



**NO SMOKING DAY**

**12TH MARCH 2025**

**YOUTH CLUB TOOLKIT**

# NO SMOKING DAY

## 12TH MARCH 2025

Thank you for being part of No Smoking Day which takes place on **12th March 2025!** This year's theme is "Every Minute Counts," a powerful reminder that every cigarette smoked takes away 20 minutes of life\*, but quitting gives that time back—for health, happiness, and family moments that matter most.

We've put together this fun, interactive toolkit to help you run No Smoking Day activities that young people will actually enjoy. From challenges and games to creative projects and social media takeovers, there's something for every group.

## USING THIS TOOLKIT

This pack is filled with fun, creative, and interactive ideas to make No Smoking Day a hit at your youth club. You can pick and mix activities that best fit your group - whether you want to run a quick game, a creative challenge, or a full event.

- **Pick Your Activity** – Choose from quick 20-minute challenges, games, or group projects.
- **Resources for Youth Leaders and Parents:** To spread the message further.
- **Share Your Moments** – Tag @ashwalescymru and use #NoSmokingDayWales so we can see and share your activities

You don't have to do everything - pick what works for your group, and feel free to adapt the ideas to make them your own. Every effort, big or small, helps to inspire a smoke-free generation. Let's make No Smoking Day 2025 a day to remember!



# THE RESEARCH

## Every Cigarette Takes 20 Minutes of Life

- Research from University College London (UCL) finds that each cigarette reduces life expectancy by 20 minutes.
- Smoking 10 cigarettes a day for a week takes a full day off a person's life.
- By quitting for a year, a smoker could avoid losing 50 days of life.
- Reference: [onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/add.16757](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/add.16757)

## Smoking in Young People

- 2.9% of Year 7-11 students smoke regularly, rising to 5.2% in Year 11.
- 23% of Year 7-11 students (2,546/11,002) live with a smoker.
- 18% of Year 12-13 students (268/1,522) live with a smoker.
- Young people who live with a smoker are 3x more likely to smoke (6.6% vs 1.8%).
- In Year 11, students with a smoker at home are 4x more likely to smoke (12.6% vs 3.1%).

## Vaping Among Young People

- 1 in 4 (24%) Year 7-11 students have vaped – rising to 44% in Years 12-13.
- 7% of Year 7-11 students vape regularly, increasing to 13% in Years 12-13.
- Vaping is 2x more common in students who live with a smoker or vaper (66% vs 32%).
- 62% of Year 10s say vapes are 'easy' or 'very easy' to get.
- 57% of students believe vaping is common in their school or area.

## Health Benefits of Quitting

- Smoking is the number one preventable cause of death in the UK.
- The earlier someone starts smoking, the harder it is to quit.
- Two-thirds of long-term smokers will die from a smoking-related illness.
- Quitting reduces the risk of heart disease, stroke, and cancer, with health benefits starting within 20 minutes.

## Support to Quit Works

- Help Me Quit supports young people aged 12+ to quit smoking or vaping.
- Support is free, confidential, and proven to increase success rates.

# LOOKING FOR MORE INFORMATION

For a comprehensive range of topics, downloadable resources, and in-depth research on smoking and health in Wales, please visit our website: [ash.wales](https://ash.wales).

# 20 MINUTE ACTIVITY IDEAS

The Every Minute Counts theme highlights how quitting smoking gives people back time—each cigarette not smoked adds 20 minutes to their life. Here are some 20-minute activities you can run to inspire positive change and raise awareness.

## ACTIVITIES



### The 20-Minute Action Challenge

**What:** A fast-paced, action-packed team challenge! How many fun tasks can your group complete in 20 minutes?

**How to Play:** Set a timer and see how many challenges they can tick off in 20 minutes!

- 100 jumping jacks
- 20-second plank
- Pass a ball between teammates 20 times
- Hold a balance pose for 20 seconds
- Do a 20-second TikTok dance
- Play a game of rock-paper-scissors in slow motion

**Wrap-up chat:** How does exercise help lung health? What happens to breathing when people smoke? End with a fun fact—each cigarette smoked takes 20 minutes off a person's life! What else could you do with that time?



