Emily Evans

From: International Longevity Centre <events@ilcuk.org.uk>
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International Longevity Centre UK

Latest news

ILC Friday three

- Reasons for optimism - ban on disposable vapes
- Brightwell report launch - what does the future hold for long lives?
- ILC Insight Experts - journalists, Sarah O'Grady, joins

Reason for optimism - ban on disposable vapes



The UK Government has confirmed a ban on single-use disposable vapes in England and Wales starting in June next year, aimed at protecting children's health and reducing environmental damage. The decision, initially announced by the previous

government but delayed by the general election, aligns with similar actions in Wales and Scotland - and is something the ILC has been calling for since March 2023.

Vaping has grown significantly in England, with 9% of the population using vapes. Worryingly, a quarter of children aged 11 to 15 have tried vaping, and nearly one in ten (9%) do so regularly. What was particularly striking in the data on electronic cigarette use by children released by NHS England was the regional and gender disparities in use. For instance, only 4% of pupils in London vape regularly compared to 12% in the North East and 11% of girls vape compared to 7% of boys. And while the sample is statistically small, 17% of those with another gender identity report vaping regularly. Such disparities are something that we hope our upcoming work on a UK Long Lives Index will allow us to explore further.

Disposable vapes, often in attractive, colourful packaging – with child-friendly flavours like vanilla milkshake or the more seasonal pumpkin spice latte – have been linked to this rise in youth vaping. Public health officials argue that the ban will reduce their appeal to children, though the ban does not affect rechargeable or refillable vapes.

Disposable vapes have built-in lithium batteries and so are also a major environmental concern due to their difficulty in recycling. More than seven million single-use vapes were bought every week in the UK in 2023 – double the amount bought in 2022, according to the environmental group, Material Focus. But only 17 per cent of people correctly recycle their vapes in shops or recycling centres meaning five million disposable vapes end up as landfill each week.

The vaping industry has argued the move would fuel a rise in illegal sales of the products. However, this argument seems rather weak given that a quarter of 11 to 15-year-olds have tried vaping even though sales to under 18s is against the law. Many parents, medical professionals and environmental campaigners support the ban, noting the negative and potential health impacts on children and the wastefulness of disposable vapes.

Other countries across the globe, from Singapore to the Seychelles, have implemented or are planning similar bans.

ILC's interest in health inequalities, particularly in health outcomes between regions and localities, has prompted us to begin work on a UK Long Lives Index. If you are interested in working with us on the development of our UK Long Lives Index please contact Esther McNamara, ILC's Senior Health Policy Lead click the button below for more on smoking and UK health inequalities.

READ MORE

Brightwell report launch - what does the future hold for long lives?

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Brightwell



"There's a perception that older people are less tech savvy, but we've found the opposite to be true. While the members we serve are typically in their seventies, their expectations for simple, fast and easy to use online services are the same as any other age group.

The pensions industry has lagged the wider financial services sector when it comes to keep pace with technological change, and this has resulted in frustration and lack of engagement."

Morten Nilsson, Chief Executive, Brightwell

It has been another exceptionally busy week for the ILC Team with several important events. However, if we had to pick one highlight, it would be the publication and launch of our report *The Future of Ageing in an Uncertain World*.

The report follows six months' work, supported by Brightwell, on an innovative, futures-focused research project exploring how our experience of later life will change over the next 20 years and how services for older people will need to adapt.

We know that technology, demographics, and climate change will transform our lives more in the next 20 years than in the past two decades. With 96% of us already online, it's time for service providers and policymakers to confidently recognise that people of all ages are digitally ready. They should embrace technology and design products suited to our longer lives.

At the webinar launching the report, ILC's Senior Research Fellow, Vivien Burrows, presented the findings alongside a panel of experts, including Nausicaa Delfas, Chief Executive of The Pensions Regulator, who also commented in the media:

"Following the success of automatic enrolment, more than 8 in 10 workers are saving into a workplace pension. The challenge now is to make sure that the millions of people saving get real value for money.

"This research highlights the potential challenges faced by the next generation in later life, and there are no easy answers. With the government's pensions review looking to the future, we have a unique opportunity to build consensus between industry, regulators, and government to make the pensions system work for everyone."

Other speakers at the webinar, which you can watch on YouTube, included:

- Alexander Evans OBE, Professor in Practice in Public Policy at the LSE
- Martin Jones MBE, CEO of Home Instead UK
- George MacGinnis, Director of UKRI Healthy Ageing Challenge
- Morten Nilsson, CEO of Brightwell

Of course, living longer and better lives is not just about pensions or encouraging service providers to make better use of technology. The report focuses on six key areas: health and care; managing finances; work and lifelong learning; mobility; housing; and leisure and social connectedness. With such a comprehensive piece of work, there is much to share and we will be doing so in the weeks and months ahead. In the meantime, you can download the report using the button below.

DOWNLOAD REPORT

ILC Insight Experts - journalist, Sarah O'Grady, joins



ILC's Insight Experts are world-renowned thought leaders and experts from government, business, academia and the third sector on the many strands of longevity. They provide specialist knowledge across ILC's portfolio of work, reviewing our publications to enhance quality and advising research areas to maximise impact. They also act as Ambassadors for ILC, helping to enhance our reputation, sharing key messages and connecting ILC to their networks.

We're excited to announce that the journalist and commentator, Sarah O'Grady, has joined our group of Insight Experts. ILC's Insight Experts are a group of world-renowned thought leaders and experts from government, business, academia, the third sector and the media on the many strands of longevity.

Sarah is the former Social Affairs Editor of The Daily Express and an expert on pensions, social care, longevity and other later life policy issues. The award-winning journalist currently writes on these subjects and others for the national press while also working as a strategy and communications consultant on public affairs projects.

Throughout her Fleet St career, she has highlighted the plight of older and disabled people needing access to NHS Continuing Healthcare, the unfairness faced by older workers in the workplace and campaigned for the continuation of the State Pension Triple Lock. Sarah is the author of two property books.

Sarah is a longstanding community volunteer, serving as a governor at her daughter's school and runs a successful charity event for her local Sue Ryder Hospice. We're delighted to have her on board.

Please use the button below, for more information about all our Insight Experts.

MORE INFO

To keep up-to-date with ILC events throughout the year, please continue to check our website on a regular basis.

Please follow us on social media via the links below for our latest news and event updates.



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The Foundry
17 Oval Way
London, SE11 5RR
United Kingdom
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