



Youth vaping and nicotine use prevention campaign

Campaign pack

March 2026





The problem

- Nicotine use among young people has increased in recent years.
- Disposable vapes have contributed to more teenagers and young people experimenting with these products.
- Smokeless nicotine products like nicotine pouches, often called snus, are also becoming more prevalent.
- While the majority of young people do not vape, many encounter vapes as soon as they enter secondary school, and vaping has become normalised for those under 18.
- Vapes and associated products contain nicotine and children and young people are more vulnerable to the risks of the negative effects of nicotine use.
- Nicotine is highly addictive and can harm the developing brain, affect memory, concentration, mood, and impulse control, and increase the risk of future smoking.
- Vaping can also lead to breathing problems like asthma.





What the research told us

We held in-person focus groups with friendship pairs aged 11-17, parents, teachers, older siblings and sports coaches and a survey with 300+ parents and their children.

Key findings:

- From age 14, vaping is not a particularly rebellious or fringe activity. The social stigma associated with traditional cigarettes is absent; vaping is simply what people their age do.
- Over 70% of children said they are exposed to vapes in school or in shops 1 in 4 children said they have ever vaped and 1 in 10 have tried nicotine pouches.
- The initial and continued use of vapes is overwhelmingly driven by a desire to fit in. The bright colours and sweet flavours (e.g. Strawberry kiwi) are cited as a major reason vapes are attractive.
- While there is a general sense that vaping is bad, specific knowledge is hazy and often contradictory.
- Nicotine pouches (commonly referred to as snus) are an emergent trend among young males.
- Health and physical performance are a primary concern for young people, especially for those involved in sports. This is a key barrier to them vaping.
- There are so many unknown variables for parents, including not knowing all the products available, a lack of clarity around the consequences of use, and even transparency about how and what their kids are experimenting with. This uncertainty leaves parents feeling out of their depth when it comes to vaping.
- Teachers shared how adamant young people are in the belief that vaping is the 'healthier' alternative to cigarette use.
- Both parents and their children reported they are very open and willing to discuss vaping and snus with each other mainly stemming from relationships. Parents would like more information to support these discussions with their children.



Campaign overview

The first phase of the campaign launched in October 2025 following research with parents and influential adults and young people.

Our goal for phase 1 was to ensure parents, teachers, and sports coaches understood where to get information on vaping and snus and the support available and to encourage them to talk to young people about vaping and nicotine.

We developed [website content](#) and booklets on the different types of nicotine products being used by young people, health risks, warning signs, and conversation tips.

The HSE Tobacco Free Ireland programme issued a letter to schools highlighting rising nicotine use and directed teachers and parents to further information and support.

This activity was supported by a public information campaign through social media, radio, and digital channels to encourage parents to talk to their children and seek trusted advice. This activity will resume for phase 2 of the campaign.

The second phase of the campaign builds on this work, focussing on young people while continuing to support adults to have conversations with young people about vaping and nicotine use. This phase is informed by consultation and research with young people and adults. It has two strands:

- A campaign for young people using a mix of organic social, paid social and creator-lead content, this content is tailored to young people and how they use digital platforms.
- A series of short, factual videos from experts for adults discussing issues like health risks, vaping myths, addiction, new products like snus or pouches, popcorn lung, oral and mental health with the young people in their lives. This phase will continue to support parents while focusing firmly on young people, the group most affected and most at risk.



Resources for adults

We will target parents, guardians and influential adults with video content from 7 experts on topics including the risks of vaping, addiction, oral health, and how to talk to your young person.

These videos will be available on YouTube and on social channels and will run as ads on Instagram and TikTok targeting parents and guardians. The ads will start on March 20 and run until mid- June. They will also be shared organically on HSE channels.

View [playlist](#)

Experts featured:

- Professor Bobby Smyth, Consultant Child & Adolescent Psychiatrist, HSE Youth Drug & Alcohol Service
- Dr Ioanna Politi, Periodontist, Hampton Dental
- Emer Loughrey, Counselling Psychotherapist, HSE Youth Drug & Alcohol Service
- Martina Blake, National Lead, HSE Tobacco Free Ireland Programme
- Dr David McConaghy, Clinical Lead for the Prevention of Cardiovascular Disease, ICGP
- Dr Helen McAvoy, Director of Policy, All Island Institute of Public Health Free Ireland Programme
- Geoff Taylor, Principal Environmental Health Officer, HSE National Environmental Health Service





Content creator videos



Kasey Campion
<https://www.tiktok.com/@kaseycampion25>



Jim Flanno
<https://www.tiktok.com/@jimflanno>



Zara Deasy
<https://www.tiktok.com/@zara.deasy>



Daragh McGurn
<https://www.tiktok.com/@mcgurnfitness>



Shauna Davitt
https://www.tiktok.com/@shauna_the_sheep123



Ryan Mar
<https://www.tiktok.com/@ryanmar99?lang=en-GB>



Sean Fitzgerald
<https://www.tiktok.com/@fitzy.007?lang=en-GB>



Billykiss Azeez
<https://www.tiktok.com/@billykissazeez?lang=en-GB>

The creator content will be shared on the creators' own TikTok channels and be boosted for further visibility.

