



Evidence: Young People and Vaping

Purpose

A review of research evidence was undertaken to support the development of the NCSCT briefing on *Young people and stopping vaping*, which was commissioned by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC). See this briefing and other resources relating to young people and stopping vaping here:

<https://www.ncsct.co.uk/publications/category/young-people-stopping-vaping>

A search and review of the research evidence was conducted to cover the:

- patterns and prevalence of vaping in young people
- vaping nicotine dependence, attitudes and perceptions to vaping, and health effects in young people
- interventions to support young people to stop smoking

For the evidence reviews, and briefings, young people were defined as those under the age of 18. However, research in this area sometimes only focuses on 12–15-year-olds or those up to 25 years old. We have acknowledged within the documentation where we have drawn on evidence from a different age range to that defined.

Search Strategies

We undertook a review using the following:

- inclusion of the randomised controlled trials (RCT) from the latest (2025) Cochrane review
<https://www.cochranelibrary.com/cdsr/doi/10.1002/14651858.CD016058.pub2/full>
- excluded studies of young people from the above Cochrane review.
- published systematic reviews
- database searches
- trial registries
- grey literature (reports, monographs, book chapters)

Latest Cochrane review

We included all studies from the 2025 Cochrane review which involved young people under the age of 18, either alone or when this age group were included as part of the analysis.

Additional studies excluded from the 2025 Cochrane review

The Cochrane review includes RCTs with outcomes on vaping abstinence at least six months after study start. We therefore searched the excluded studies list from the above review, to identify studies where the target sample matched our young person definition noted earlier and were non-RCTs, studies where abstinence outcome measures were less than six months, and studies which reported on outcomes other than cessation.

Published Systematic reviews

Using MEDLINE, Embase, and PsychINFO and (from Jan 2020 until Feb 2025). We primarily focused on UK studies only, where the evidence base was limited or non-existent, we then included international studies with a focus on Europe, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, USA.

Database searches

In addition to the above, we updated the search to capture any more recent RCT evidence, non-randomized RCTs, and observational studies, and evaluations between Jan 2020 and Feb 2025. We searched MEDLINE, Embase, and PsychINFO using the search terms used in the 2025 Cochrane review

<https://www.cochranelibrary.com/cdsr/doi/10.1002/14651858.CD016058.pub2/full>, but with the additional term of young people / young persons / adolescence. We focused initially on searching for UK based research and expanded to broader international experience where there were a limited number of publications.

Trial registries

We searched the UK's Clinical Study registry (ISRCTN; <https://www.isrctn.com/>) and the NIH Clinical Trials registry (<https://clinicaltrials.gov/>) for any unpublished trial data, current trials in progress or registered new trials, involving vaping interventions for young people up until Feb 2025. We focused on young people under the age of 18, however included trials where they had included a higher upper age if they included under 18s.

Grey literature search strategy

We searched the worldwide web and government websites to identify published reports, books/book chapters, or monographs reporting on evidence, best practice, or evaluations or insight work (quantitative and qualitative) which have addressed either preventing or stopping vaping among young persons. This search was limited to reports published by reputable universities and governments or the equivalent (e.g. not for profit organisations). We focused the search on young people under the age of 18 and expanded to 18-24 years where there was a sparsity of reports and thoughts that key insights would be lost.

The following key words were used to conduct searches:

Youth, or children or young people, or adolescents, school aged
and
Vaping, or electronic cigarettes, or e-cigarettes
and
Preventing or addressing or uptake
or
Stopping or cessation or quitting

The following organisational websites were also be searched using same key words:

- Google
- NICE (UK)
- English Department of Health
- Wales Department of Health
- Scottish Department of Health
- Republic of Ireland
- Australian Department of Health
- New Zealand Department of Health
- CDC (USA)
- World Health Organisation
- Health Canada
- CADTH (Canadian Agency for Drug and Technologies in Health)
- European Network for Smoking Prevention
- European Commission