



The Association of Directors of Public Health

Position Statement: Nicotine vapourisers and associated products

The Association of Directors of Public Health (ADPH) is a Charitable Company Limited by guarantee and is the representative body for Directors of Public Health (DPH) in the UK.

It seeks to improve and protect the health of the population through collating and presenting the views of DsPH; advising on public health policy and legislation at a local, regional, national and international level; facilitating a support network for DsPH; and providing opportunities for DsPH to develop professional practice.

The Association has a rich heritage, its origins dating back more than 150 years. It is a collaborative organisation working in partnership with others to maximise the voice for public health.

www.adph.org.uk

ADPH Policy Position - overview

Throughout this position statement we use the term nicotine vapourisers – to encompass the range of products variously described as electronic cigarettes or Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS), etc.

ADPH recognises the significant burden that smoking places on individuals and society. Stopping smoking, however this is achieved, is the single best thing anyone can do for their health. ADPH supports the updated NICE guidance on [tobacco harm reduction](#).

We believe that restrictions and regulations on the advertising, marketing and use in enclosed public spaces of smoked tobacco products should also apply to nicotine vapourisers, given the lack of knowledge on their long term health risks and to prevent undermining of the successful efforts that have been made to de-normalise smoking behaviour.

We are cognisant of arguments for the potential impact of nicotine vapourisers as a means of quitting or reducing harm by substituting for conventional tobacco products. However, we believe that more research is needed to establish clear evidence of safety and their long term impact on health – as well as on wider questions relating to re-normalisation of smoking behaviour, and the impact on young people of product development, advertising and marketing. Therefore we do not advocate their use beyond supporting smokers who have unsuccessfully tried other methods of quitting.

The involvement of the tobacco industry in product development raises concerns, and whilst efforts to de-normalise tobacco use are welcomed, attempts to maintain a population addicted to nicotine (including tobacco) are not.

We welcome the introduction of regulations in 2016. We will continue to review our policy position in the light of further research and evidence, in response to product development and after assessing the impact of new regulations. We will continue to work in collaboration with other Public Health organisations to support the development of evidence based approaches to nicotine vapourisers.

Use in enclosed public places

As demonstrated by our 2015 survey of UK Directors of Public Health, ADPH believes that the use of nicotine vapourisers in enclosed and substantially enclosed public places (including work places) undermines and makes more difficult the enforcement of the current ban on smoking in such places. In

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our survey, 63% of Directors of Public Health who responded said that the restrictions and regulations relating to the use of smoked tobacco products in public places should also apply to nicotine vapourisers. Many nicotine vapourisers look similar to regular cigarettes, therefore sending mixed messages to the public about acceptance of smoking. Evidence supports the need for consistency in messages in trying to support behaviour change and culture change. Similarly the use of nicotine vapourisers in an enclosed private vehicle could undermine and make more difficult the enforcement of any ban on smoking in such vehicles.

We are concerned over the second hand effects of vapour on those with respiratory conditions (such as asthma) particularly when nicotine vapourisers are used in enclosed and substantially enclosed public places.

Marketing & advertising

ADPH is particularly concerned that marketing of nicotine vapourisers and their widespread use in enclosed public spaces will undermine the successful efforts which have been made to de-normalise smoking behaviour.

In our 2015 survey of UK Directors of Public Health, 72% of the Directors of Public Health who responded believed that the restrictions and regulations for the advertising and marketing of smoked tobacco products should also apply to nicotine vapourisers.

In responding to the Committee of Advertising Practice/Broadcast Committee of Advertising Practice consultation (2014) on the advertising and marketing of electronic cigarettes and associated products, ADPH advocated for the following principles:

- Advertising and promotion of products containing an addictive drug should always be subject to close supervision by regulatory authorities, since addiction undermines the principle of informed consent by adult consumers.
- Regulation of un-licensed nicotine vapourisers should be consistent with that for licensed products. For example, celebrity endorsement and free samples are not allowed for licensed nicotine containing products and should not be allowed for nicotine vapourisers either.
- Nicotine vapourisers should not be advertised or promoted in ways that could reasonably be expected to promote smoking of tobacco products. As far as possible, nicotine vapourisers should be advertised as an alternative to smoking cigarettes or other tobacco products.
- Nicotine vapourisers should not be advertised in ways or through channels that could reasonably be expected to make them appealing to non-tobacco users.
- Nicotine vapourisers should not be marketed in ways or through channels that could reasonably be expected to make them appealing to children and young people, including the use of flavourings.

We believe that - in addition to the need to establish clear evidence of safety and long term impact on health - more research is also needed in relation to the impact of advertising and marketing of nicotine vapourisers, as well as on their impact on the re-normalisation of smoking behaviour. A particular concern is the impact on young people.

Harm reduction

ADPH supports the updated NICE guidance on [tobacco harm reduction](#) and in considering their recommendation on supplying licensed nicotine-containing products, we recognise that this should be interpreted based on the available evidence for the effectiveness of those products and the clients' needs. In our 2015 survey of UK Directors of Public Health, 61% of Directors of Public Health who responded felt that this could include MHRA-licensed nicotine vapourisers. While 58% thought that MHRA-licensed nicotine vapourisers could be made available through smoking cessation services and 59% felt that could be made available over-the-counter in pharmacies, only 42% felt they should be available via GP prescription. At present the use of nicotine vapourisers in pregnant and breastfeeding women cannot be recommended given the lack of knowledge on their impact in this group.

In our survey we also asked Directors of Public Health for their views on whether nicotine vapourisers have a role in niche settings to enable them to become smoke free. The survey results indicated that there was little support for their potential use in supporting mental health trusts (only 26% agreed) to become smoke free. However 65% of respondents felt it was inappropriate to extend their use to hospital grounds where cancer patients are being treated.

Concerns have also been raised relating to the risk of nicotine poisoning through accidental ingestion (especially for young children) and the need for improved safety of product packaging (including clear advisory warnings). Monitoring of the misuse of nicotine vapourisers as a delivery mechanism for illicit drugs and substances should also be undertaken.

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