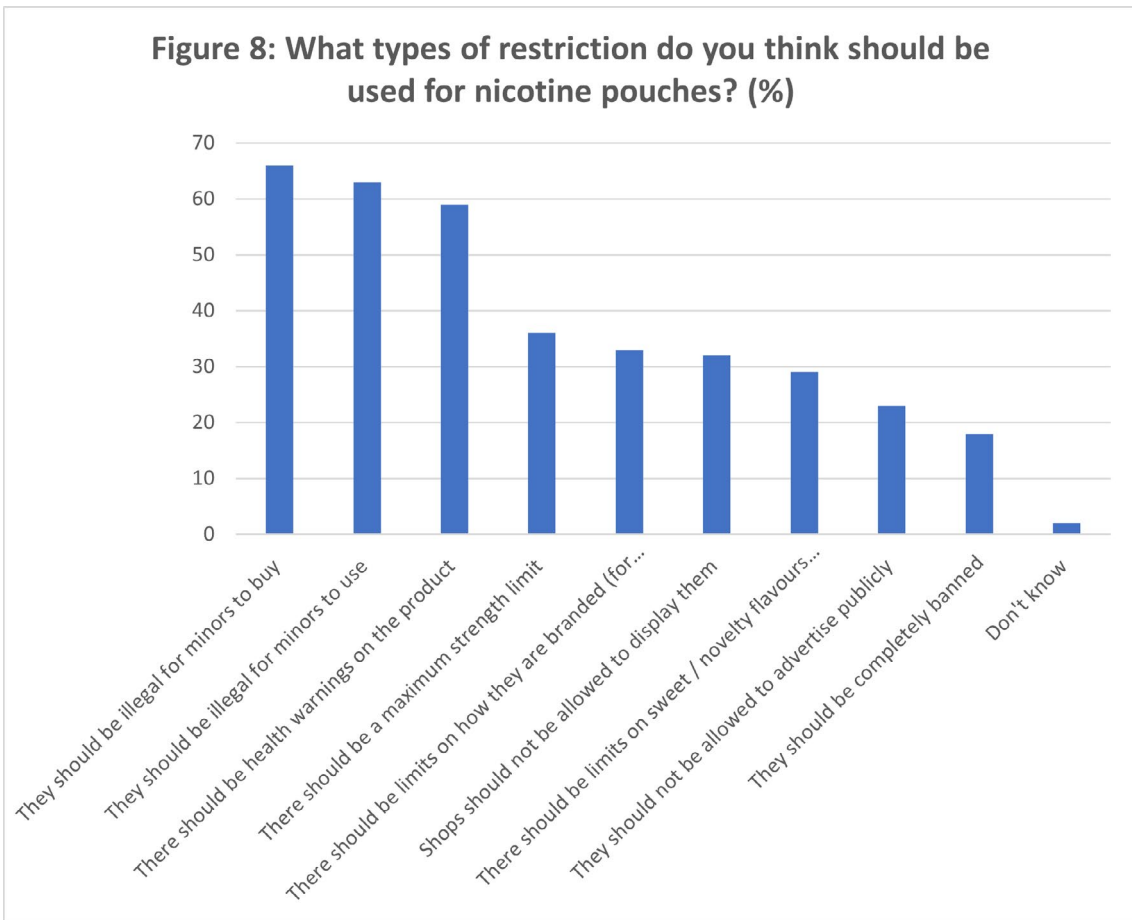
Youth Options Ambassador quote: “They’re literally called nicotine pouches it still has nicotine in it so how can it be any safer than vaping if it still has nicotine which is addictive?”

73% of respondents said that there should be more restrictions on the advertising, sale and use of nicotine pouches, with just 15% saying that there should not.



The most popular restrictions were in restricting access to and use of products by age ('they should be illegal for minors to buy' and 'they should be illegal for minors to use'). 59% also said there should be health warnings on the products. Maximum strength limits, branding restrictions and withdrawing shop displays were all supported by over 30% of respondents.

