

Vaping Information for Parents and Carers



Vaping Information for Parents

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Vaping Information for Parents

What are vapes?

E-cigarettes or vapes are battery powered devices that heat a liquid, releasing a flavoured vapour which is then inhaled.

In the UK, vapes (e-cigarettes) are regulated as consumer products that can be legally sold to anyone **over the age of 18**. The government encourages adult smokers to switch to vapes as they are substantially less harmful than smoking. However, vapes should not be used by people under the age of 18 (ASH, 2023).

Planet Youth data from the 5 pilot schools shows that **23%** of those surveyed had tried vaping or were vaping regularly at the **age of 13 or younger**.



What is in a vape?

Vapes usually contain vegetable glycerine, propylene glycol, nicotine and flavourings. Vapes come in a wide variety of colours, flavours and strengths and this increases their attractiveness to children and young people. Whilst some of these products do not contain nicotine, there are still concerns related to the e-liquids and delivery methods which can contain or produce harmful ingredients and may have both short and long-term health impacts (ASH, 2023). Testing has shown that **some e-liquids that are marked as nicotine free do actually contain nicotine.**

The following chemicals have also been found in some vapes: **Aldehydes:** Acetaldehyde and formaldehyde that can cause lung and heart disease, **Acrolein:** a herbicide can damage lungs, **Diacetyl:** a food additive used to enhance the flavour of e-cigs which can damage the lungs' small passageways, **Vitamin E acetate:** this chemical has been linked to EVALI, a lung injury caused by vaping, Heavy metals including nickel. **Tin, lead** and cadmium. **Benzene:** this toxic and flammable material can be absorbed through the skin and cause liver damage if inhaled or absorbed.

E-cigarette devices vary greatly and are evolving rapidly

There is also a variety of "generations" of e-cigarettes that differ according to technology and how they are designed to be used.

Vape pens

These enable users to vary e-liquid formulations according to their preferences. Some use pre-filled cartridges while others allow users to refill them.



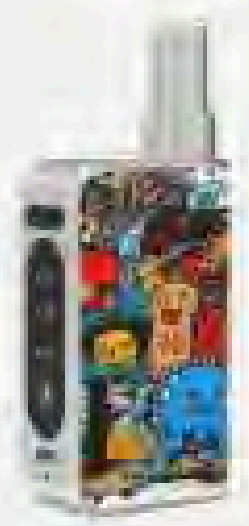
Cig-a-likes

These are disposables that have the look and feel of conventional cigarettes. This may renormalise smoking.



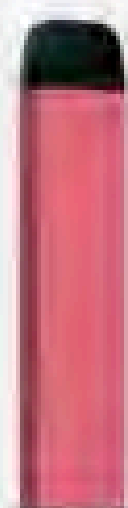
Tank systems

These enable users to vary almost every element of the user experience, including e-liquid formulations and battery power.



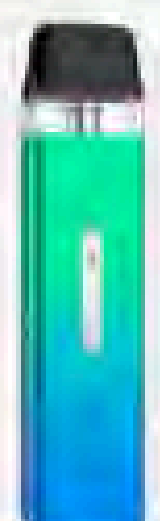
Disposables

These are the latest version of disposable e-cigarettes, often shaped like pods, but are meant to be discarded after the e-liquid has been used. They are available in a wide variety of flavours and are also concealable.



Pods

These are the newer generation of e-cigarettes. Because this generation often uses nicotine salts, these provide higher doses of nicotine without a harsh sensation. The device often looks like USB sticks allowing users (e.g. young people or students) to conceal them.



Exploitative Marketing

In the 2022 ASH survey, the most common place people reported seeing vape promotion online was on TikTok (45.4%). Under current regulations, marketing communications must ensure that they do not appeal particularly to people under 18, especially by reflecting or being associated with youth culture. They also must not encourage non-smokers or non-nicotine users to vape. Advertising vapes on TV or radio is against the law - but social media is a different story.

In the survey (ASH, 2022), over half (56%) of 11 to 17 year olds reported being aware of vape promotion, most frequently in shops, or online. TikTok followed by Instagram were the most frequently mentioned online sources of promotion reported.

Popular platforms such as TikTok contain content that portrays vaping positively. This can contribute to glamorising the products and lead to misinformation about vaping among children and young people.



What is Planet Youth?

Why is Planet Youth involved in providing information on use of vapes in our young people?

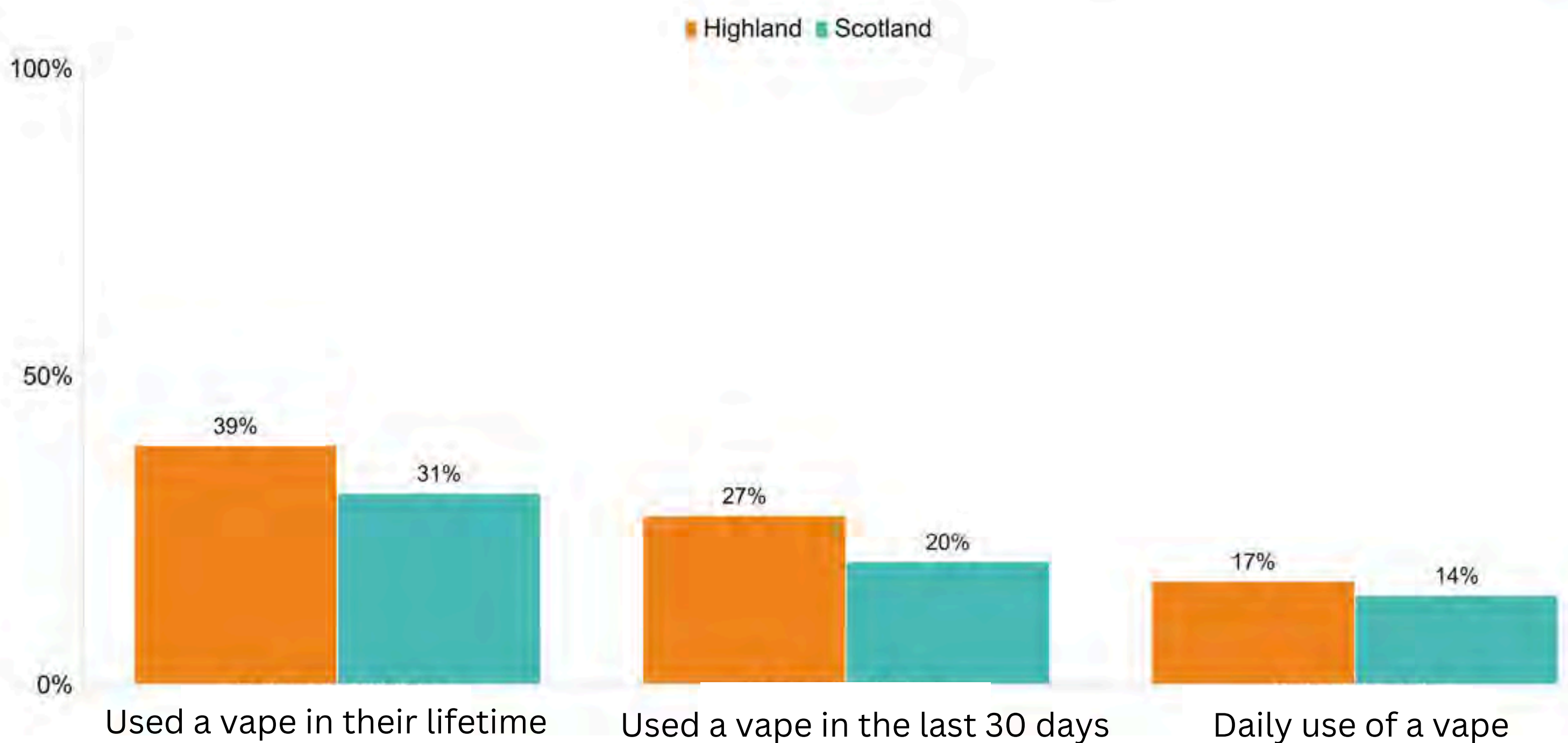
Planet Youth (also known as the the **Icelandic Prevention Model**) is an early intervention, health promotion model, which is currently being piloted within Highland. The model uses confidential data provided by the S4 pupils in the participating schools to generate reports that provide information around a wide range of issues affecting the mental and physical health of the young people in our communities. **Vaping is one of the areas examined.**

