



# State of the Nation Report

## UK Adult Smokers' Trust in Vaping study

Commissioned by  
SMOORE International

Conducted by **OnePoll**  
May 2023



# Overview

A study conducted by One Poll on behalf of SMOORE International, the largest atomisation technology company in the world, sought to explore the degree to which vaping is currently trusted amongst the smoking community and the factors that influence their trust levels. The research is particularly important given that vaping is seen as being pivotal to creating a

smokefree future as it is evidenced as being the most effective way to quit conventional cigarettes. The study, carried out amongst 2,000 adult smokers, including dual users of conventional cigarettes and vapes, and some who have tried vaping in the past, focused on the following areas:

- Perceptions of the relative harm of vaping versus smoking
- The degree to which they trusted vaping as an effective harm reduction tool
- The impact of their trust levels on their decision to use vaping as a quit method
- The importance of knowing more about the harm level of a vape product
- The influencing factors on smokers' levels of trust in vaping

This report will provide critical insights to policy makers, regulators, healthcare leaders, the vaping industry, consumer groups, think tanks and researchers on the current perceptions and trust levels relating to vaping amongst the

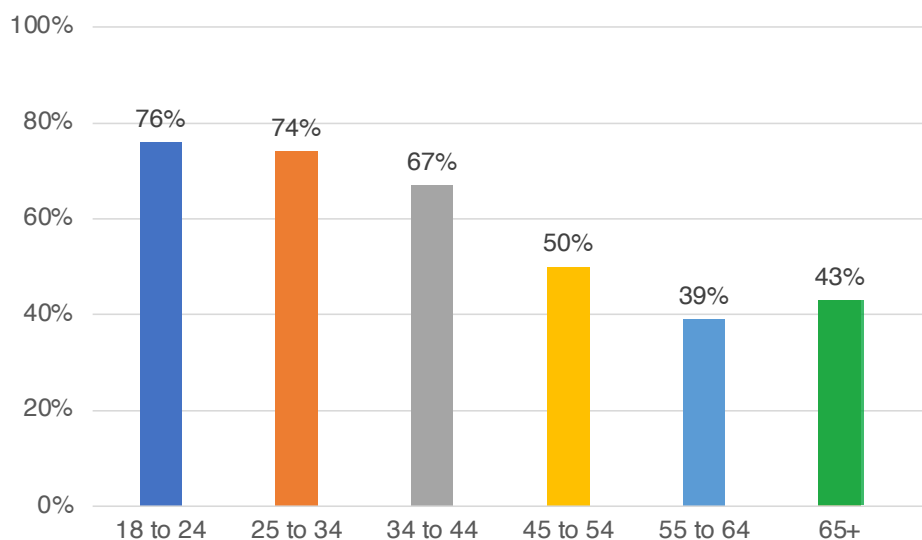
smoking community and what needs to be done to turnaround any misperceptions and distrust so that vaping can play a pivotal role in a future world without smoking.

# Perceptions of harm of vaping versus smoking

Despite the fact that vaping is evidenced as being considerably less harmful than smoking, this isn't the sense of adult smokers in the UK. This mirrors last year's Vaping Evidence Review undertaken by the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID), which revealed continuing misperceptions of the relative harm of vaping versus smoking, which had been flagged up in earlier reviews by its predecessor Public Health England.

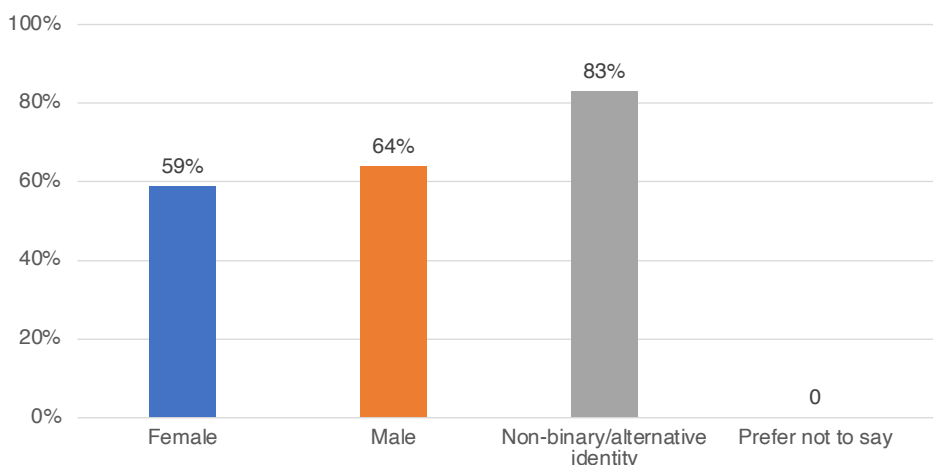
Nearly 1 in 5 adult smokers (17%) thought vaping was more harmful, whilst nearly half (45%) thought vaping came with the same harm levels of conventional cigarettes.

