1. This submission provides information on the health implications of e-cigarettes in relation to the following point:

‘the uptake of e-cigarettes among young people and evidence on whether e-cigarettes play a role in ‘re-normalising smoking’.

2. Stoke-on-Trent City Council’s Public Health department have recently received the results of the local Lifestyle Survey (2017). This survey asked high school pupils to complete a confidential questionnaire; asking them questions about many aspects of their life and health. 2440 pupils aged from 12-16 completed the survey in 2017.

3. The results of this survey provided helpful information on tobacco use and e-cigarette use, some of which may be of relevance to your inquiry. Notably, the uptake of e-cigarette use amongst young people in Stoke remains low. Just 3% of those who completed the survey, regularly use e-cigarettes. However, only 2% of those surveyed smoke tobacco, so, e-cigarette use is slightly higher. Interestingly 19% of those surveyed have tried an e-cigarette but only 13% had tried smoking tobacco. As the number of regular e-cigarette (young) user’s remains very low, it is arguable that e-cigarettes aren’t necessarily renormalizing or increasing the prevalence of smoking significantly. However, the fact that more young people have stated that they have tried e-cigarettes than those who have tried tobacco might imply that young people feel that e-cigarettes are less risky to experiment with. The main reason that young people gave for never smoking tobacco is because it is ‘bad for their health’. The question therefore is, are young people more likely to try e-cigarettes because they believe they are less, or, not harmful? 36% of pupils surveyed as part of our Lifestyle Survey stated that they think using an e-cigarette 2 to 3 times every day would be ‘not at all’ or only ‘slightly’ harmful to their health.

4. The concluding report of the Stoke on Trent’s Lifestyle survey states that: ‘we clearly have some experimentation with e-cigarette use by never-smokers, but very little current (regular) use of e-cigarettes by never-smokers’. This seems to match with national findings. What we can conclude from our Lifestyle Survey is that regular e-cigarette use amongst young people in Stoke-on-Trent remains low, implying that e-cigarettes are not currently renormalizing smoking.

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