This data is then used to work alongside community groups to bring about long term, sustainable positive changes that will benefit the health of our young people

“Planet Youth - Working with communities to prevent and delay our young people from starting to use substances”

What the Planet Youth data shows us:

Regularity of e-cigarette use (vaping) among adolescents in Highland



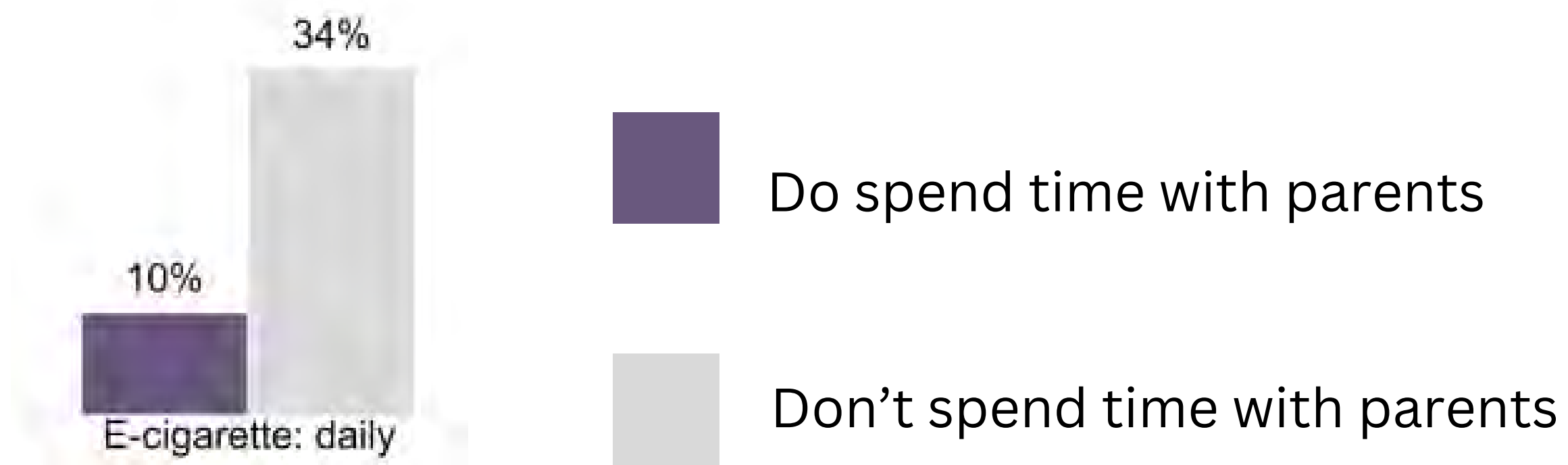
What the data shows us

Proportion of adolescents in Highland who tried or started vaping for the first time **while they were 13 years old or younger**



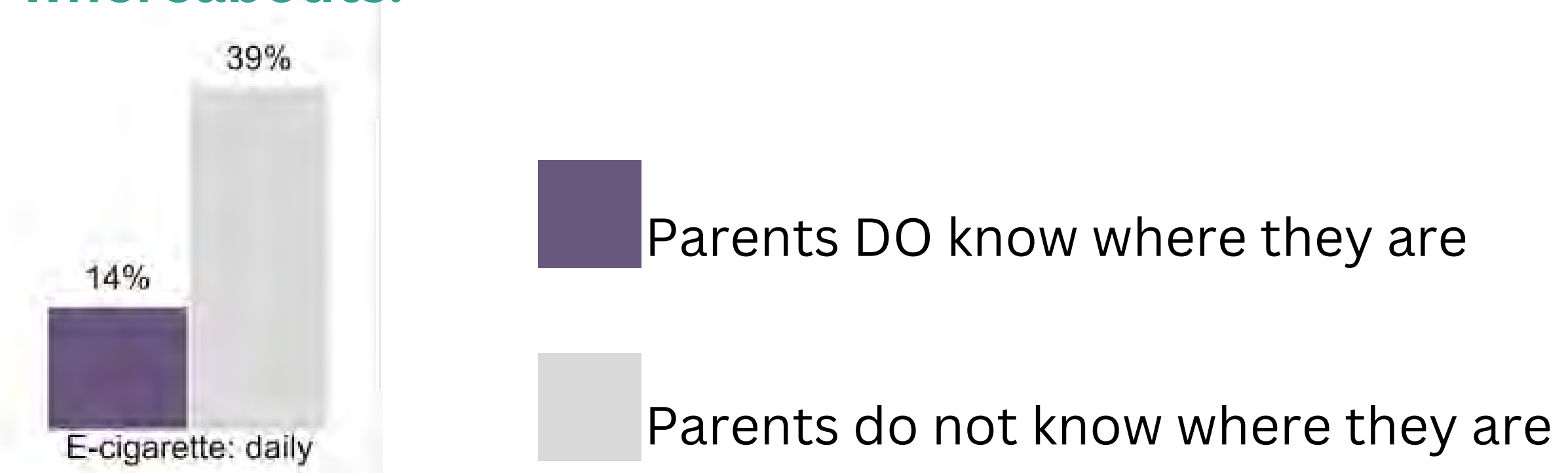
Comparison of vape use in those who spend time with parents on the weekends with those who do not

The graph below was created from the Planet Youth survey data. It shows us that young people **who almost never or rarely spend time with their parents on the weekend are more than 3x as likely to vape** as those who reported often or always spending time with their parents on the weekend.



% of young people using e-ciagrettes daily

Comparison of vape use in adolescents whose parents do know their whereabouts in the evening with those whose parents do not know their whereabouts.