## Smokers' who think vaping is more harmful than, or has the same harm as smoking by age



Nearly  
**1 in 5**  
adult smokers  
thought  
vaping was  
more harmful

## Smokers' who think vaping is more harmful than, or has the same harm as smoking by gender



**45%**  
of adult smokers  
thought  
vaping came  
with the same  
harm levels of  
conventional  
cigarettes

# Trust in vaping as an effective harm reduction tool to help quit smoking

Only 1 in 10 respondents trusted vaping very much whilst more than a third trusted it somewhat. Nearly a third (29%) trusted it a little, whilst just over 1 in 10 (13%) did not trust it at all.

**1 in 10**

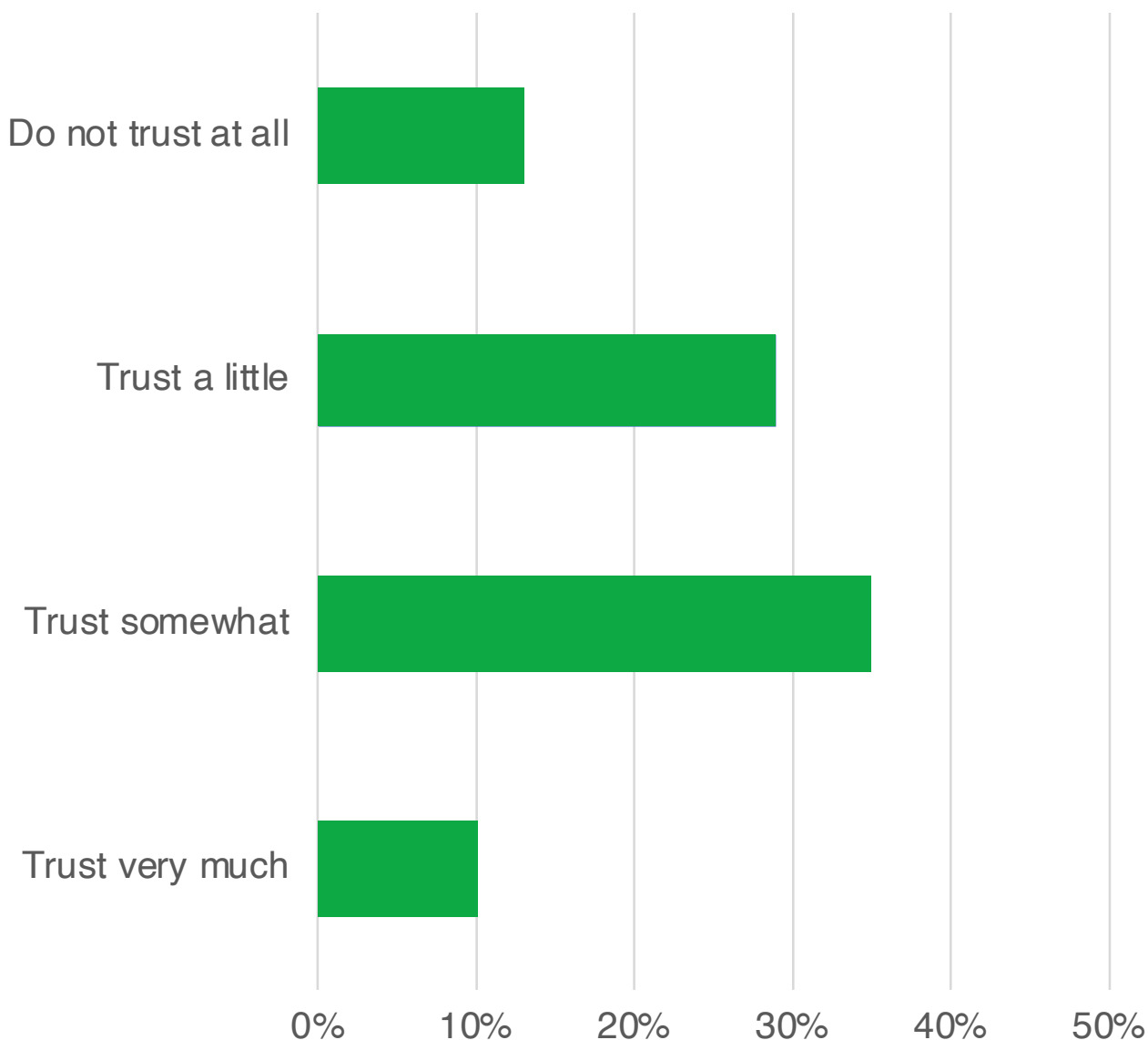
respondents  
trusted vaping  
very much

