

V2 May 2025. Drug and Alcohol Action Team, Cornwall Council. In partnership with Education, Public Health, Police and YZUP. daat@cornwall.gov.uk

Talking to your child, or a young person about vaping and drugs.

If you are concerned about vaping and drugs this guidance may help you to talk to your child.

Things to think about

Whilst tricky, make sure the young person knows you are there for them and that your concerns come from a place of care and wanting to make sure they are OK. It is always helpful to listen to what your child says, so they feel heard. This can often reassure you. If you remain concerned, there are some contacts on page 4 that can support you.

Remember most young people do not vape and only a small number who do vape will use illegal drugs. Your child may not be interested in vaping or illegal drugs and may not be inclined to try them at all.

When talking about drugs, what we say can be influenced by our emotions and personal beliefs which do not always reflect what other people see or experience. This can mean that the young person you are speaking to may not find these views relevant to them and in some cases, it can achieve the opposite effect to what you intended.

Research tells us that when talking to young people about sensitive issues it is helpful to be as factual as possible. This is so the 'message' is credible and makes sense to them. You do not need to know everything, but it helps to know something.

General Information

- Most young people do not vape.
- Most young people who have tried vaping don't go on to use regularly. Those that do tend to use flavour only or nicotine based vape products.
- If you don't vape already, it's safest not to start.
- It is illegal to sell a nicotine vape to anyone under the age of 18. It is **not** illegal for an under 18 to use a vape.
- It is not illegal to sell a nicotine-free vape to under 18s. This will likely change with upcoming legislation.
- If you are aware of outlets that sell nicotine-based vape products to under 18s you can report this to Trading Standards tsintel@cornwall.gov.uk
- If a young person is vaping with legal nicotine vapes to help them switch from smoking tobacco this is substantially less risky. Any young person who believes that they are dependent on nicotine can seek support from [Healthy Cornwall's Smoking Cessation Service](#).
- Useful information for talking to your child or a young person: [Vaping and E-Cigarettes: Facts for parents and carers leaflet](#)



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Substances Controlled Under the Misuse of Drugs Act (1971)

- A small proportion of young people who vape use illegal drugs such as cannabis products.
- THC comes from the cannabis plant. It is associated with getting 'high/stoned'.
- Spice is the street name for synthetic cannabinoids. Spice has nothing to do with the cannabis plant- it is manufactured by people.
- Both THC and synthetic cannabinoids are illegal Class B drugs under the Misuse of Drugs Act- possession and supply of these is illegal.
- THC and Spice can only be obtained illegally.
- Illegal supply can mean possible exposure to wider criminal behaviour and exploitation.
- Sharing a vape containing illegal drugs technically counts as supplying.
- Vaping products obtained illegally are unregulated therefore ingredients, strength and effects are unpredictable. You do not know what is in these products, they could contain other drugs, not just THC or spice. How much a product costs does not guarantee what is in it.
- From using a vape bought illegally you could feel worried, scared and/or become very unwell. You could overdose. Symptoms include vomiting, diarrhoea, breathing difficulties or becoming unconscious.
- If you see someone who has overdosed, do not hesitate to call 999. Paramedics are first and foremost interested in keeping people safe and well, not whether a drug is illegal.
- To avoid getting ill or any other harm it's safest not to use vapes bought illegally.
- Information on substances: [Vapes | FRANK \(talktofrank.com\)](https://www.talktofrank.com)
- If a young person is determined to continue using drugs such as THC/spice, seek support from YZUP (page 4).

Legal Cannabis Vaping Products

- Some cannabis vaping products can be legal such as a form of cannabis called CBD, sometimes referred to as medical cannabis. If bought legally, CBD products are regulated to ensure quality and safety.
- CBD is mainly associated with reducing anxiety, stress, reducing inflammation and pain. CBD does not get you 'high/stoned'.
- If you are aware of outlets that sell CBD to under 18s you can report this to Trading Standards tsintel@cornwall.gov.uk.



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Overdose Response

1. Call 999 if anyone is showing signs of being seriously ill:

- being sick
- dizziness
- sudden, noticeable heartbeats (palpitations)
- breathing difficulties
- uncontrollable restlessness or agitation
- seizures (fits)
- drowsiness or loss of consciousness

If the person is unconscious but breathing put them in the recovery position. If the person is not breathing, carry out CPR. The 999 call handler will guide you through this.

2. Call NHS 111 for advice if a person does not appear to be seriously ill.

3. Stay with a person if they are ill or experiencing negative effects.

Try to remain calm and explain to them what has happened - they may be confused and unsure of what is happening.

- **Never call-off an ambulance** even if you think someone has recovered. Overdose symptoms can be unpredictable because substances obtained illegally could contain anything. Your child may become ill again. Wait for advice from paramedics.
- It is important not to take your child home or to the hospital yourself without paramedics assessing them first. They will advise you on what to do and answer any questions you may have.
- If paramedics advise that it is safe to take your child to hospital yourself then do so.
- The professional/service will log what has been agreed in their notes or accident/incident book.
- The professional working with you/service will check-in with you later to see how your child is doing. Please note that if you did not take your child to hospital even though paramedics advised you to, then professionals will have to treat this as a safeguarding issue. We have a responsibility to make sure your child is safe and well.



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Contacts

	Description	Contact
YZUP	Young persons' drug and alcohol service in Cornwall. Ages 11-17.	Call 01872 300816 Online chat https://www.wearewithyou.org.uk/services/cornwall-for-young-people/
Childrens/ Young Peoples Safeguarding	Multi-agency Referral Unit (MARU). Concerns about the welfare or safety of a child or young person including exploitation.	Call 0300 123 1116 Email multiagencyreferralunit@cornwall.gov.uk Inter-agency referral form: https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/childrens-services/child-protection-and-safeguarding/
Education Effectiveness, Welfare and Safeguarding	Advice and support for attendance, suspensions, permanent exclusions from school/college.	Email: schooleffectiveness@cornwall.gov.uk
With You	Adult (18+) drug and alcohol service in Cornwall.	Call 0333 2000 325 Online chat www.wearewithyou.org.uk
Adult Safeguarding	Response to concerns about an adult experiencing abuse, neglect or harm.	Call 0300 1234 131(out of hours number 01208 251300) Email accessteam.referral@cornwall.gov.uk Online www.cornwall.gov.uk/safeguardingadults
Cornwall Early Help	Support or advice about your family or situation.	Online request. https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/childrens-services/early-help/ Call 01872 322277 Email earlyhelphub@cornwall.gov.uk
Healthy Cornwall Smoking cessation	Help to quit smoking and nicotine dependency support. Any age.	Available Support to quit smoking - Healthy Cornwall Call 01872 324200