IS IT EASY TO GET HOLD OF VAPES?

Vapes are often marketed as an alternative to traditional smoking, with the NHS endorsing their use as a way of giving up cigarettes. However, an unintended consequence of this messaging is that they are being used by non-smokers at an increasing rate, as they are seen as less harmful. This growing user base includes young people, and there is much concern about the impact vapes could be having on teens' health, despite the fact it is illegal to sell or provide them to under-18s. As of 2026, 19% of 11-17-year olds in Great Britain have tried vaping. The ban on cheap, disposable vapes in 2025 seems to have had a positive effect in reducing numbers, but the Government wants to go further, introducing a new Vaping Product Duty in 2027 in a bid to reduce their appeal. But what do our young voters have to say about vapes, their packaging and how easy it is to get their hands on them?

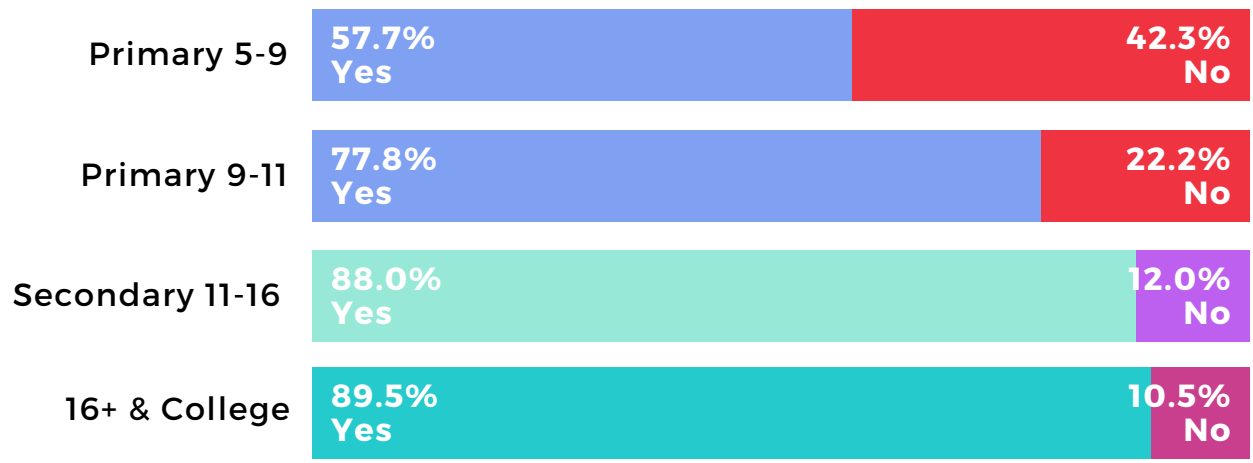
Alex
Data Coordinator



6,906	4,868	49,995	2,481
VOTES AGE 5-9	VOTES AGE 9-11	VOTES AGE 11-16	VOTES AGE 16+

The VoteTopic questions, discussed amongst the different age groups, were:

Primary 5-9: "Is it easy to make healthy choices?"
Primary 9-11: "Should vapes have plain packaging?"
Secondary 11-16, 16+ & College: "Is it easy to get hold of vapes?"



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Primary 5-9: Is it easy to make healthy choices?

In their discussion, 'Yes' voters aged 5-9 named specific behaviours they used to keep themselves healthy, such as choosing vegetables they liked or brushing their teeth. Some also stressed the importance of taking a balanced view when it came to healthy and unhealthy habits. Others commented on how school and the adults in their lives have made making healthy choices easier for them. The most common 'No' argument was that seeing your friends enjoying something unhealthy made you more likely to want it yourself. Many voters also found "yummy" unhealthy food hard to resist. There was also discussion on how colourful and bright packaging can make it harder to resist certain things, particularly sweets. Some pupils discussed how being excited can inhibit their ability to make healthy choices.

> *Sometimes I get carried away and don't always make a healthy choice. I voted yes because even though it can be addictive I know what the healthy choices are.*
>
> Primary Voter

> *No, because lots of things like bright colours and your friend doing something makes YOU want to do it. That makes it HARDER to control yourself.*
>
> Primary voter

Primary 9-11: Should vapes have plain packaging?

> *Yes because if vapes have plain packaging children won't like how it looks so they won't get it. Since it worked with cigarettes it is probably going to work with vapes.*
>
> Primary Voter

> *I think it is too late now to change the packaging because children are already curious and tempted to vape.*
>
> Primary voter

Their 9-11-year old peers had a similar idea about vape packaging, arguing that making it less colourful would help reduce the appeal, particularly for children. Lots of voters said that children could easily confuse current vape packaging with sweets or even highlighters. A few also pointed out that changing packaging worked to disincentivise smoking; many thought that vape packaging should carry warnings similar to those seen on cigarette packets. 'No' voters generally argued that changing the packaging wouldn't have much effect on reducing vaping, especially for people who were already addicted. A small number wanted to see a permanent ban on vapes, rather than just changes to their packaging.

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Secondary, 16+ & College: Is it easy to get hold of vapes?

Secondary voters overwhelmingly answered that it was easy to find vapes. Corner shops were the most commonly named source with some saying that many local shops either didn't check ID or didn't care about the law at all. Lots argued that almost every shop in their area would sell them a vape, with some even naming specific establishments. Personal connections were the second most common source. Some voters said that older siblings or even parents could get vapes. Others mentioned older peers distributing or dealing them. Social media was also mentioned, with some voters arguing that people buy them online in bulk to distribute. A few students even said that they could find vapes discarded on streets in their communities.

Similarly to Primary, some Secondary students were concerned that vape marketing targeted young people. Others showed concern of the health risks of vaping, especially at a young age. A handful of voters called for more regulations, whether around ID checks in shops or an outright ban. A minority made it clear that they had never tried vapes and knew almost nothing about where to source them from.

16+ & College voters generally agreed with their Secondary peers that it was "too easy" for underage users to get their hands on vapes. Some thought the highly palatable "fruity" flavours specifically targeted younger people and that vapes shops often looked too much like sweet shops.

Voters in both age groups thought that teenagers vaping was a common sight in their communities.

> *In our corner shop no one ever gets ID'd. They just sell them even to people in school uniforms.*
>
> **Secondary Voter**

> *Students were more of the opinion that this is something that they are not interested in, rather than trying to get vapes and not being able to because students are more aware.*
>
> **Secondary Voter**

> *We don't think some local shop keepers realise how they bad they are for people so they will sell them to underage people.*
>
> **16+ & College Voter**

> *There are so many places to purchase them from and there aren't enough police available to enforce the rules about under 18s purchasing them.*
>
> **Secondary Voter**