**29%**

respondents  
trusted vaping  
a little

**13%**

respondents  
did not trust  
vaping at all



**North West**  
 Very much trust - 9%  
 Somewhat trust - 31%  
 A little trust - 27%  
 Not at all trust - 16%

**Northern Ireland**  
 Very much trust - 3%  
 Somewhat trust - 56%  
 A little trust - 25%  
 Not at all trust - 5%

**Wales**  
 Very much trust - 6%  
 Somewhat trust - 28%  
 A little trust - 28%  
 Not at all trust - 20%

**West Midlands**  
 Very much trust - 11%  
 Somewhat trust - 40%  
 A little trust - 25%  
 Not at all trust - 13%

**North East**  
 Very much trust - 8%  
 Somewhat trust - 31%  
 A little trust - 28%  
 Not at all trust - 13%

**Yorkshire & Humberside**  
 Very much trust - 9%  
 Somewhat trust - 27%  
 A little trust - 29%  
 Not at all trust - 21%

**East of England**  
 Very much trust - 7%  
 Somewhat trust - 34%  
 A little trust - 21%  
 Not at all trust - 13%

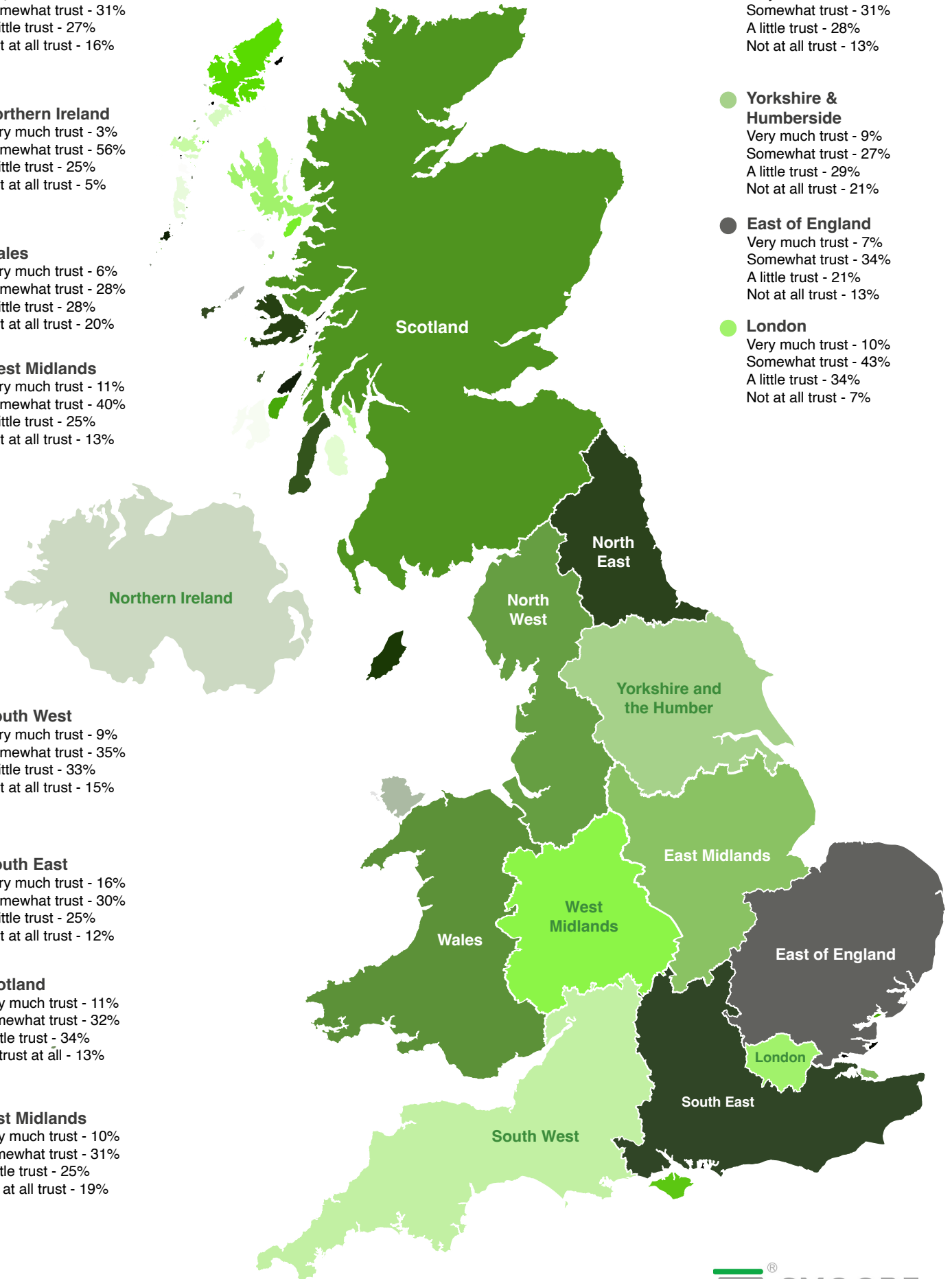
**London**  
 Very much trust - 10%  
 Somewhat trust - 43%  
 A little trust - 34%  
 Not at all trust - 7%

