



Public Health

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Dear Bromley Secondary School Headteachers and Safeguarding Leads

Re: Potentially dangerous adulterated vape devices in circulation

I am writing to inform you that there have been reports in Bromley and other neighbouring London boroughs of young people experiencing health complications after using adulterated vape devices containing illegal substances. Public Health Bromley has been informed of three incidents at three separate local secondary schools that resulted in students becoming unwell after using adulterated vape devices. One of the young people had to be taken to hospital. It has been confirmed that one of the devices contained THC (tetrahydrocannabinol). We are awaiting the results of tests on the other two vape devices.

Adulterated vape devices pose a serious threat to the health of young people. It appears that the young people purchasing these devices are often unaware of their contents and the potential dangers they pose and there is a risk that they may, unknowingly, be supplied with a device containing Spice. THC is the primary psychoactive compound in cannabis. Spice is a synthetic cannabinoid, that is far more dangerous than THC. In appearance it can look exactly like THC but has a potency that is significantly stronger than THC.

Vaping THC may have various side effects. These can include dizziness, drowsiness, impaired memory and thinking, nausea and/or an upset stomach. THC may also worsen anxiety, cause changes in mood, and affect appetite. You may find the following advice helpful, and you may choose to share with young people so they know what to do if they encounter someone who becomes unwell after using a THC vape:

- Keep calm and get help
- Stay with them
- If they are distressed, sit them somewhere calm and give reassurance
- If they are overheating, take them somewhere cooler, cool them using fans or wet towels and give them small sips of water
- If they are fitting, keep the area safe and move anything that could hurt them
- If they are unconscious, put in the recovery position (or on their side) and monitor breathing
- Call 999 and give as much information as possible, including location, age, gender, what's happened and be honest about what the affected person has taken

Please be assured that Public Health is collaborating closely with Bromley Changes (CGL), Met Police, Education and Trading Standards colleagues to share information on this matter so we can better understand the emerging issues. We urge school staff to fully utilise the offer of advice and training from Bromley Changes. We strongly encourage referrals to Bromley Changes for young people that you are aware of who are using substances. Bromley Changes Team Leader is Grace Collins and she can be contacted directly via email grace.collins@cgl.org.uk and referrals can be sent to referrals.bromley@cgl.org.uk. If your school would like to request more general support, such as school assemblies, this can also be addressed to Bromley Changes who will share with other agencies.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter. Your cooperation and awareness are crucial in ensuring the safety and wellbeing of young people. Please consider appropriate sharing of the details within this communication with parents/carers and young people.

Yours sincerely

Dr Nada Lemic

Director of Public, London Borough of Bromley