

Updates:

Number of children who vape has stabilised - but not declined

A YouGov survey commissioned by public health charity Action on Smoking and Health (ASH) has found that the proportion of children who use vapes has "stabilised", but is "not yet clearly declining". The survey found that 980,000 11- to 17-year-olds, around 18%, had vaped in 2024, of whom around half had only done so once or twice. Of those who vaped at least once, 4.2% reported doing so more than once a week. ASH chief executive Hazel Cheeseman said the figures "must stiffen the Government's resolve to bring back the Tobacco and Vapes Bill immediately it returns from its summer break". "Cheap, accessible vapes", she said, "promoted on every street corner and packaged and labelled like sweets or toys are totally inappropriate, but until the Bill is on the statute book they cannot be taken off the market."

Daily Mirror |

Problem smartphone use linked to anxiety and depression

Research carried out by King's College London's Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology and Neuroscience has found that almost a fifth of 16- to 18-year-olds show signs of smartphone addiction, or "problematic smartphone use" (PSU). Symptoms identified in the study include difficulty concentrating and feelings of panic when separated from the device, with those showing such symptoms twice as likely to experience anxiety and almost three times as likely to experience depression. Dr Nicola Kalk said concerns over smartphone use are "not old people being hysterical", noting that some young people involved in the studies were already employing "reduction strategies", including removing notifications, enabling silent mode, or leaving the phone in a different room at night.

Daily Mirror | *The Daily Telegraph* *The Guardian* *The Times*

Parents unite to ban smartphones

An initiative by Smartphone Free Childhood has seen parents at 20% of schools in the UK sign a pledge to delay giving their children smartphones until at least the end of year 9. The "parent pact" has garnered support from at least one parent in 6,537 schools, representing nearly 35,000 children. Co-founder Daisy Greenwell said: "The ultimate aim is to permanently shift the culture around when you give smartphones to your children." The movement is particularly strong in Hertfordshire, where 2,429 parents have signed, with St Albans aiming to be the first UK city to go smartphone-free for children under 14. The pact seeks to alleviate peer pressure and promote the use of basic phones among children.

The Guardian