**South West**  
 Very much trust - 9%  
 Somewhat trust - 35%  
 A little trust - 33%  
 Not at all trust - 15%

**South East**  
 Very much trust - 16%  
 Somewhat trust - 30%  
 A little trust - 25%  
 Not at all trust - 12%

**Scotland**  
 Very much trust - 11%  
 Somewhat trust - 32%  
 A little trust - 34%  
 No trust at all - 13%

**East Midlands**  
 Very much trust - 10%  
 Somewhat trust - 31%  
 A little trust - 25%  
 Not at all trust - 19%



# Top factors influencing the lack of trust in vaping as an effective harm reduction tool to help quit smoking

Driving factors included: lack of long term clinical research showing vaping to be less harmful than smoking (35%); lack of information about the harm profile of different vape products (31%); and negative reports and studies about vaping (30%). Interestingly the influence of inconsistent government attitudes and vaping makes it into the top 4 of the key factors.

Which, if any, of the following reasons have caused you to have a lack of trust in vaping as an effective harm reduction tool to help you quit smoking?	%
The lack of independent long term clinical research showing vaping to be less harmful than smoking	35%
The lack of information about the harm profile of different vape products	31%
From the negative reports and studies about vaping	30%
Inconsistency of governments' attitudes to vaping across the world	21%
My own personal experiences trying to use it to quit smoking	21%
Because of the growing 'black market' for vaping	18%
The view of the World Health Organisation on vaping	17%
Information I've accessed online	15%
The views of my friends and family	14%
The views of my doctor	10%

# Top factors that would boost trust in vaping as an effective harm reduction tool to help quit smoking

Unsurprisingly the factors that are behind the lack of trust in vaping are also key to boosting it, including long term research on the positive impact on vapers' health as a result of switching from smoking (41%) and better access to verified information on the harm rating of different devices so those looking to switch can make more informed choices (30%). Also, featuring high on the list were the need for: public health campaigns promoting the evidence-based facts of vaping around harm reduction (30%); and increased education of doctors to give more advice on how vaping can be an effective way to reduce harm caused (28%).