Youth Options Ambassador: "I think there should be more restrictions on them, but I don't know what these should be."




Summary of findings

Amongst those 14-17 year olds surveyed there are high levels of awareness of nicotine pouches. Whilst three quarters had heard of them nearly half had seen them advertised with shops and social media being the most common places. Over 1 in 10 of those surveyed said they used nicotine pouches, with a third saying such use was the equivalent to once a week and two thirds accessing them through friends.

There are mixed levels of understanding of the safety of nicotine pouches when compared to cigarettes, vapes and snus.

Young people surveyed were supportive of more restrictions on the advertising, sale and use of nicotine pouches, with over 60% saying they should be illegal for minors to buy and/or use. There was also majority support for health warnings on the products.



**HOW CAN THE TOBACCO
AND VAPES BILL
SUPPORT REDUCTIONS
IN YOUTH VAPING AND
NOVEL NICOTINE USE?**

The Labour manifesto committed the party to deliver a 'smoke-free' Britain.²⁶ After the previous Tobacco and Vapes Bill fell as a result of the snap General Election in July 2024 the incoming Government introduced an updated Bill in November 2024 including some additional measures such as a licensing scheme for tobacco and vapes and extending smokefree places.²⁷ The Bill aims to:

- Create a smoke-free generation, gradually ending the sale of tobacco products across the country and breaking the cycle of addiction and disadvantage
- Strengthen the existing powers to ban smoking in public places to reduce harms of passive smoking, particularly around children and vulnerable people
- Ban vapes and non-medicinal nicotine products from being deliberately branded, promoted, and advertised to children to stop the next generation from becoming hooked on nicotine²⁸
- Provide powers to introduce a licensing scheme for the retail sale of tobacco, vapes and non-medicinal nicotine products, extend the retail registration scheme in Scotland, and strengthen enforcement activity to support the implementation of the above measures
- The Bill sits alongside wider support across the health service to support smokers to quit²⁹

26 <https://labour.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Mission-Public-Services.pdf>

27 <https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3879>

28 The Tobacco and Vapes Bill refers only to non-medicinal nicotine products e.g. vapes and nicotine pouches: <https://bills.parliament.uk/publications/60034/documents/6282>

29 <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/59-01/0121/en/240121en.pdf>

On vaping and novel nicotine products specifically the Bill aims to:

- Ban vaping products and non-medicinal nicotine products from being sold to under 18s and ban the free distribution of these products
- Ban advertising, promotion and sponsorship agreements for vapes and non-medicinal nicotine products mirroring impactful restrictions on tobacco
- Provide regulation making powers to regulate the flavours, packaging, and other product standards of vapes and non-medicinal nicotine products
- Provide powers to regulate the display of vapes and non-medicinal nicotine products; ban vape and non-medicinal nicotine product vending machines
- Introduce powers to introduce a new registration scheme for all vapes and non-medicinal nicotine products. This scheme would also cover tobacco products
- Introduce powers to extend smoke-free laws so that they could also prohibit the use of vapes and heated tobacco products in specified areas where smoking is prohibited³⁰

Alongside the Tobacco and Vapes Bill, the Government also brought forward legislation to ban the sale of disposable vapes. The Ban came into force on 1 June 2025.³¹

To understand how the powers in the Tobacco and Vapes Bill can be effectively used to reduce youth vaping and novel nicotine use, Future Health convened a roundtable with Government, public health, NHS, voluntary sector and other interested representatives in September 2025.

The roundtable produced a series of areas for potential policy intervention and development. The following provides Future Health's summary of these areas following the discussions.³²

Addressing the gap in nicotine policy in the national policy response

It was noted that whilst the Government has public health policy positions on tackling tobacco, alcohol and unhealthy food, it does not have a policy or set of policies on nicotine use. Given the changes in the market, such as the development of nicotine pouches, building such a response was identified as being potentially helpful to strengthen and co-ordinate Government action in this space.

