

# The views of under-18s to e-cigarettes

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A new study by researchers at the University of Glasgow has investigated the views of under-18s to e-cigarettes for the first time and found they support strict regulation.

The study, conducted by Dr Shona Hilton and Dr Heide Weishaar of the MRC/CSO Social and Public Health Sciences Unit, University of Glasgow, and Dr Filippo Trevisan of American University in Washington, DC, is published days after the Scottish Parliament passed new health legislation.

As well as banning sales to under-18s, the new Scottish laws require retailers to ask for proof of age when selling e-cigarettes to someone that looks under 25 (similar to alcohol). They ban the sale of e-cigarettes from vending machines, make it an offence to buy on behalf of someone under 18, and require retailers to put their names on a product register. The law does not regulate marketing and the use of e-cigarettes in public.

Until now, however, no research had investigated the views of [young people](#) in the UK on such regulation. The qualitative study, "Maybe they should regulate them quite strictly until they know the true dangers": A focus group study exploring UK adolescents' views on e-cigarette regulation, published by the journal *Addiction*, found that young people overwhelmingly support strong e-cigarette regulation. This includes restrictions on sales to minors, marketing and the use of e-cigarettes in public places.

"Adolescent smokers, e-cigarette users, non-smokers and non e-cigarette users were united in their support of stringent e-cigarette regulation," said Dr Weishaar.

Dr Trevisan added: "Our analysis suggests that UK adolescents, while aware of the potential of e-cigarettes to assist smokers in quitting, overwhelmingly supported precautionary approaches and favoured regulation that guards against yet underexplored impacts of e-cigarette use on non-smokers, especially children and young teenagers."

Dr Hilton, senior author of the study, highlighted: "Our findings echo the 2014 Scottish Youth Commission on Smoking Prevention report to the Scottish Government which highlights that Scottish youth are in favour of aligning e-cigarette regulation with tobacco product regulation. It thus supports calls for regulation to effectively protect children and adolescents from the potential detrimental impact of increasing e-

cigarette marketing and consumption and the risks of socialisation into new forms of nicotine use."

The research was co-funded by Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland whose Chief Executive, Mark O'Donnell, said, "This study shows that whilst UK adolescents are aware of the potential benefits of e-cigarettes to smokers – including those teenage smokers who want to quit – young people overwhelmingly support strong e-cigarette [regulation](#). This includes restrictions on sales to minors, marketing and the use of e-cigarettes in public places."

Provided by University of Glasgow

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