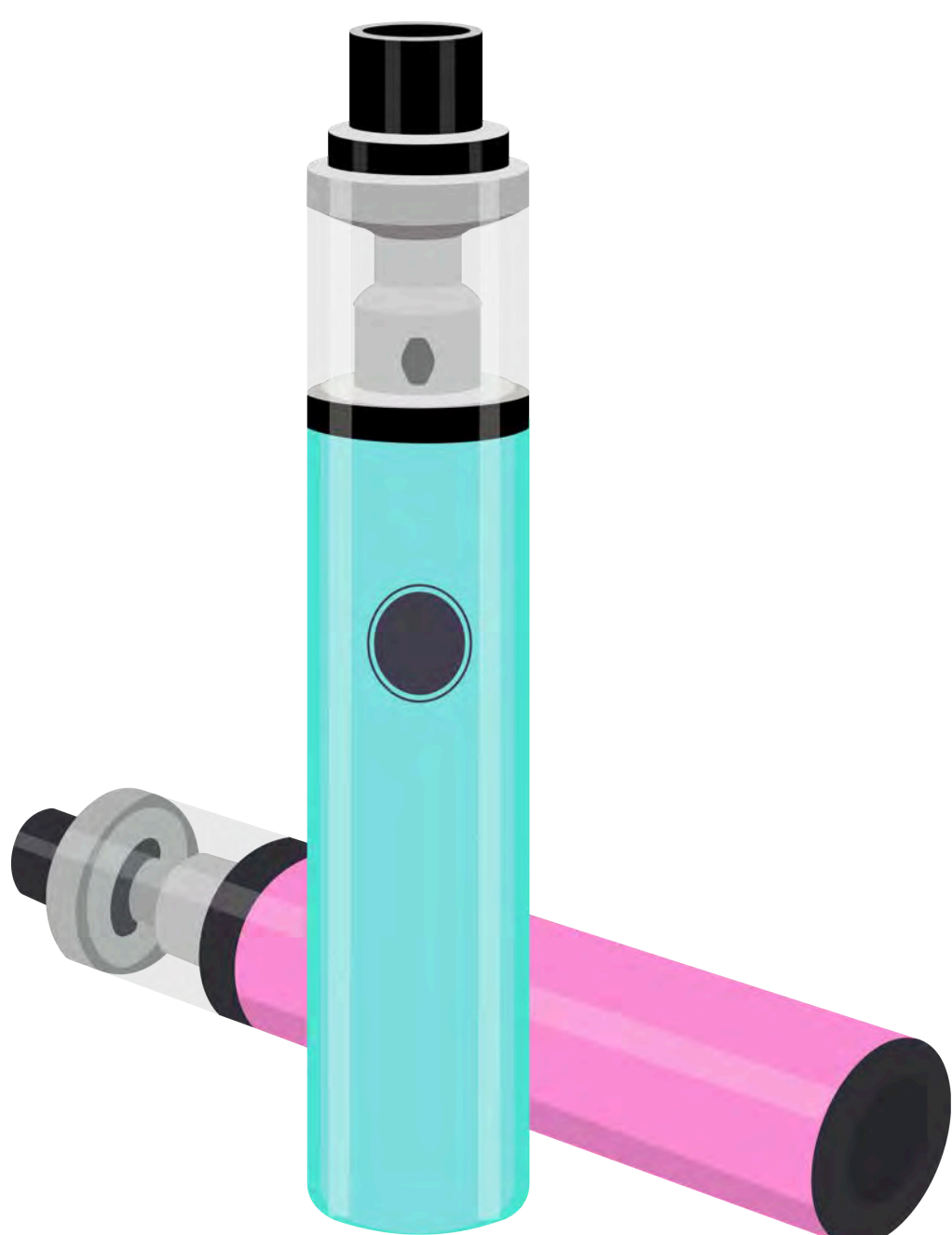
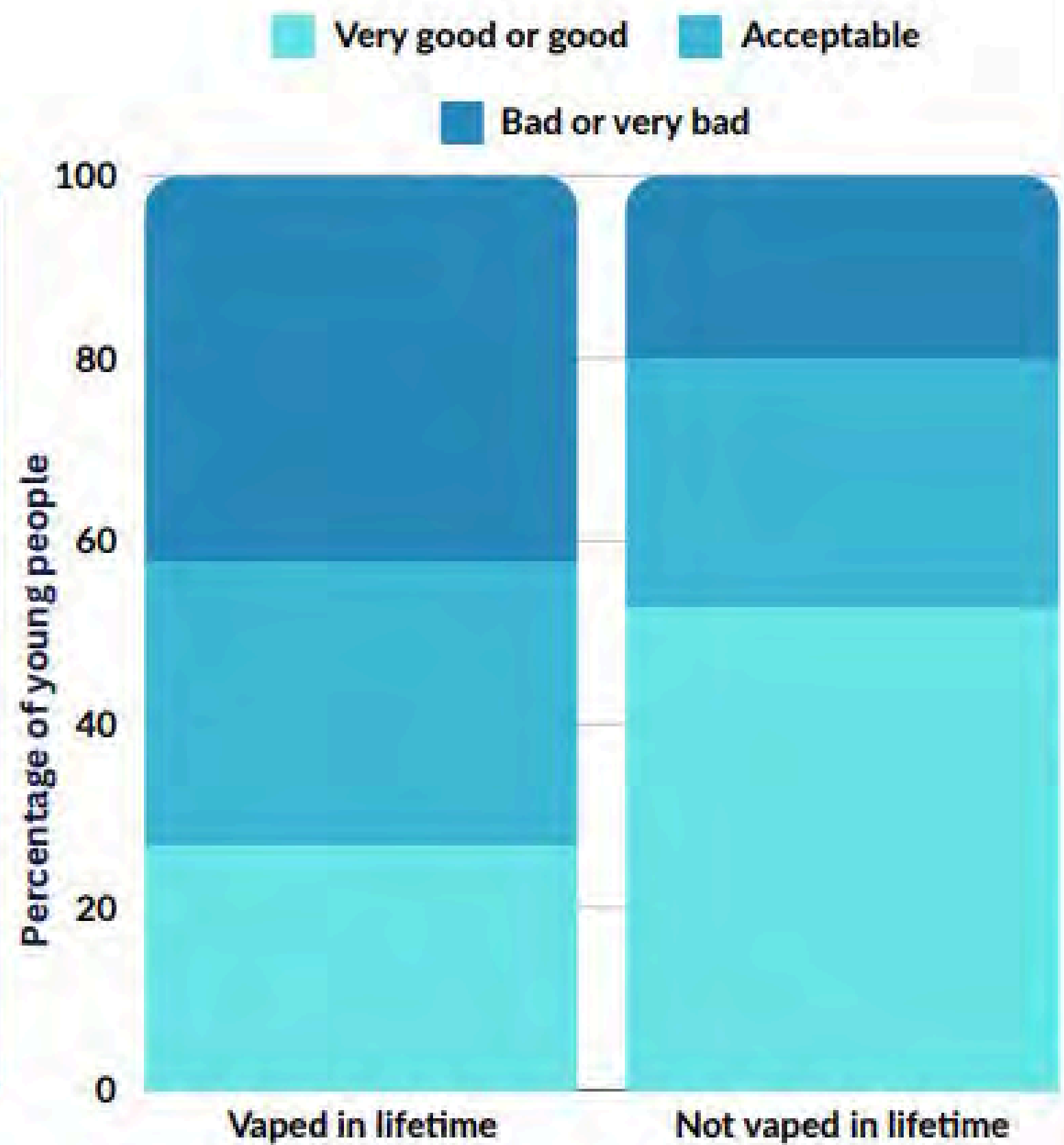
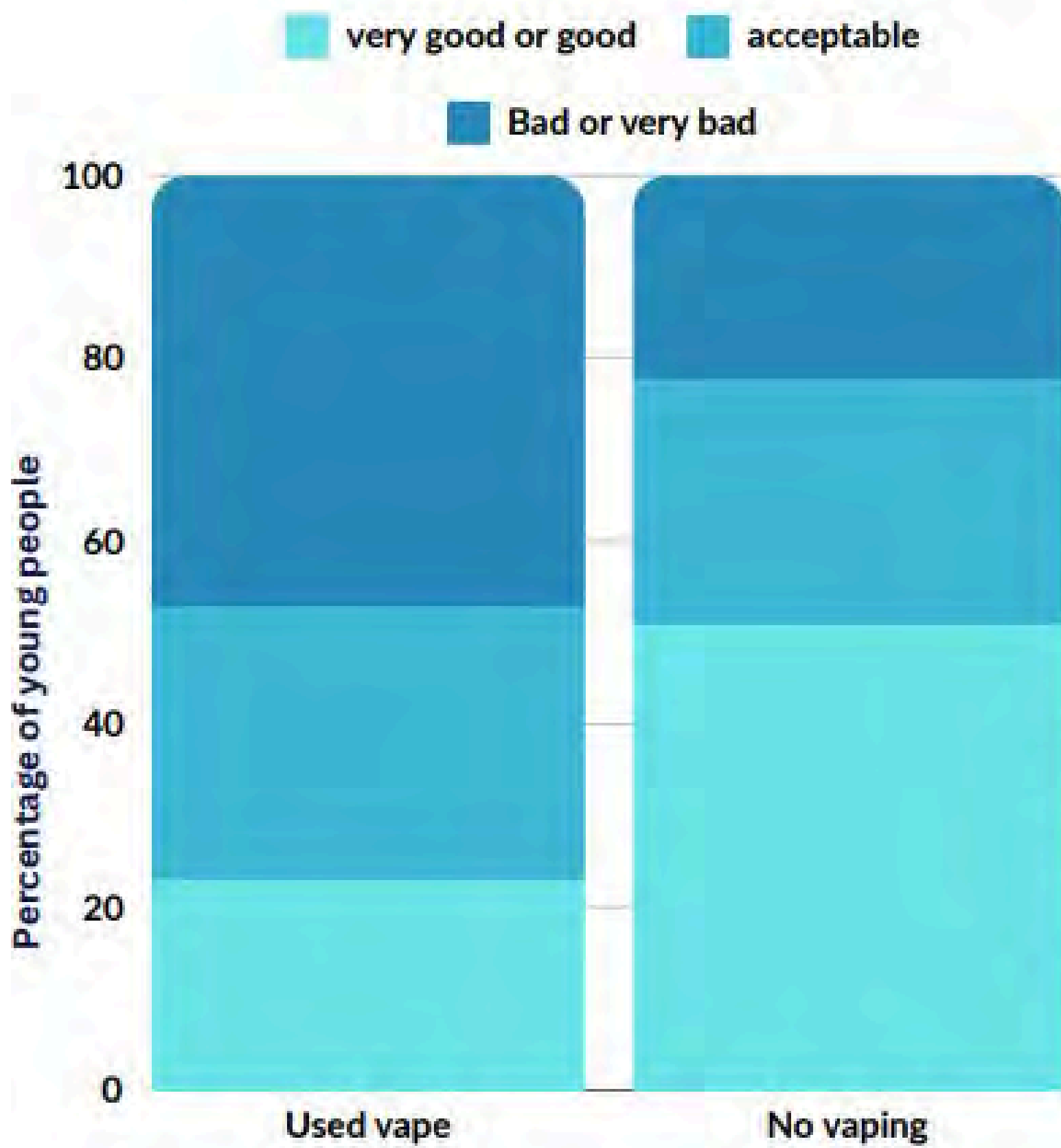
% of young people using e-ciagrettes daily