Recommendation: The Government should develop a public health policy on nicotine use that can be used to inform a coherent and co-ordinated policy response to nicotine pouches and other novel nicotine products

30 <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/59-01/0121/en/240121en.pdf>

31 <https://defraenvironment.blog.gov.uk/2025/05/01/single-use-vapes-why-its-time-to-ditch-them-for-good/>

32 This is an adapted summary from the session by Future Health which includes additional data and evidence points. No comments are attributable to individual or groups of participants

Young people marketing, perceptions and access to novel nicotine products

The growing role of influencers and online platforms in promoting vaping and novel nicotine use was highlighted as a challenge by participants.

This was backed by ASH data which showed that TikTok, YouTube and Instagram were the most common places online where young people had seen vapes promoted. A recent study of 250 TikTok videos promoting nicotine pouches found that they had attracted 16 million likes, more than 114,120 comments and almost two million shares. The study found that the products were heavily marketed towards young men and designed to normalise pouch use.³³ The challenges for parents and teachers in managing this was raised – particularly as new platforms have emerged such as Telegram.³⁴

The partnership between companies promoting nicotine pouches and UK festivals was highlighted as an example of products being promoted directly to young people. For example Nordic Spirit has partnered with a number of UK festivals in 2025, including Download, the Isle of Wight and Creamfields.³⁵

It was noted that such marketing tactics were reminiscent of the tobacco industry in the past, where approaches were clearly targeted at young people, with an aim of getting them hooked on nicotine.

It was noted by participants – and supported by the data – that flavoured vapes are important for adults to support them in their attempts to quit. Caution was noted however that flavours are clearly also enticing to young people – presenting a difficult balance to strike. Evidence has also suggested that certain sweeteners in nicotine pouches could make them more addictive.³⁶

The Tobacco and Vapes Bill includes powers to address this, and participants noted there was a case for being more prescriptive on what flavours should be allowed and not allowed to be marketed (an example identified as clearly marketed at young people was ‘skittles’ flavour).

Data was also highlighted showing the increase in young people who had seen vapes promoted in shops over the last three years. Shops were also prominently identified by those surveyed by Deltapoll as places where young people had seen nicotine pouches promoted. One of the aims of the powers within the Bill is to help reduce such exposure particularly at prominent places in stores (such as store fronts and checkouts).

Recommendation: The Government should move quickly to use the powers in the Tobacco and Vapes Bill to restrict the promotion and marketing of vapes and nicotine pouches to under 18s, introduce a minimum age of sale, ban shop and online promotions, along with sponsorship agreements with events and brands. The powers in the Bill should also be used to restrict the range of flavour descriptors used to market vapes and nicotine pouches

33 <https://formative.jmir.org/2025/1/e73032>

34 <https://ash.org.uk/uploads/Use-of-Vapes-Among-Young-People-in-Great-Britain-2025.pdf?v=1752076968>

35 <https://nordicspirit.co.uk/festival-hub>

36 <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/health/nicotine-pouches-addictive-flavour-sweet-snus-b2716650.html>

Building capacity to support enforcement

The challenges with enforcing the powers in the Tobacco and Vapes Bill in the present environment were noted. The commitment to 80 Trading Standards apprentices as part of actions through the Bill was welcomed, but the wider challenges with local Government finance – with no ringfenced funding for Trading Standards was raised as a concern.³⁷ With local government finances facing multiple pressures, how the powers in the Bill can be effectively enforced remains an unanswered question. Collaboration between central and local government and Trading Standards on policy development was agreed as a critical component for success. Participants noted that such collaboration had been constructive and positive to date.