Which, if any, of the following do you think would help improve your trust in vaping as a harm reduction tool to help you quit smoking?	%
Long term research on the positive impact on vapers' health as a result of switching from smoking	41%
Better access to verified information on the harm rating of different devices so I can make more informed choices	30%
Public health campaigns promoting the evidence-based facts of vaping around harm reduction	30%
More education of doctors to give more advice on how vaping can be an effective way to reduce harm caused by smoking	28%
More consistent and positive policy making around vaping across the world	23%
Advertising regulations to allow vape companies to promote evidenced from credible sources	21%
Tackling the black market for vapes	16%

## Influence of lack of trust in vaping on decision to use it as a method to quit smoking

The study highlights the high level of influence that a lack of trust could have on smokers' attempts to quit their habits through turning to vaping, with more than a third (38%) saying this could be the case. However, more than 1 in 4 adult smokers, who despite having reservations about vaping, claim that it could not stop them from attempting to quit through switching to vapes.

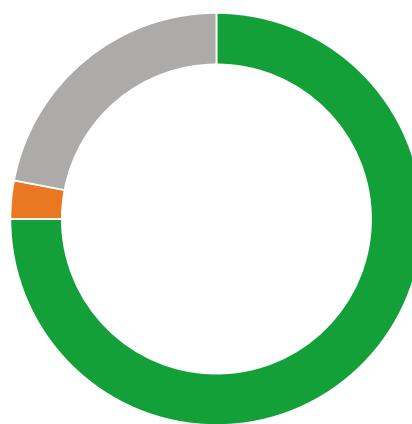


**38%**  
said 'Yes' - could stop me attempting to quit smoking through vaping

**28%**  
said 'No' - could not stop me attempting to quit smoking through vaping

## Views on the idea of information on the harm profile of vape products being made available upon purchase

Whilst vaping products currently communicate nicotine strengths and number of puffs on their packaging, there is no information on the harm profile of the vape being purchased. This study reveals that smokers would very much welcome such information, whilst the chart overleaf highlights the type of information that they would like to receive.