The graph below shows a cross tabulation between the young people's mental health rating and their usage of vapes

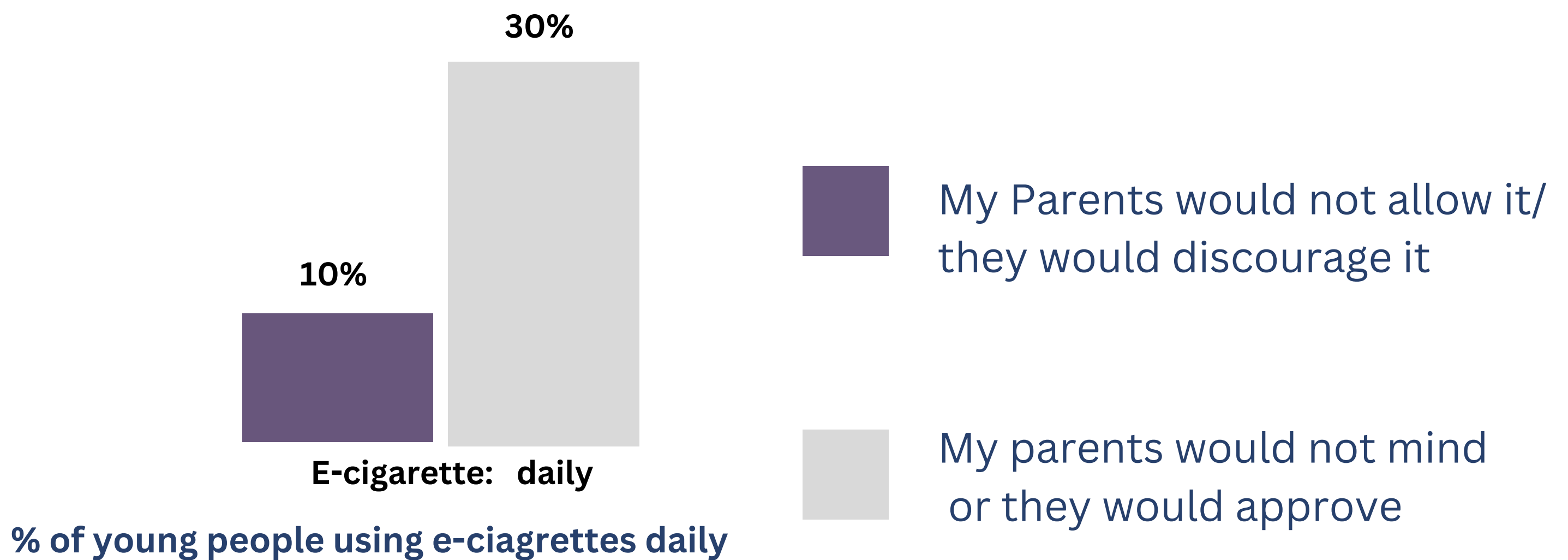
Mental health and use of vapes

Mental health rating crosstab in those who have/have not vaped in the last 30 days

Mental health rating crosstab in those who have/have not vaped in their lifetime



Adolescent perceived parental reactions to them using e-cigarettes (how the adolescent THOUGHT their parents would feel if they realised the adolescent was vaping).



