

DSM Foundation responds to disposable vape ban with its unique insights on young people and drugs

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Ten days on from the [UK-wide ban on disposable vapes](#) that was introduced on June 1, drug education charity the DSM Foundation is commenting on how they see this impacting young people in particular – who have, in the past, been cited as the [biggest users of single use vapes](#).

Although it is likely to take a few months for the full impact of the legislation to become clear, the DSM Foundation knows from its survey of over 4,000 15-18 year olds (since September 2024) that vapes score the highest in terms of acceptability for young people, with over half stating that they are “OK to use regularly”, and only an eighth of respondents considering them “not OK”. Interestingly, vaping also scores the highest in response to the question “Which substances do you think cause people in your year group most problems, if anyone does have problems?” with nearly 80 per cent stating it as an answer.

DSM founder and director Fiona Spargo-Mabbs OBE comments: “We have yet to see how the ban on disposables will affect vape use among young people: while the change in the law may deter some from continuing or starting, it could mean that others purchase single-use vapes from illegal sources, or move onto refillables. Both of these pose risks, the former because it means young people will be accessing a completely unregulated market, while the latter may lead to more individuals inadvertently accessing products that contain drugs other than nicotine. This concern, and specifically worries that this could mean increased exposure to the highly potent, addictive and dangerous drug Spice, led us to work with the University of Bath to develop some [training for school and college staff](#) to raise awareness of this issue.”

“There is also a chance that young people will move to alternative forms of nicotine delivery devices, with our data showing how high awareness – and possibly prevalence – of nicotine pouches is among the 15-18 year olds who have responded to our survey. Only vaping, alcohol, cigarettes and smokable forms of cannabis rank higher, though it is interesting that acceptability of nicotine pouches is more mixed than might be expected, with around a third of respondents deeming them ‘not OK to use’, and a significant number considering use of nicotine pouches to be causing a problem for their peers.”

As a charity working extensively in schools and colleges to help young people make informed and safer choices about drugs and alcohol – whether for themselves or to support their friends – the DSM Foundation will continue to gather insight from the students who receive their evidence-based, non-judgemental drugs education, as well as from other data sources. Doing so not only means the charity's work continues to reflect and address the real issues faced by young people, but also gives them expertise in a fast-moving and fascinating slice of society: drugs, decisions and young people.

Information for editors:

The DSM Foundation is a drug education charity established in 2014 following the death of 16 year old Daniel Spargo-Mabbs from an accidental overdose of ecstasy. His family felt that he simply hadn't known enough to be able to make decisions that would keep him safe, and realized there was a huge gap in the resources and support available to schools, so set up the charity in order to spare other families going through what they had experienced.

The aim of the DSM Foundation is to provide young people with relevant, age-appropriate, up to date and evidence-based information about drugs so they develop the skills to make choices that will keep themselves and their friends as safe as possible. To this end, the charity is currently working in almost 750 schools, colleges and community organisations with children and young people, and also provides workshops for parents and caregivers, and training for school and college staff – the two groups shown by NHS survey data as the most likely sources of information about drugs and alcohol sought out by 11-15 year olds. Educational settings are also able to access “I Love You Mum, I Promise I Won't Die”, a verbatim play by Mark Wheeler that was commissioned by the charity to tell Dan's story in the words of his family and friends, through studying the work itself (sometimes due to it being a GCSE Drama set text on the Eduqas syllabus), or booking a Theatre in Education performance. Schools and colleges can also download age-appropriate, relevant, up to date and evidence-based drugs education lesson resources free of charge from the DSM Foundation website for delivery by teachers through PSHE/PSE provision.

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For more information about the DSM Foundation, go to <https://www.dsmfoundation.org.uk/>.

Media enquiries about this press release or the work of the DSM Foundation should be sent to media@dsmfoundation.org.uk.

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