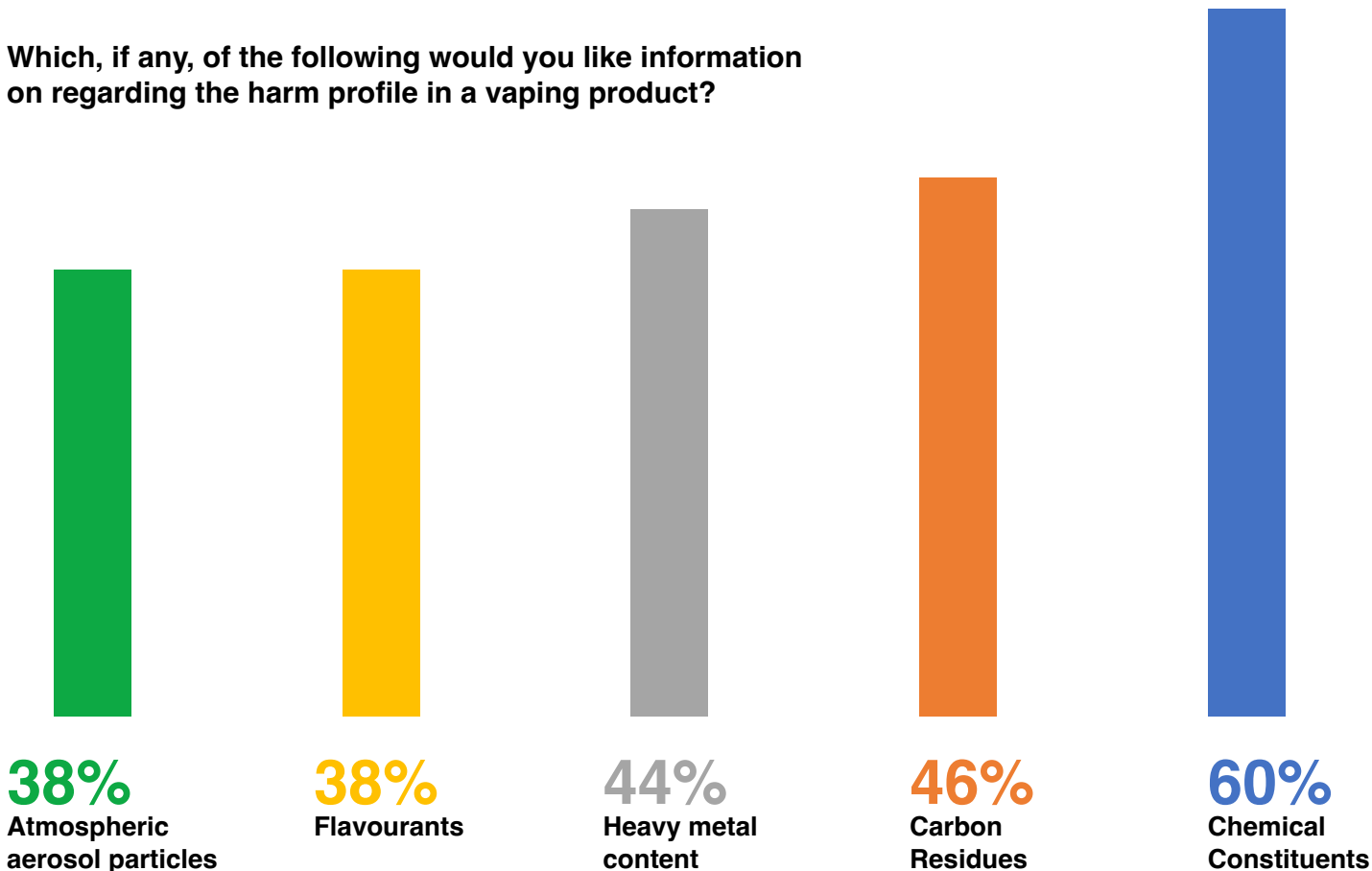


**75%**  
strongly/somewhat agree with the idea

**3%**  
strongly/somewhat disagree with the idea



Which, if any, of the following would you like information on regarding the harm profile in a vaping product?



## Other key findings of the research

**70%** of smokers don't really know who to believe to some extent when it comes to vaping.

**87%** of smokers said that it was important for them to know what they are vaping when using a vape product.

**58%** of smokers think that more needs to be done to encourage conventional cigarette users to consider vaping as a tool to help them quit their habits versus 8% who feel less needs to be done.

**78%** of smokers agree to some extent that when it comes to harm reduction they are confused about what vape products would be suitable for them.

# Conclusions

The findings of this *Smokers' Trust in Vaping* study present some fascinating insights into how smokers feel about vaping and therefore the prospect of them using - what has proven to be the number one quit method - to kick their smoking habits.

## Key conclusions include:

- Misperceptions and distrust amongst the UK smoking community in vaping is worryingly high, particularly as so much rests on vaping to create a future without smoking. With 62% believing that vaping is more harmful or just as harmful as smoking; and 42% only trusting vaping a little or not at all as an effective harm reduction tool, action is therefore urgently needed to build back their trust to avoid impeding the progress made by vaping to date in helping smokers kick their habits and ensuring that the public health prize presented by e-cigarettes is fully realised.
- Policy makers, regulators and healthcare leaders have a critical part to play in building back trust in vaping amongst smokers including through the introduction of more consistent and positive policies; greater education of doctors so they are equipped with the knowledge to give more advice on vaping to their patients; and a regulatory environment that allows vape companies to promote the positive evidence on vaping from credible sources. All these were cited as significant factors that would help those smokers who have a lack of trust to improve their belief in vaping as an effective harm reduction tool to help quit smoking.
- There is a clear need to look at establishing a rating system which would give consumers an idea of how each product matches up when it comes to the properties found in the vapour inhaled by a vaper. Three quarters of smokers interviewed welcome to some extent the idea of information on the harm profile of different vape products. Its need was further reinforced by the fact that the lack of such verified information is one of the top factors as to why smokers have reservations about vaping and that 77% said it was to some degree important that they were aware of what they were inhaling when using their vape. A rating system or standard could be in the form of a colour coded packaging label like those that highlight the ingredients of foodstuffs or the energy efficiency of white goods.
- More education, better communication and more evidence are seen as critical to building the trust levels in vaping amongst those who do not trust it currently. Key actions required to improve their trust included: long term research on the positive impact on vapers' health as a result of them switching from smoking; better access to information on the harm profile of different vape products to enable informed decisions to be made on choice of brand; the introduction of public health campaigns promoting the evidence-based facts of vaping around harm reduction; and more education of doctors to give more advice on how vaping can be an effective way to reduce the harm caused by smoking.