The graph above clearly shows the effect that parents setting clear boundaries and guidelines can have on the likelihood of them using vapes.

Of the 348 S4 pupils who completed the survey in the 5 pilot Planet Youth schools, nearly **40%** had vaped in their lifetime and just under a third had vaped in the last 30 days.



E-cigarettes

27%

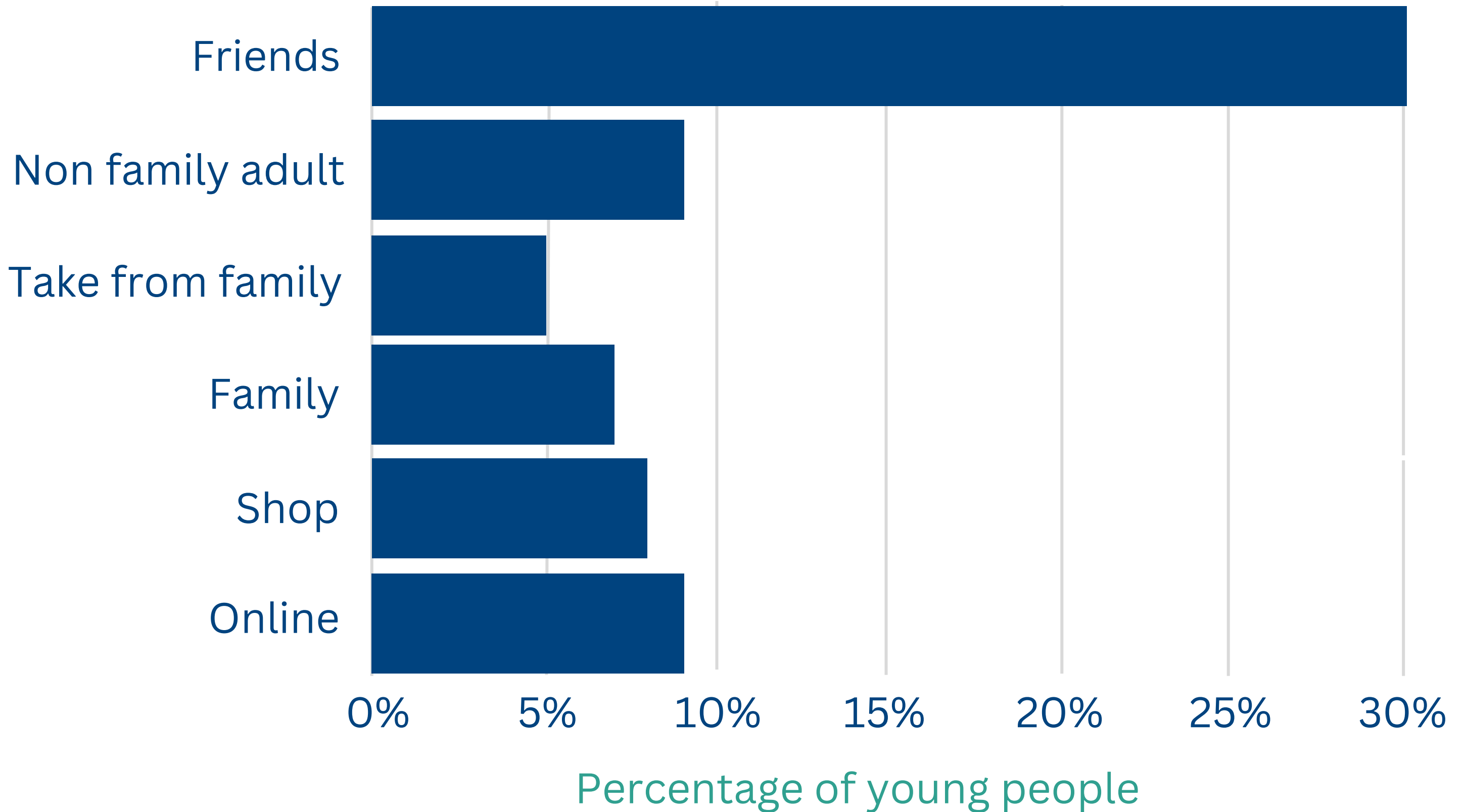
Used an e-cigarette in the last 30 days

17%

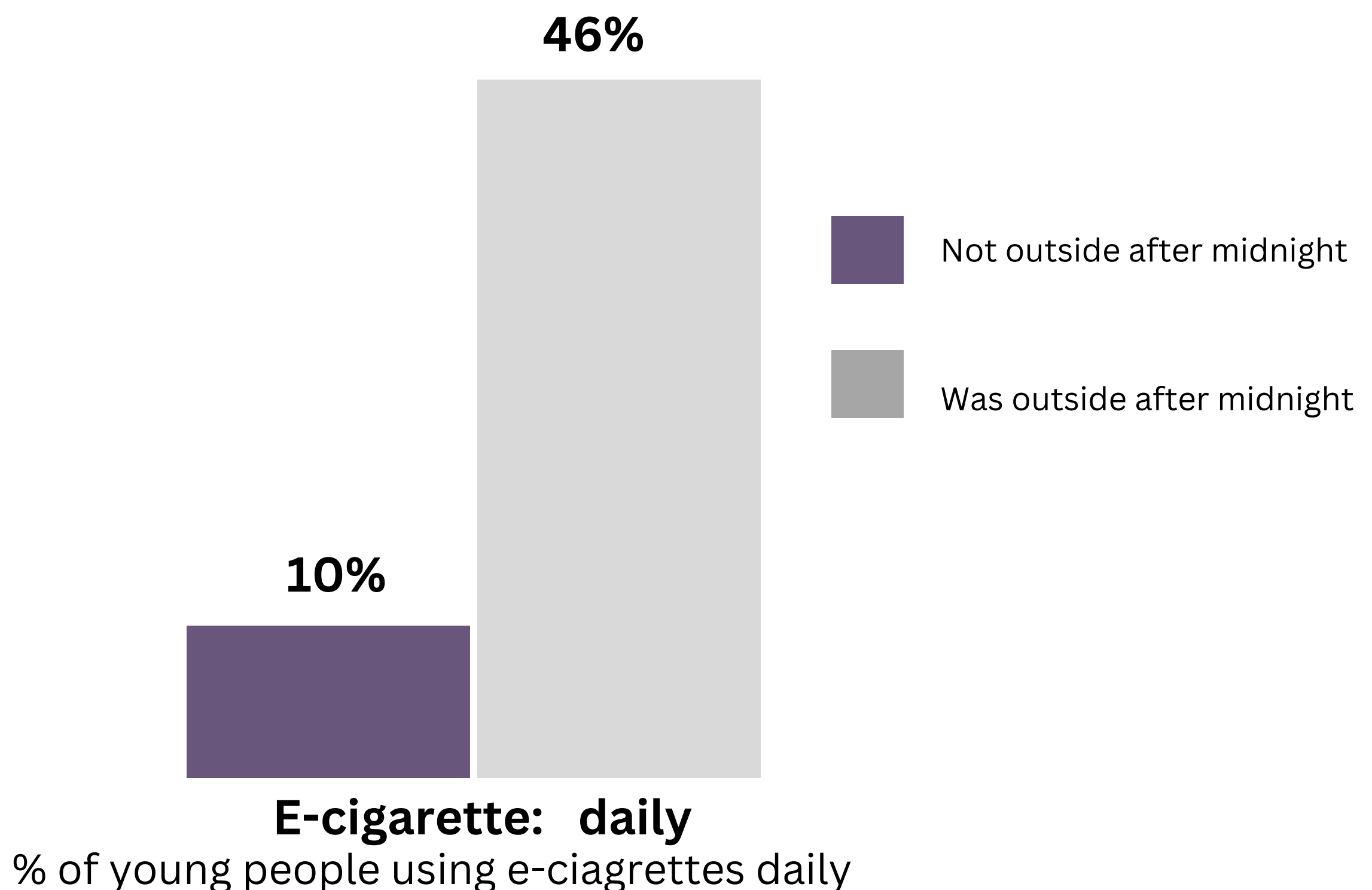
Use e-cigarettes (vape) daily

The young people were asked where they got their vapes from.

Access to e-cigarettes:



The young people who were outside after midnight once or more in the last week were more than 4X as likely to use vapes daily



Why is my child vaping?

The reasons children and young people try vaping are similar to any other drug or substance:

- **To fit in.** Some young people feel pressured to do what their friends are doing. Social status is very important to adolescents.
- **To relieve stress.** Young people are often under a lot of stress from school, work and relationships. Nicotine can have a temporary calming effect- however the nicotine can then lead to increased stress and anxiety as nicotine dependancy becomes an issue.