One of the proposed powers within the Bill is for the Government to introduce a licensing scheme for the retail sale of tobacco and vaping products. Such a scheme could help Trading Standards by giving them powers to ultimately remove licenses from businesses acting illegally.³⁸ The UK Vaping Industry Association has welcomed such moves calling them a ‘victory for law abiding vape businesses.’³⁹

Concern was also raised by participants about the contents of nicotine pouches and vapes. There were 23,000 illegal nicotine pouch products seized in 2024 and evidence has emerged that spice, THC and other illegal products are being found in vapes.⁴⁰⁴¹ Particular concerns were raised about the influx of vapes from China. It was felt that the HMRC Vaping Products Duty presented an opportunity to do more to tackle this.⁴² The challenges of multi-agency working for example between Border Force, Trading Standards and HMRC was noted as an issue that needed to be resolved through more effective co-ordination and information sharing.

Recommendation: The Government should continue to increase investment in Trading Standards to build capacity to respond to the illicit market in nicotine pouches and vapes. The introduction of a tobacco and vaping licensing scheme will also help act as a lever to support enforcement action against non-compliant business and actors

Recommendation: Local authorities and local trading standards agencies should publish clear annual data on their levels of investment in tackling illicit market nicotine and vaping products, along with the enforcement action taken

37 <https://www.tradingstandards.uk/news-policy-campaigns/news-room/2025/ctsi-helps-to-secure-vital-investment-for-trading-standards/#:~:text=The%20investment%20will%20bolster%20local%20Trading%20Standards,vape%20products%20finding%20their%20way%20into%20neighbourhood>

38 <https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3879/publications>

39 <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/LLN-2025-0019/LLN-2025-0019.pdf>

40 <https://www.alternix.com/blogs/news/the-uk-s-illegal-nicotine-pouch-hotspots#:~:text=23-,What%20are%20the%20health%20risks%20of%20illegal%20nicotine%20pouches?,Seizures>

41 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cj3l231xz5ko>

42 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preparing-for-vaping-products-duty-and-the-vaping-duty-stamps-scheme/prepare-for-vaping-products-duty-and-the-vaping-duty-stamps-scheme#:~:text=Vaping%20Products%20Duty%20will%20be,%C3%97%2022%20pence%20%3D%20%C2%A32.20>

Generating evidence and insight on the impacts from novel nicotine products

The pace of change with nicotine products was noted by participants as a challenge for building evidence of both their harm and effective harm reduction strategies. It was felt that new services such as that at Alder Hey children's hospital – which has recently opened its first vaping cessation clinic for 11-15 year olds – could help provide new evidence for the effectiveness of interventions.⁴³ Research studies should be invested in to better understand the clinical impacts of vapes and nicotine pouches. Alongside this further research should be commissioned exploring what strategies are effective in getting young people to reduce and ultimately quit their use of nicotine.

Recommendation: The National Institute for Health Research should commission studies both that understand (a) the clinical impacts of novel nicotine products such as nicotine pouches and (b) strategies and approaches that can best support young people to quit their nicotine use

Using NHS reforms to support young people in quitting nicotine

Given the highly addictive nature of nicotine, it was noted that it would be important to signpost young people to appropriate support services. NHS Wales has established an online portal called Help Me Quit Wales to improve access for people looking to quit smoking and vaping.⁴⁴ The Ten Year Health Plan and the Medium Term Planning Framework provide strong backing for the use of the NHS App as a digital communication tool with patients and the public.^{45 46} Such a channel creates opportunities to provide support and advice to young people regarding vaping and novel nicotine products.

Participants also noted the opportunities that neighbourhood health hubs – set out in the Ten Year Health Plan – could create for improving the co-ordination of support available to young people to help them quit vaping and the use of novel nicotine products.⁴⁷ It was highlighted that this should include improved access to dentistry, where there is emerging evidence of potential harms to oral health from the use of novel nicotine products.⁴⁸

43 <https://www.alderhey.nhs.uk/alder-hey-opens-first-nhs-vaping-cessation-clinic-in-the-uk-for-11-15-year-olds/#:~:text=The%20clinic%20saw%20its%20first,therapy%20where%20needed%2C%20alongside%20support>

44 <https://www.helpmequit.wales/>

45 <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6888a0b1a11f859994409147/fit-for-the-future-10-year-health-plan-for-england.pdf>;