### What Would You Do with 20 Extra Minutes?

**What:** Imagine you had 20 extra minutes every day - what would you do?

**How to Play:**

- Give each young person a card or sticky note.
- Ask them: "If you had 20 extra minutes every day, what would you do?" Gaming? Football? Writing music? Crafting? 20 minutes adds up fast!
- Stick them up on a "Time Well Spent" wall.
- Read some out loud and vote on one to try in your next session!

**Wrap-up chat:** What else could you do with all the time lost to smoking?



## Design Your Own No Smoking Day T-Shirt

**What:** Turn ideas into eye-catching designs that spread the smoke-free message!

### How to Play:

- Think about a tobacco-related challenge in your area (peer pressure, litter, costs).
- Come up with a fun campaign idea to tackle it!
- Design a logo, slogan, and image on a T-shirt template (paper or real T-shirts with fabric pens!).
- The most creative design wins a prize!
- Ask club members to bring in old T-shirts to upcycle into their new smoke-free designs!

**Wrap-up chat:** What messages really make people think about smoking?

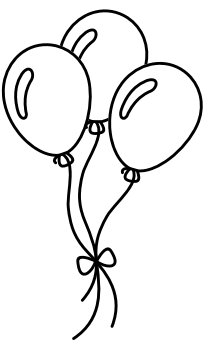


## No Smoking Day TikTok or Reels Challenge

**What:** Get creative on TikTok or Instagram Reels!

### Ideas:

- “What could you do in 20 minutes instead of smoking?” – Show fun ideas in a 20-sec video! (play football, dance, cook, game, chill with friends).
- Try a ‘before and after’ skit – a smoker running out of breath vs. a non-smoker enjoying life.
- Create a funny ‘NOPE’ reaction to smoking or peer pressure.
- Tag @ashwalescymru and use #NoSmokingDayWales to be featured



## The Balloon Challenge – Keep Your Lungs Strong!

**What:** A fun, fast-moving game to show how important lung health is!

### How to Play:

- Split into teams and give each one a balloon.
- The challenge? Keep the balloon in the air for 20 minutes - WITHOUT using hands!
- Add twists: Use only elbows, heads, knees, or feet!
- If the balloon drops, do 5 star jumps before restarting.

**Wrap-up chat:** How does smoking affect lung power? What happens when oxygen can’t reach your muscles properly?



### The 20-Minute Walk

**What:** Take the group on a 20-minute walk around the area. The goal? Enjoy fresh air, move the body, and appreciate what healthy lungs can do!

**Make it interactive:**

- Spot & List – Who can find the most nature-related things (birds, trees, flowers, insects)?
- Mindful Breathing – Take a few deep breaths and notice how it feels to breathe fresh air.

**Wrap-up chat:** Why is fresh air good for our lungs? How would smoking change how we feel on a walk like this?



### Step Challenge – Count Your 20-Minute Steps!

**What:** Can you walk, jog, or run the most steps in 20 minutes?

**How to Play:**

- Use a pedometer or phone app to count steps.
- Work individually or in teams.
- Compare results at the end – who got the most?

**Wrap-up chat:** How does smoking affect fitness? Why do non-smokers have more stamina?



# QUESTIONS

Smoking and vaping can be sensitive topics, especially if young people have family members who smoke or are exposed to smoking and vaping in their daily lives. As a youth leader, you have the opportunity to provide a safe, supportive space where young people can ask questions and learn without judgement.

## **What if a young person says their parents smoke?**

- Acknowledge their experience in a neutral way: "Lots of adults smoke, and it can be difficult to talk about. We're learning today about how smoking affects health, but that doesn't mean we're saying anything bad about people who do smoke. Some people find it really hard to stop, and there is support available if they ever choose to quit."
- Be sensitive to personal circumstances. Avoid saying smoking is 'bad' or that 'only unhealthy people smoke.'
- Instead, focus on health benefits: "People can choose to quit smoking at any time, and many do with the right support."
- Acknowledge that quitting is hard, and some people need help to do it.

## **How do I talk about vaping without making it seem appealing?**

- Young people see vaping everywhere – on social media, in school, and even at home. The goal is to keep it factual without making it sound cool or rebellious.
- "Vapes contain nicotine, which is highly addictive. We don't yet know all the long-term effects, but we do know that young people's lungs and brains are still developing, and using vapes could have risks."
- Avoid saying vapes are 'just as bad' as cigarettes – this can backfire and make young people tune out. Focus on the fact that vapes are not for young people – they are meant to help adults quit smoking.
- Link to real-life examples - "Some young people say vaping makes them feel dizzy or sick. That's because nicotine is a drug."