- **Curiosity.** They may have seen or heard other people vaping and want to know what it is like.

Vaping can have extra appeal for children and young people because:

- They come in sweet smelling flavours and bright colours.
- They see them as less harmful than smoking because of the messaging about them helping people to stop smoking.
- They are more discrete than smoking because the smell doesn't last as long and they can be easily hidden.

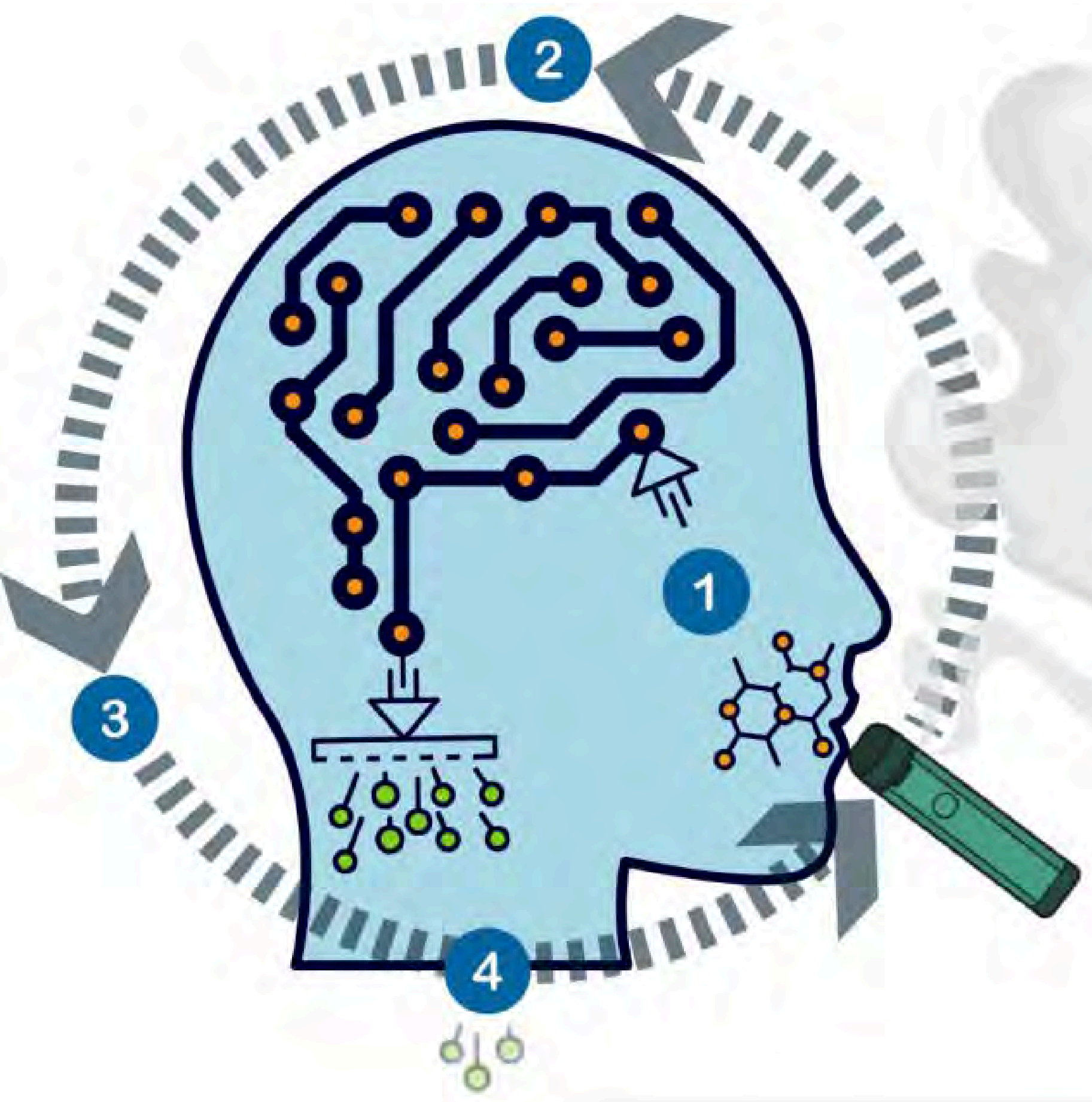


Effects of nicotine

NICOTINE IS HIGHLY ADDICTIVE

- Affects brain development, especially in young people
- Raises heart rate
- Raises adrenaline
- Raises blood pressure
- Puts body into 'fight or flight' mode – stresses body

Nicotine is more risky for young people than for adults, as evidence suggests the developing brain is more sensitive to its addictive effects



The development of nicotine dependence

- 1 Nicotine delivered by vaping and travels to the brain
- 2 Nicotine activates nicotinic receptors which stimulate the release of Dopamine
- 3 Dopamine released, leading to pleasant feelings of calmness and reward
- 4 Dopamine levels reduce, leading to withdrawal symptoms of stress and anxiety, which triggers the desire for more vaping.

