



# NO SMOKING DAY

11TH MARCH 2026

TOOLKIT FOR SCHOOLS / YOUTH CLUBS

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Thank you for being part of No Smoking Day 2026. No Smoking Day is a national moment to pause, reflect and start conversations about smoking, vaping and nicotine. For schools and youth settings, it's a chance to support young people to make informed choices, look out for one another and think about the kind of future they want..

We've created this toolkit to help you mark the day in a way that works for your setting. It's designed to be positive, and practical with simple activities, discussion ideas and creative options that young people can get involved in.

You don't need to run a big session to make an impact. A short activity, a conversation in class or a visible display can all help young people think differently about nicotine and support a smokefree future

## GETTING INVOLVED IS SIMPLE

- **Pick an Activity:** Choose from quick challenges, games, or group projects to help pupils take part in No Smoking Day.
- **Presentations:** We have created ready-to-use No Smoking Day assembly plans that can be delivered in schools or youth sessions. These can be found at: [ash.wales/nsd](http://ash.wales/nsd)
- **Lesson Plans and Resources:** A wider range of activities and downloadable materials are available at: [ash.wales/resources](http://ash.wales/resources)
- **Share Your Moments:** If your school or group would like to share what you've been doing, staff can tag @ashwalescymru and use #NoSmokingDayWales so we can see and celebrate your activities.



# WHY NO SMOKING DAY MATTERS?

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

# ACTIVITY IDEAS

## Clear the Air

*A game showing how nicotine keep cropping up in communities, and how it takes effort to create a smokefree Wales.*

- Put 10 to 15 items in the middle (cones, cups, bottles, plates).
- Half start upright, half upside down.
- Split into two teams: Smoke and Clean Air.
- Smoke flips items upside down. Clean Air flips them upright.
- Players run in one at a time, flip one item, then run back.
- Play for 60 seconds, count, then swap roles.



## TikTok or Reels Challenge

*A creative social media challenge encouraging young people to help make smokefree choices feel normal.*

- Create a short TikTok or Reel that helps people think twice about smoking or vaping.
- Try a quick before and after skit: out of breath vs enjoying life.
- Or a funny “NOPE” reaction to peer pressure.
- Tag @ashwalescymru and use #NoSmokingDayWales to be featured.



## Smokefree Wales Competiton

*A creative activity where young people make a poster or short poem about the Wales they want to grow up in, clean air, healthy communities, smokefree spaces.*

- Create a poster, poem or spoken word piece.
- Focus on places that matter: beaches, parks, sports, family, future Wales.
- Collect entries and choose favourites by group vote or staff pick.
- Display the best work on a wall, noticeboard, newsletter or social media.

## Chain Reaction Tag

*A fast tag game showing how nicotine can hook people quickly, and why it can be hard to step away once it starts.*

- Choose 2 players to be Nicotine. Everyone else is Free.
- Nicotine tags others.
- If tagged, link arms and join the chain.
- The chain grows and keeps tagging more people.
- Play until most people are caught, then swap roles.

## Litter Pick

A simple group activity showing how smoking and vaping litter harms local places, and how young people can protect their community.

- Choose an outdoor area near your school or youth club (playground, park, street).
- Provide gloves and bags, and set clear boundaries.
- Spend 15 to 20 minutes collecting litter, especially cigarette butts or vape waste if found.
- Bring everything back and dispose of it safely.
- Optional: count the number of cigarette butts found or take a group photo of the clean space.

## Smokefree Wales Pledge Wales

A shared pledge activity where young people create a handprint wall for a smokefree future in Wales.

- Put up one big sheet of paper.
- Write: We pledge to build a smokefree future in Wales for everyone.
- Pupils add handprints, outlines or signatures.
- Invite staff to join in.
- Children can collect extra signatures from parents or carers at pick up.

## Design Your Own No Smoking Day T-Shirt

A creative design activity where young people create messages that encourage a smokefree future.