## **What if a young person asks, 'Isn't vaping safer than smoking?'**

- Be honest but clear: "For adults who already smoke, vaping is less harmful than cigarettes because cigarettes contain thousands of toxic chemicals. But that doesn't mean vaping is safe. The best choice is to stay smoke-free and vape-free."

## **How do I handle a young person who admits to smoking or vaping?**

- The most important thing is to stay calm and avoid judgement – young people shut down if they feel they're being told off. "What made you decide to try it? How do you feel about it?"

- Encourage reflection on how smoking or vaping could impact their health, fitness, and finances.
- If needed, signpost them to Help Me Quit, which supports young people aged 12+ in Wales. "There's help if you ever want to stop. It's okay if you're not ready, but you don't have to do it alone."

### **What if a young person says smoking 'isn't that bad'?**

- Many young people don't see the immediate effects of smoking, so relatable examples work best.
- "We now know that smoking causes serious illnesses like cancer and heart disease. It also affects your breathing, energy levels, and costs a lot of money over time."

### **How do I talk about peer pressure and smoking/vaping?**

- Explain that many young people feel pressure to try smoking or vaping because they think 'everyone is doing it.'
- Reinforce that most young people in Wales do not smoke or vape, and making independent choices is important.
- Suggest refusal strategies: "If someone offers you a vape, you can say 'No thanks, I don't want to mess up my lungs.'"

### **What if a young person asks about smoking cannabis?**

- Keep the focus on health and legality: "Smoking any substance is harmful to the lungs, and in the UK, cannabis is illegal. There are also risks to brain development, especially for young people."
- If needed, refer students to trusted health resources or pastoral support.

## **NEWSLETTER TEMPLATE**

This week at [Youth Club Name], we marked No Smoking Day by celebrating the benefits of a smoke-free life and showing how every minute counts when it comes to health and well-being. Through fun challenges, games, and discussions, we explored how smoking and vaping impact fitness, time, and money—and why choosing to stay smoke-free gives young people more time to enjoy the things they love. Help Me Quit provides free support for young people aged 12+ and adults looking to stop smoking or vaping. Call 0800 085 2219, text: HMQ to 80818 or visit: [helpmequit.wales](https://helpmequit.wales).

For more information on smoking and vaping, visit ASH Wales – [ash.wales](https://ash.wales).





# LETTER HOME TEMPLATE

Today at [Youth Club Name], we took part in No Smoking Day, encouraging young people to think about the benefits of a smoke-free, healthy future. Through interactive games, challenges, and discussions, we explored how smoking and vaping affect health, fitness, money, and well-being—and why making positive choices now can have a big impact later in life.

Young people are often exposed to conversations about smoking and vaping, whether through friends, social media, or family members. We encourage you to continue these conversations at home in a way that's open, supportive, and honest.

Talking to Young People About Smoking & Vaping:

- For younger children: Keep it simple. Explain that smoking and vaping can make it harder to breathe, run, and play. Focus on positive health choices like fresh air, exercise, and looking after our bodies.
- For older children and teenagers: They may already see smoking and vaping around them. Be open and approachable—talk about the risks honestly, including how these habits affect lung health, money, energy, and sports performance. Encourage them to think about their future health and the benefits of staying smoke-free.

Support for Young People & Families

If you or a young person in your family wants support to quit smoking or vaping, Help Me Quit offers free, friendly advice for those aged 12 and over.

**Help Me Quit Contact Details:**

- Call: 0800 085 2219
- Text: HMQ to 80818
- Visit: [www.helpmequit.wales](http://www.helpmequit.wales)

For further information on smoking, vaping, and quitting support, visit: ASH Wales – [ash.wales](http://ash.wales).

Thank you for supporting our young people and helping us spread the No Smoking Day message beyond the club. Together, we can help them make positive choices for their health and future.

[Youth Club Name] Team





**Help to Quit Smoking**

**Freephone: 0800 085 2219**

**Visit: [helpmequit.wales](http://helpmequit.wales)**