What are the risks?

Health Impacts of vaping

Possible side effects



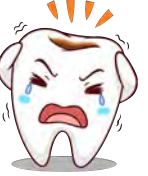
Headaches



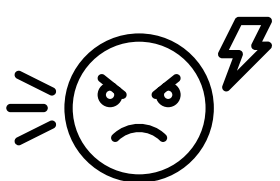
Dry mouth



Cough



Gum disease, tooth decay, early tooth loss



Irritability



Anxiety



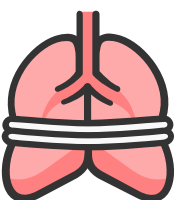
Feelings of stress



Increasing heart rate and blood pressure



Shortness of breath



Lung injury (particularly for people with asthma etc)

- The long-term effects of vaping are still unknown, they are still too new for there to have been proper research.
- Nicotine is highly addictive. There is also a risk when non-smokers try vaping, they might move on to try more harmful cigarettes and drugs.
- There are also illegal vapes being sold that contain dangerous levels of lead, nickel and chromium.

Why are adolescents at greater risk?

Adolescence is characterised by:

- increased emotional reactivity and intensity
- changes in circadian rhythms (e.g. sleep)
- increased sensation seeking
- increased drive for peer affiliation and acceptance
- increased openness to influence and exploration
- need to build their own identity
- building competence

Children and young people face many new challenges and experiences as they grow and develop; part of growing up includes experimenting and trying new things. **Risk taking behaviours** are those that potentially expose young people to harm, or significant risk of harm, which will prevent them reaching their full potential.



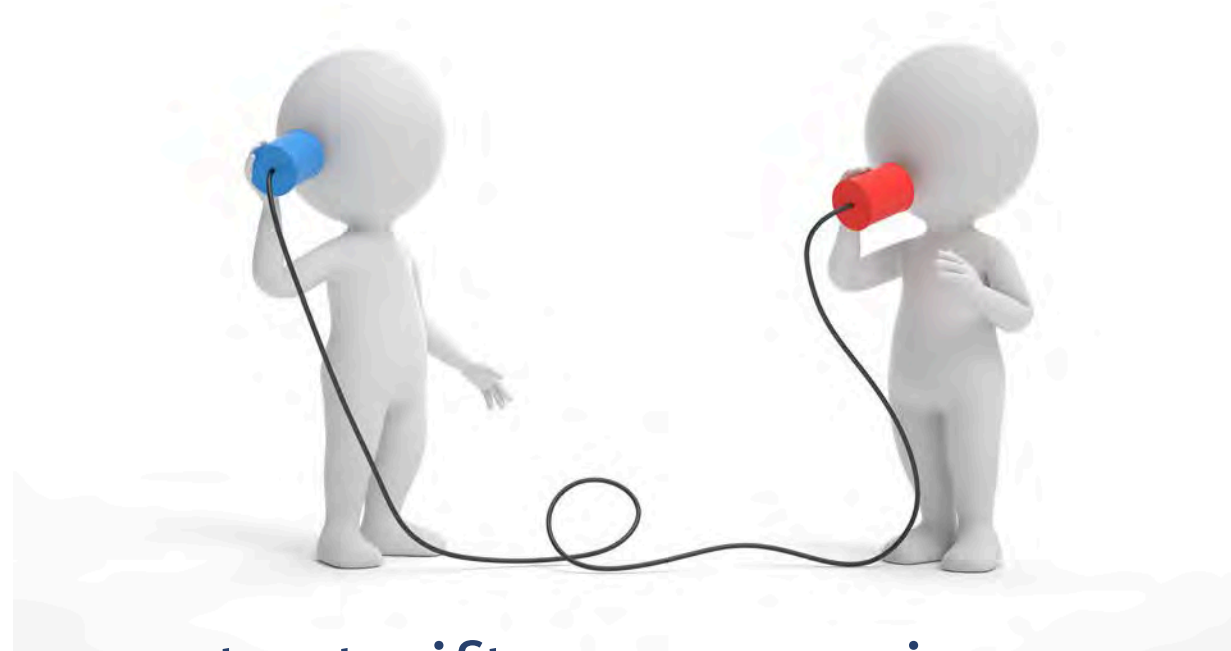
Increasing protective factors

Increase the protective factors in their child's life.



The Planet Youth model focuses on **strengthening protective factors**. These are the types of things that, if part of a young person's life from an early age, can contribute to reducing the risk of substance use and other risk taking behaviours.

This could include having shared interests, regular family mealtimes, family activities and finding ways to create enjoyable time and space to chat with and listen to our teenagers. As they get older, it is important to maintain good quality communication with them and to stay connected, interested and engaged in what's happening in their lives (at the same time as they seem to be pushing us away and developing their independence). As parents, we are the most important role models for our teens so it is important that we set a good example with our own behaviours.



Our time is one of the greatest gifts we can give our children and setting time aside each day creates the opportunity and space to chat with them and listen to what they have to say.

Here are just a few good reasons why this is so important:

- It strengthens family bonds
- It improves communication
- It builds children's self esteem
- It develops positive behaviours
- It can help your child to do better in school

What can I do to help?

Parents can support children not to vape by:

- Having open and honest conversations on the topic of vaping.
- Setting a good example by taking care of their own health
- Making their house smoke-free and vape-free
- Keeping all vaping supplies and refill materials out of the reach of children

Being supportive and encouraging your child can be key in helping them decide not to vape. And if your teen has experimented with vaping and tobacco products, support their desire to quit. Have an open and honest conversation with your teen about pressures they are facing, including alcohol, tobacco, and drug use. You also should share truthful facts and resources with them about the dangers of vaping

SUPPORT

How do I talk to my child about vaping?

Find a good time to start the conversation. It might be as you walk past a vape shop or see someone using an e-cigarette.

Ask your child what they know about vaping. You can ask them if they know of people who use them and why they use them. You might ask them if they've ever tried it.

Listen to your child, their experience, and their point of view. Show you are interested in what they have to say. Then you can gently and calmly give them some facts about vaping. Ask them what they think about the facts.

If your child is already using a vape, then have the same conversation with them and ask them what they like about it. You are not saying it's okay for them to do it, by being interested. You can still be clear about how you feel. If they feel pressured into vaping by friends, you can teach them helpful skills of being confident in saying 'no thanks, it's not for me'.