- Use a paper t shirt template or old shirts with fabric pens or paint.
- Design a logo, slogan or image linked to smokefree Wales.
- Prompt themes like pressure, money, litter, stress or fitting in.
- Share designs and vote on favourites, or display them as a gallery.
- **Optional:** design for a specific audience like younger pupils, families or sports teams.



## The Influence Game

A social deduction game based on Wearwolf showing how quietly influence can spread through a group, and how support and awareness help people stay in control of their choices.

- Sit in a circle. Secretly choose: Influencer, Protector, Spotter. Everyone else is The Crowd.
- Narrator: **“Everyone close your eyes.”**
- **Influencer (or influenced) open your eyes and point at one person to influence.** Influencer close your eyes.
- **Protector open your eyes and point at one person to protect.** Protector close your eyes.
- **Spotter open your eyes and point to 1 person to check if they have been influenced.** Narrator gives thumbs up or down. **Spotter close your eyes.**
- Narrator quietly taps the chosen person only if they were not protected.
  - If I tap you on the shoulders you have lost your current role and have now joined Influence and will open your eyes with them next round.
- Narrator: **“Everyone open your eyes.”**
- Narrator says: Last night someone has been influenced or someone was protected.
- The Crowd discusses for 30 seconds, then votes.
- Whoever is voted out leaves the game.
- The Crowd wins if they vote out the main Influencer. Influencer wins if they become the majority.



# FAQ'S

Smoking and vaping can be sensitive topics, especially if young people have family members who smoke or vape. Keep conversations and questions calm, factual and non judgemental.

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

Acknowledge it neutrally: "Lots of adults smoke, and it can be difficult to talk about." Reassure the group the session is about health, not blaming people. Avoid judging families. Emphasise that quitting is hard, and support is available.

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

Young people see vaping everywhere, so keep it factual. Explain: "Most vapes contain nicotine, which is addictive. We do not yet know the long term effects, but young people's lungs and brains are still developing." Reinforce that vapes are not for children and are intended for adults quitting smoking.

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

Be honest: "For adults who smoke, vaping is less harmful than cigarettes because cigarettes contain thousands of toxic chemicals. But that does not mean vaping is safe. The best choice for young people is to stay smoke free and vape free."

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

Stay calm and avoid judgement. Ask gently: "What made you try it?" "How do you feel about it now?" If they want help, signpost to Help Me Quit (available for young people aged 12+): "There's help if you want to quit. you don't have to do it alone."

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

Many young people do not see effects straight away. You can say: "We know smoking causes serious illnesses like cancer and heart disease, but it can affect breathing and fitness much sooner. It also costs a lot over time."

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

Acknowledge that pressure can make things seem normal. Reinforce that most young people in Wales do not smoke or vape, and it is okay to make your own choice. Offer refusal lines like: "No thanks, I'm not bothered," or "I don't want to mess up my lungs."

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

Keep it factual: "Smoking any substance harms the lungs. Cannabis is illegal in the UK, and there are risks to brain development, especially for teenagers." Signpost to pastoral support if needed.

# NEWSLETTER TEMPLATE

**Schools and youth clubs may wish to share a short update with parents and carers about No Smoking Day activities. This is a good way to show the positive work young people are doing and to remind families that free NHS support is available across Wales to quit smoking or vaping.**

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This week at [Youth Club/School], we marked No Smoking Day by coming together to celebrate the idea of a smokefree Wales for young people and future generations.

Through fun activities, challenges and conversations, we explored why clean air matters in the places children and teenagers spend time every day, from school gates and sports spaces to parks, homes and youth clubs.

We talked about how smoking, vaping and nicotine products can affect health, money and the environment, and why creating a smokefree future is something communities can work towards together.

For anyone who wants support to stop smoking or vaping, Help Me Quit provides free, friendly support for young people aged 12+ and adults across Wales.

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

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





## Help to Quit Smoking (Age 12+)

Freephone: 0800 085 2219

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