There are 8 creators, the content will go live in stages, 2 content creators per week and boosted for 4 weeks from go live. You can see and share the content at the handles given here.



HSE social media advertising

We will run a social media campaign on the HSE's Instagram and TikTok targeting people aged 18 to 25. This will run until mid-June.

This content will also be shared organically on HSE channels at various times over the next number of months.

The campaign will feature our animated character Alex who shares evidence-based advice and information about the risks of vaping and nicotine in a friendly and factual way.

These assets will be shared as they become available.

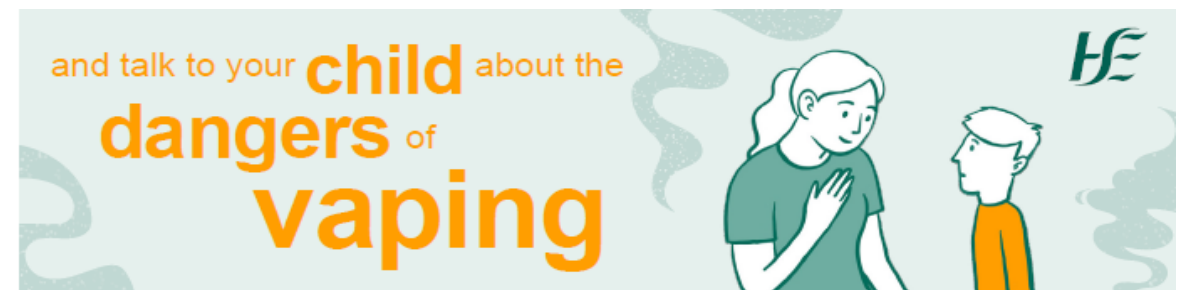




Radio, digital audio, display and search

The 'Take a deep breath' campaign will run again as part of this launch to encourage parents to speak to their children about vaping and nicotine use. This will include:

- National and local radio from 20th March- 20th April and digital audio until 29th June. Listen to the radio ad [here](#)
- Digital display advertising from 20th March to 29th June
- Google search from March to July





Information and resources



[Health A to Z](#)

[Services](#)

[Living well](#)

[Mental health](#)

[Pregnancy and birth](#)

[Home](#) > [Living well](#) > [Quit smoking](#)

Vaping and other nicotine products

Advice on vaping and smokeless products such as nicotine pouches

[Vaping \(using e-cigarettes\)](#)

[Quitting vaping](#)

[Vaping and young people](#)

[Smokeless products](#)

Clear, easy to find advice online

Advice on vaping, other nicotine products and how to talk to young people about these topics is available at hse.ie/vaping

HSE
Talking
Health & Wellbeing

**Vaping, Teens and the Truth:
Protecting Young People from Nicotine**

with Martina Blake & Kirstie White

Hosted by Noreen Turley #126

The poster features the HSE logo and the 'hi healthy Ireland' logo. The background is dark green with white and yellow text. The title 'Vaping, Teens and the Truth: Protecting Young People from Nicotine' is in a white rounded rectangle.

Information and advice

[Podcast](#) exploring vaping and nicotine products and what they really mean for young people's health in Ireland.

HSE **hi** **YOU CAN QUIT**
Healthy Ireland

Vaping and e-cigarettes
A HSE information booklet for parents, guardians and young people

The cover features the HSE logo, the 'hi healthy Ireland' logo, and the 'YOU CAN QUIT' logo. The background is light blue and green. The title 'Vaping and e-cigarettes' is in large blue letters. Below the title is a subtitle 'A HSE information booklet for parents, guardians and young people'. The central illustration shows a family (a man, a woman, and two children) standing next to a large blue e-cigarette. The man and woman have question marks above their heads, and one of the children is holding a soccer ball.

Resources

Information booklets on vaping and e-cigarettes for parents and schools are available on HealthPromotion.ie



Press release

HSE launches new national youth vaping and nicotine prevention campaign

The HSE launched a new youth vaping and nicotine prevention campaign at Presentation De La Salle College in Bagenalstown, Co Carlow.

This new campaign highlights the risks of youth vaping and nicotine use and was launched by the HSE Tobacco Free Ireland Programme, and Minister for Public Health, Well Being and the National Drugs Strategy Jennifer Murnane O'Connor TD, school students, teachers and doctors.

Vaping can lead to smoking or addiction to other substances. Children and young people are more at risk of the negative effects of nicotine which include problems with attention and learning, mood, impulse control and anxiety as well as problems sleeping and mental health difficulties, such as low mood. It can cause damage to your heart, lungs, teeth and gums, the developing brain and blood vessels. Over time these risks may cause diseases such as heart disease, lung disease and cancer.

This campaign creates tailored messages for young people and complements the existing vaping campaign for parents and influential adults 'Take a Deep Breath' which aims to arm parents and influential adults with the facts about vaping, to help facilitate meaningful discussions. 75% of teenagers say that their parents are trusted sources of information on vaping.

To continue reading [go here](#)





Contact Information

For queries on this campaign please contact the team at:

- Darina Carr darina.carr@hse.ie (Campaign Manager)
- Maria Byrne maria.byrne6@hse.ie (Social Media Lead)
- Rachel Wright rachel.wright@hse.ie (Campaign Director)