46 <https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/medium-term-planning-framework-delivering-change-together-2026-27-to-2028-29/>

47 <https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/medium-term-planning-framework-delivering-change-together-2026-27-to-2028-29/>

48 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/10-year-health-plan-for-england-fit-for-the-future>

There was also felt to be an important role for pharmacies in supporting vaping and smoking cessation. Variation in access to smoking cessation support services was highlighted as a challenge by participants and with 90% of the population within a twenty minute walk of a pharmacy, greater support for pharmacies was highlighted as an opportunity, building from existing smoking cessation services and offers.⁴⁹

More widely it was felt that the policy response needed to be much broader than just health services and focus not just on young people themselves but also parents, families and communities.

*Recommendation: The NHS should use the role out of neighbourhood health services to improve access to co-ordinated support for young people that can help reduce youth vaping and novel nicotine use. Local health services and local authorities should use Government funding for Stop Smoking Services to support the evolution of such services from supporting people to go smokefree to nicotine free*⁵⁰

Medical professional education

The lack of medical educational time spent on smoking, vaping and nicotine was highlighted as a challenge for getting people the support they need. The fast moving nature of product development and the lack of evidence on novel products was again highlighted as a challenge. It was noted that this combination meant that many medical professionals lacked up to date knowledge and that addressing this both within the curriculum and in healthcare practice will be important. A suggestion made was that this could be done through information leaflets and updates relating to the legislation with underpinning evidence.

Recommendation: The Government and Royal Colleges working alongside partners such as the National Centre Smoking Cessation Training should publish materials supporting improvements in clinical education on smoking, vaping and nicotine addiction. Similar evidence-based guidelines for service planners should be rolled out across local authorities and the NHS

Schools and education

Whilst the risks of vaping are incorporated into the PHSE curriculum, it was felt that there is an important balance to strike over when the risks of vaping and nicotine pouches should be taught in schools, with participants noting that if it was done too early it could be seen as 'something of a forbidden fruit.'⁵¹ Ensuring teachers had the right expertise, evidence and tools at their disposal to effectively teach the dangers from vaping and other nicotine products was also felt to be critical.

49 <https://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/pharmacies-gp-practices-and-appliance-contractors/dispensing-contractors-information/nhs-smoking-cessation-service-referral-secondary-care-community-pharmacy>

50 A recent Healthwatch report identified an example where someone accessing a stop smoking service for help in quitting vaping was turned away. Support needs to be available to those looking to quit both smoking and vaping: <https://www.healthwatch.co.uk/blog/2025-01-15/how-can-we-better-support-people-stop-smoking-and-vaping>

51 <https://campaignresources.dhsc.gov.uk/campaigns/school-zone/mental-wellbeing/vaping/vaping-ks3-form-time-activities/#:~:text=H23%20%E2%80%93%20the%20positive%20and%20negative,the%20human%20gas%20exchange%20system>

It was also felt important to tailor approaches for different groups of young people. Examples of different groups included by age, by level of nicotine addiction and by socio-economic background.

Recommendation: The Department for Education should develop guidance for schools setting out information and evidence on nicotine pouches to help raise awareness amongst teachers and staff

The Government's plans to increase mental health support in schools was raised as an opportunity to identify those young people needing more support, particularly given survey data showing 8% of those who had smoked who now vape state that vaping helps them manage their stress and mental health.^{52 53} Pilot programmes aimed at improving neurodiversity assessments in schools for conditions such as ADHD and autism were also highlighted as opportunities to discuss issues of nicotine dependency and improved support for young people.⁵⁴

Recommendation: Questions examining nicotine dependence should be incorporated into relevant mental health and neurodiversity assessments of young people in schools

52 <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/almost-million-more-pupils-get-access-to-mental-health-support>

53 <https://ash.org.uk/uploads/Use-of-Vapes-Among-Young-People-in-Great-Britain-2025.pdf?v=1752076968>

54 <https://bnssghealthiertogether.org.uk/news/neurodiversity-profiling-pilot-launches-in-local-schools/>