1) Encourage positive activities or activities that make them realise what they are capable of and can satisfy their need for taking risks and pushing boundaries.

Encourage and support your child to take part in activities that will build their self esteem and self awareness. These will depend on what is available and what your child is interested in but COULD involve:

- Martial arts
- Mountain Biking
- Surfing
- Attending music concerts
- High Life Highland Leadership programme
- SFRS Fireskills course
- Climbing
- Boxing
- E-gaming tournaments
- Debating



2) Set clear rules and boundaries.

Be clear with your children and let them know that vaping is not acceptable due to the harm to their brain and body. Set rules in place so they know the consequences if they do vape such as confiscation of their phone, no screen time for a set period, being grounded etc. Young people need rules and boundaries, they make them feel safe and help them to know what is and what is not allowed.

 An infographic consisting of six numbered tips, each in a dark blue square with a white icon and text. The tips are:

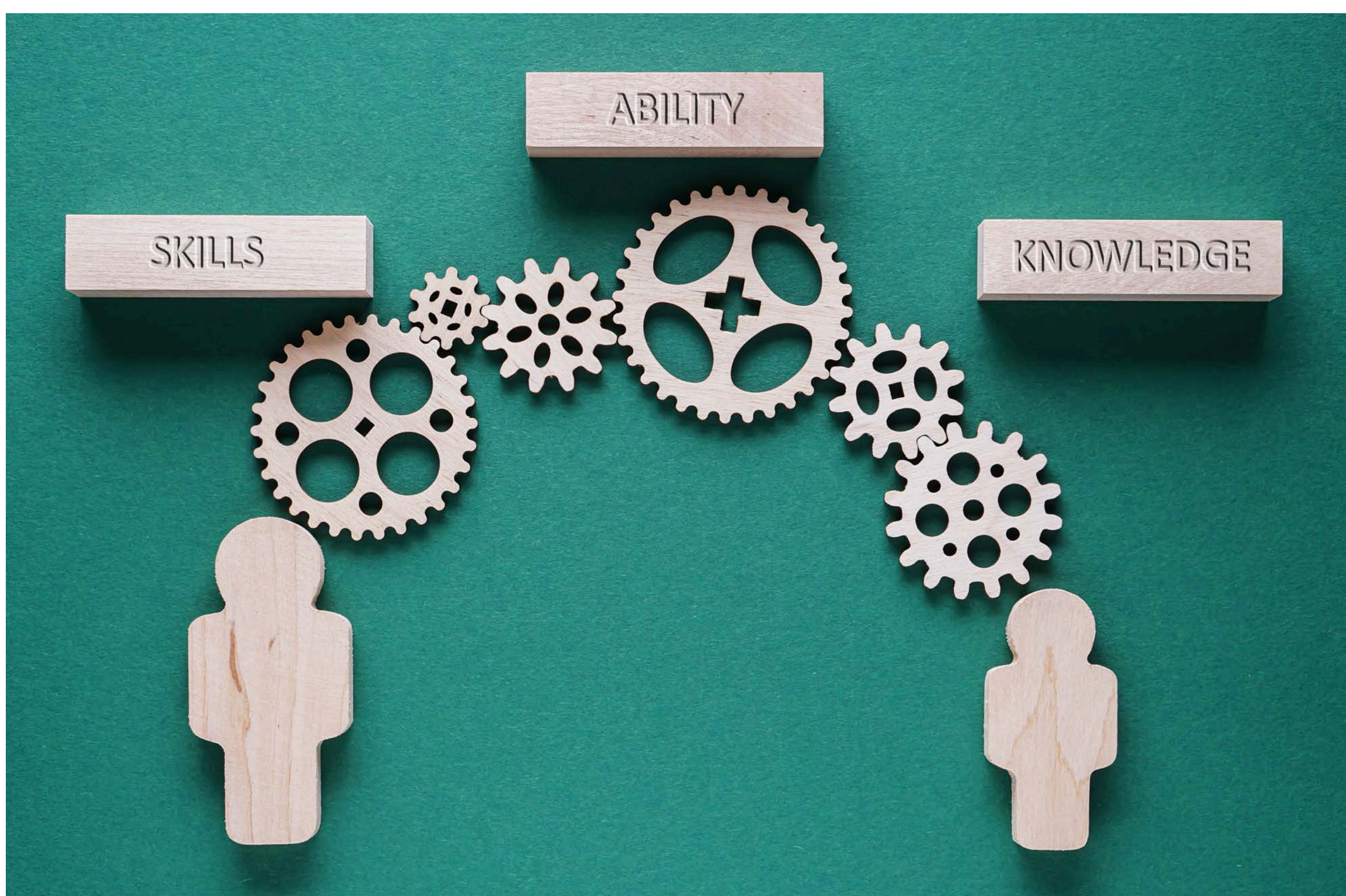
- 1.** Build a close relationship (Icon: two speech bubbles above two profiles).
- 2.** Set boundaries and stick to them (Icon: a right-pointing arrow followed by a vertical line and a left-pointing arrow).
- 3.** Know what they're doing, encourage hobbies and interests (Icon: a group of four stylized human figures).
- 4.** Don't give alcohol, tobacco and/or other drugs to under 18s (Icon: a bottle with a diagonal line through it).
- 5.** If you drink or smoke, set a good example - take lower-risk approaches (Icon: a white checkmark inside a square).
- 6.** Talk openly & honestly about the risks of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs (Icon: two stylized human figures with arrows forming a circle between them).

What do we know works?

Using a combined approach of building social competence and focussing on the role of social influence on our children has been shown to be effective in helping to prevent young people starting to use vapes. Parents can help build social competence in their children through development of personal and social skills, including self management, goal setting, problem solving, decision making, increasing self esteem, finding plausible alternatives to cope with stress and anxiety, helping build their assertiveness and interaction skills.

Social influence includes helping young people to be able to recognise high-risk situations (parties, being out late at night), increasing awareness of the fact that vapes are marketed at adolescents, media, peer and family influences, and teaching and practising refusal skills.

Parents can focus on prevention by encouraging their child to practise and learn a range of personal and social skills, specifically coping, decision making and resistance skills. These approaches also increase assertiveness skills and competence and to interact with others. This can help young people better manage relationships and situations where substances may be present.



Helpful Resources



Highland Substance Awareness Toolkit

<https://www.highlandsubstanceawareness.scot.nhs.uk/substance-awareness-toolkit/parent-carers/>



Parent Club <https://www.parentclub.scot/articles/information-and-facts-about-vaping>

Smoke Free Highland

Smoke Free Highland (help to stop vaping as well as smoking)

<https://www.smokefreehighland.scot.nhs.uk/stopping-smoking/>

Quit your way - an advice and support service for anyone trying to stop vaping or smoking in Scotland.

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/care-support-and-rights/nhs-services/helplines/quit-your-way-scotland/>



ASH Scotland - Here you will find information, resources and train topic of young people and vaping. <https://ashscotland.org.uk/get-support/working-with-young-people/young-people-vaping>

