

TRENDS IN YOUNG PEOPLE'S SUBSTANCE USE IN SCOTLAND

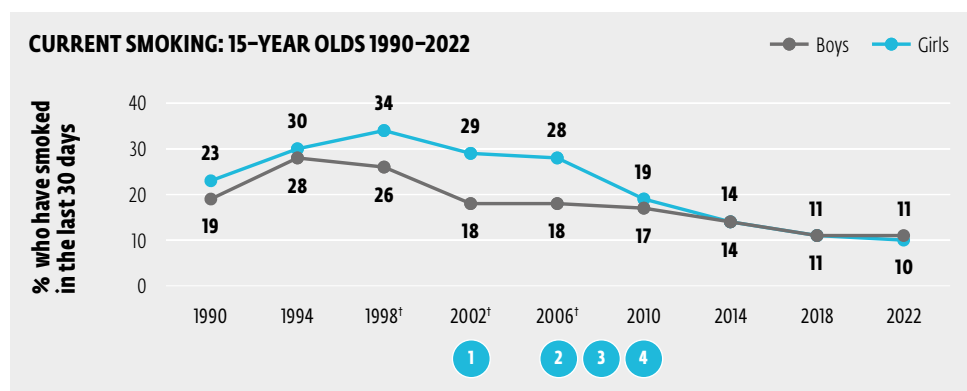
HEALTH BEHAVIOUR IN SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN 2022 SURVEY



Substance use is an important health issue because it is linked to negative consequences for health and wellbeing. This is why government policy focuses on discouraging the use of substances such as alcohol, cigarettes, and electronic cigarettes (commonly called vapes). HBSC has been asking young people in Scotland about substance use since 1990 so we can look at how patterns of use have changed.

Cigarette smoking

Cigarette smoking has decreased over the last 32 years. In 2022, 10% of 15-year-olds said they had smoked in the last 30 days compared with 30% in 1998.



Some Scottish Government policies:

- 1 In 2002 tobacco advertising was banned
- 2 In 2006 smoking in enclosed public spaces was banned
- 3 In 2007, the age to buy tobacco was raised from 16 to 18 year-olds and standardised plain packaging for cigarettes was introduced
- 4 In 2010, displays of tobacco and smoking products in shops were banned

E-cigarette use (vaping)

Vapes have been recommended as an alternative to cigarettes for adults who want to give up smoking. But they have become popular among young people. This is of concern because we do not fully understand the long-term health impacts of vaping.

In HBSC, we started asking young people about vaping in 2018.

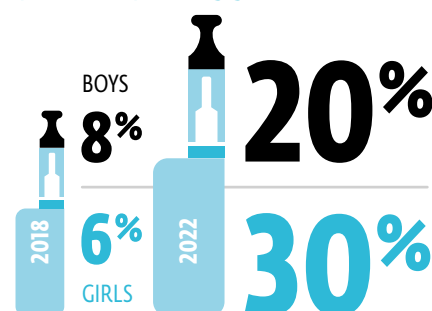
In 2017, the Scottish Government banned the sale of nicotine and vaping products to under 18s and for adults to purchase these products on behalf of under 18s. The government also banned advertising of electronic cigarettes containing nicotine on the TV, radio, Internet, and e-mail.

An important global health treaty "Framework on Tobacco Control" was adopted in 2003 and approved by 181 countries, including the UK.

It included measures to reduce the negative impacts of tobacco.

The Scottish Government's aim is to create a tobacco free generation by 2034

Between 2018 and 2022, there has been an increase in current vaping among 15-year-olds, particularly among girls.



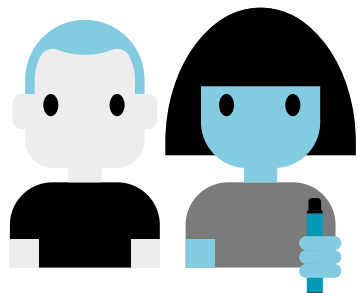
We bin nearly 5 million disposable vapes each week in the UK, that's roughly 8 vapes every second! The plastic cannot always be recycled and the lithium battery in vapes is a precious metal that is facing global shortages. There are plans to ban single use vapes in Scotland.

What else could be done to discourage young people from vaping?

35%

Some people think that young people who vape may also be more likely to take up smoking cigarettes.

HBSC 2022 found that over a third (35%) of young people who vape also smoke cigarettes

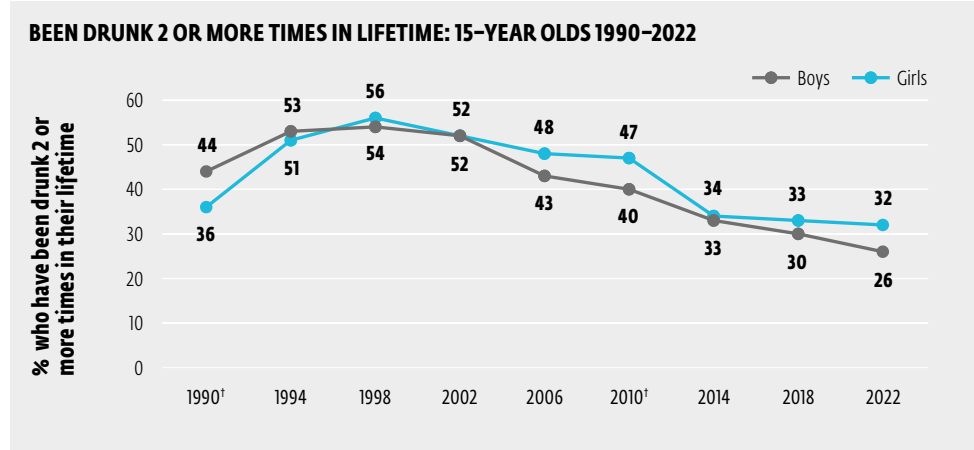


To find out more about young people's concerns about vaping and how to make good choices, >> watch this short video << coproduced by young people.

Alcohol use and drunkenness

Excessive drinking, or drunkenness, is of particular concern among young people because of the health and social risks associated with it. In 2022, 32% of 15-year-old girls and 26% of 15-year-old boys said they had been drunk 2 or more times in their lifetime. This is the lowest level since 1990.

45% of 15-year-olds said they had drunk alcohol in the last 30 days



A recent international studyⁱⁱ found that increasing the price of alcohol was the most successful measure to reduce alcohol consumption among adolescents. However, a combination of measures worked best overall, such as restrictions on buying alcohol and controlling alcohol advertising.



i <https://www.greenpeace.org.uk/news/are-disposable-vapes-bad-for-the-environment/>
 ii Leal-Lopez et al., (2020). Journal of Drug Policy, 84.

About the Health Behaviour in School-Aged Children (HBSC study)

HBSC is an international school-based survey that is conducted every four years. It asks young people aged 11-, 13- and 15-years old questions about their health and health behaviours. Scotland has taken part since 1990. In 2022, 4,388 young people from 137 schools across Scotland took part in the survey. For more information, visit: gla.ac.uk/hbscscotland.

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