Summary of recommendations

National policy

- The Government should develop a public health policy on nicotine use that can be used to inform a coherent and co-ordinated policy response to nicotine pouches and other novel nicotine products
- The Government should move quickly to use the powers in the Tobacco and Vapes Bill to restrict the promotion and marketing of vapes and nicotine pouches to under 18s, introduce a minimum age of sale, ban shop and online promotions, along with sponsorship agreements with events and brands. The powers in the Bill should also be used to restrict the range of flavour descriptors used to market vapes and nicotine pouches and help reduce the use of recreational nicotine products

Local action and enforcement

- The Government should continue to increase investment in Trading Standards to build capacity to respond to the illicit market in nicotine pouches and vapes. The introduction of a tobacco and vaping licensing scheme will also help act as a lever to support enforcement action against non-compliant business and actors
- Local authorities and local trading standards agencies should publish clear annual data on their levels of investment in tackling illicit market nicotine and vaping products, along with enforcement action taken

Health research and health services

- The National Institute for Health Research should commission studies both that understand (a) the clinical impacts of novel nicotine products such as nicotine pouches and (b) strategies and approaches that can best support young people to quit their nicotine use
- The NHS should use the role out of neighbourhood health services to improve access to co-ordinated support for young people that can help reduce youth vaping and novel nicotine use. Local health services and local authorities should use Government funding for Stop Smoking Services to support the evolution of such services from supporting people to go smokefree to nicotine free
- The Government and Royal Colleges working alongside partners such as the NCSCCT should publish materials supporting improvements in clinical education on smoking, vaping and nicotine addiction. Similar evidence-based guidelines for service planners should be rolled out across local authorities and the NHS

Schools

- The Department for Education should develop guidance for schools setting out information and evidence on nicotine pouches and recreational nicotine product use to help raise awareness amongst teachers and staff
- Questions examining nicotine dependence should be incorporated into relevant mental health and neurodiversity assessments of young people in schools

CONCLUSION

The Tobacco and Vapes Bill presents an opportunity to stop the next generation from smoking. However, it is critical that the tobacco industry is not allowed to circumvent this aim and get a new generation hooked on nicotine, through new products such as nicotine pouches.

This research shows that awareness of these pouches is growing amongst young people as the industry pushes advertising through social media, partnerships with music festivals and through appealing store displays.

The young people we have spoken to are clear that there should be greater restrictions on the sale, use and promotion of these products and that new action to do so is very welcome.

Following the expected passage of the Tobacco and Vapes Bill the Government will get the powers to act on nicotine pouches, it should quickly do so.

ANNEX A: DELTAPOLL QUESTIONS

Deltapoll questions

Deltapoll interviewed 514 GB 14-17 year olds online between 15th to 22nd October 2025. The data have been weighted to be representative of the GB 14-17 year old population as a whole.

Main Body

[ASK ALL]

Q1. Before this survey, had you heard of nicotine pouches?

Yes, I had heard of them	1
No, I had not heard of them	2
Don't know	99

[ASK IF Q1 = 1]

Q2. How much would you say you know about nicotine pouches?

A great deal	1
A fair amount	2
Not very much	3
Nothing at all	4
Don't know	99

[ASK ALL]

A nicotine pouch is a small white bag containing nicotine, which is made to deliver nicotine to users by being placed between the lip and gum.

Nicotine pouches are different from snus pouches, which are brown pouches that contain tobacco. Nicotine pouches do not contain tobacco but do contain nicotine.

Brands of nicotine pouches include Nordic Spirit, Velo, LYFT, and ZYN.

Q3. Have you personally ever used a nicotine pouch?

Yes	1
No	2
Prefer not to say	98
Don't know	99

[ASK IF Q3 = 1]

Q4. You say you have used nicotine pouches. Roughly how often have you used nicotine pouches?

