

Researchers evaluate free vape kit program for smoking cessation

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Researchers at the University of East Anglia (UEA) are evaluating a new free vape kit scheme in Great Yarmouth, to help find out whether the initiative helps people to quit smoking tobacco for good.

The innovative scheme which is provided by Smokefree Norfolk, offers a vape voucher to people in the Great Yarmouth area who are struggling to quit smoking.

Around 21% of people who live in Great Yarmouth smoke tobacco, compared to 14% of people in the rest of Norfolk, and 15% as a national average.

This comes during National No Smoking Day (Wednesday 11 March) which is intended to help those who want to quit smoking.

The vape shop voucher scheme, which has been running since December 2019, is a [pilot project](#) to help those who would like to try to quit smoking using an e-cigarette, and there are a number of similar projects across the UK.

People living in the area who go to their GP or access Smokefree Norfolk are offered a voucher to take to a local vape shop to exchange for a starter kit, given advice about e-liquid strengths, and provided with additional support from Smokefree Norfolk.

This approach is pioneering with the NHS, vape retailers and researchers working together, recognising that other forms of smoking cessation support do not work for everyone.

UEA are evaluating the scheme and will be asking people who have taken up the scheme to feedback on their experience after one month. It is hoped they can inform future commissioning of services locally.

Dr. Caitlin Notley, who is a Senior Lecturer at UEA's Medical School leading the research, and a member of the Norfolk Tobacco Control Alliance, said: "Research shows that vaping is an effective method of quitting smoking when compared with nicotine replacement therapies

like patches and gum, and e-cigarettes are now the most frequently chosen method of stop smoking support."

In fact, research completed by Dr. Notley suggests that they are particularly helpful in helping people to not only quit, but to stay quit for good.

"There is a lot of interest in methods to help people in coastal communities like Great Yarmouth to quit smoking." she continued. "It is important to have an independent evaluation of pilot projects such as this one, so that we can robustly conclude whether the outcomes are positive, and if not, we can make recommendations for future practice and service provision."

Jay Marsh, Shop Manager at the Ministry of Vape who are involved in the scheme, said: "My biggest aim is to help people stop [smoking](#). As an ex-smoker I know what a big leap it is to make, and can speak from personal experience about how vaping helped me to stay quit. So I'm really pleased to be working with SmokeFree Norfolk on this great scheme to help other smokers make that break."

More information: To find out more about the UEA research, visit: www.uea.ac.uk/medicine/research/addiction

For more information about Stop Smoking services in Norfolk, visit: www.smokefreenorfolk.nhs.uk/

Provided by University of East Anglia

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