

27 October 2023

Middlesbrough Council  
PO Box 505  
Fountain Court  
119 Grange Road  
Middlesbrough  
TS1 2DT

Dear Parent

**We are concerned about the increasing number of young people in Middlesbrough who are collapsing after vaping THC or SPICE in schools.**

Cleveland Police have seized a number of vapes confiscated by a local school in recent weeks, some of which are now being tested for illegal drugs such as THC or SPICE.

**Vapes** are designed to help smokers quit smoking, they deliver nicotine in a safer way than smoking tobacco products. The legal age to purchase vapes is 18 and they should not be used by young people who do not smoke. Only legally sold vapes are regulated, so people who use illegal vapes or refillable vapes are at an increased risk of vaping THC and SPICE either through choice or accidentally.

**THC** is the main psychoactive compound in cannabis, it is a Class B drug that gets you high, this is why THC products are illegal to buy, sell or consume in the UK (except where prescribed). THC smells like cannabis although this can be obscured by flavoured oils.

**SPICE** is a collection of synthetic Class B drugs, they are cheaper to produce (usually in makeshift labs by criminals) and mimic the effects of drugs like cannabis. There are over 700 different types, so it's impossible to know which type you are consuming, what it contains, or how much you can have without overdosing. Vaping SPICE is extremely dangerous for young people, it can lead to an inability to move, breathing difficulties, chest pain, heart palpitations, seizures, extreme anxiety, paranoia, suicidal thoughts, psychosis, gastrointestinal issues (vomiting or diarrhoea), acute kidney injury and in some cases **a single dose can kill**.

THC and SPICE are sold in small unlabelled bottles, usually via social media, with efficient delivery schemes and via networks of friends. If your young person shares these oils with their friends, they could all overdose together and not be able to get help. They could also be charged for supply of a Class B drug. Police are working closely with local schools to share information and intelligence. Today, the force has issued a [WARNING](#) and urged parents, or anyone with information they may have about the supply of illicit vapes, to contact them on 101.

**So, if your young person uses a refillable vape or you are concerned they are at risk, please:**

- 1) familiarise yourself with this useful information on the drug wise website [SPICE](#)
- 2) have a chat with your young person following helpful suggestions in this [GUIDE](#)
- 3) encourage your young person to access the relevant local support services (see next page)

Your Sincerely,



**Mark Adams**  
Joint Director of Public Health  
Public Health South Tees



**Rob Brown**  
Director of Education & Partnerships  
Middlesbrough Council

## Local support services for young people in Middlesbrough

South Tees Stop Smoking and  
Stop Vaping Service

Tel: 01642 727579



Select 'Smoking Cessation' referral pathway

Recovery Solutions for  
alcohol and substance support

Tel: 01642 726800



Middlesbrough  
0-19 Health Service

Tel: 0300 303 1603



Sexual Health Services  
HRCG

Tel: 0300 330 1122



C-Card Contraception  
Brook

Tel: 0750 080 0830