At least once a day	1
Once every few days	2
Once a week	3
Once every few weeks	4
Less than once every few weeks	5
Less than once a month	6
Once every three months	7
Less often	8
Don't know	99

[ASK IF Q3 = 1]

Q5. Thinking back over the last 12 months, would you say your use of nicotine pouches has generally gone up or down since then?

My nicotine pouches use has gone up	1
My nicotine pouch use has gone down	2
My nicotine pouch use has stayed the same	3
Don't know	99

[ASK IF Q3 = 1]

Q6. When using nicotine pouches, how do you usually get them? [MULTICODE]

Through friends	1
Through family	2
I buy them at the shops	3
I order them online	4
I get an adult to buy them for me	5
Prefer not to say	99

[ASK ALL]

Q7. Have you seen nicotine pouches advertised anywhere?

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	99

[ASK IF Q7 = 1]

Q8. Where have you seen nicotine pouches advertised?

Shops	1
Television	2
Online (excluding social media)	3
Social media	4
An event you attended	5
Newspapers	6
Public transport in London	7
Other (please specify)	95
Don't know	99

[ASK ALL]

Q9. How much safer, if at all, would you say nicotine pouches are compared to each of these other nicotine products?

- Cigarettes
- Vapes
- Snus

Much safer	1
A little safer	2
Neither safer nor less safe	3
A little more dangerous	4
Much more dangerous	5
Don't know	99

Currently there are no restrictions on the purchase and advertising of nicotine pouches. Neither is there any law limiting the strength of products.

[ASK ALL]

Q10. Do you think more restrictions around the advertising, sale and use of nicotine pouches should be put in place?

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	99

[ASK IF Q10 = 1]

Q11. What types of restriction do you think should be used for nicotine pouches?
Please select all that apply

They should be completely banned	1
They should be illegal for minors to buy	2
They should be illegal for minors to use	3
There should be limits on how they are branded (for example, no bright colours or 'fun' associations)	4
There should be limits on sweet / novelty flavours (for example, berry or bubble-gum)	5
Shops should not be allowed to display them	6
There should be health warnings on the product	7
There should be a maximum strength limit	8
They should not be allowed to advertise publicly	9
Don't know	99

Summary of Youth Options survey findings

- Overall between members of our Youth Ambassadors and Energy Youth Centre we interviewed eight people.
- There was an exactly even split of 4 against 4 who had heard of nicotine pouches.
- After explaining the concept, when asked whether they had personally used nicotine pouches themselves in the past, they all said no. Most respondents said they used vapes instead.
- Only 2 of the respondents said that they had seen nicotine pouches advertised and that they had seen these advertised on TikTok. I tried to extend this into questioning whether what they had seen was legitimate pouches but because they did not have enough background knowledge on them, they could not say for sure.
- Our respondents all believed that nicotine pouches were at least the same level of safety if not worse than smoking and vaping. This was due to the name of the product- because it clearly states about having the addictive substance of nicotine in it from the off, it seems to come across as less safe to the young people we spoke to.
- Perhaps because of this, they all agreed there should be stronger restrictions around the sale and advertising of the products. However, they do not know what this would or should look like.

ANNEX B: ROUNDTABLE ATTENDEES

As part of the research Future Health held a roundtable to discuss the polling and early research findings in September 2025. Future Health would like to thank the following for their participation. All views expressed in this report are those of Future Health only and should be attributed as such.

Roundtable attendees

The following people attended the roundtable:

Attendee	Organisation
Sangeeta Singh	CCA
Daragh Quinn	DHSC
Alex Peck	DHSC
Helen Poole	NHS Wales
Neil Carmichael	ADG
Seb Rees	IPPR Former Public Health Director,
Kate Arden	Wigan
Helena Conibear	Talk about Trust
Madeline Dure	Youth Options
Steve Jones	Perins MAT The Chartered Trading Standards
Kerry Nicol	Institute
Alex Bobak	GP
Jonathan Blades	Asthma and Lung UK Former Chair, Health Select
Steve Brine	Committee
Richard Sloggett	Future Health
Mairead Langbien	Kenvue



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