

North Yorkshire Councillors Report September 2025

Shopkeepers warned about illegal vapes after guilty pleas

Shopkeepers who persist in selling illegal vapes are putting people's health at risk and could face jail if convicted, trading standards officers in North Yorkshire are warning.

Barlick Megatronic Mobiles Ltd, trading as Phonefix, and its director, Humayoun Khan, pleaded guilty to two offences of selling a vape containing more than 2 millilitres of nicotine-containing liquid and one offence of selling a vape without the required labelling.

They also pleaded guilty to possessing for sale 430 vapes containing more than 2ml of nicotine-containing liquid and 226 vapes without the required labelling, instructions or dosage information.

York Magistrates' Court was told that officers from North Yorkshire Council's trading standards team had visited the premises in The Arcade, Ripon, on two occasions in 2024. In the first instance in February, 654 illegal products were seized. But despite this, officers who visited the premises again in October were able to buy an illegal vape.

The vape sold to an officer in February 2024 contained 10,000 puffs, about the equivalent to the nicotine in 50 packets of cigarettes, and the vape sold to an officer in October contained 9,000 puffs, approximately equivalent to the nicotine in 45 packets of cigarettes.

The 430 vapes with more than 2ml of nicotine-containing liquid seized from the shop had between 4,000 and 10,000 puffs each, equivalent to the nicotine in between 20 and 50 packets of cigarettes in a single vape.

In the UK, the maximum allowed amount of nicotine-containing liquid in vapes is 2ml. At most, this is about 600 puffs.

As the company had been dissolved after the offences were committed, the court imposed no penalty. However, Khan was fined £350 and ordered to pay costs of £1,871.45 and a court surcharge of £140.

As well as proactive work from officers, North Yorkshire Council also receives help in the fight against the sale of illegal vapes from communities across the county, be it members of the public, schools, police and other partners about shops selling vapes to under 18s or offering illegal vapes. And based on this intelligence, our staff

embark on a process of test purchasing, inspections and seizures. In order to continue to keep people safe, it is vital that people tell us about shops they suspect are selling to young people or which may have illegal products for sale.

The Citizens Advice Consumer Service is the national reporting centre for trading standards services and can be contacted on 0808 223 1133 Monday to Friday or by web form after 5pm on Fridays via

<https://referrals.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/forms/general>.

‘Life-saving’ charity benefits from former chair’s fundraising

More than £8,000 has been raised by the former chair of North Yorkshire Council for a “life-saving” charity that is close to her heart.

Cllr Roberta Swiers, the elected member for the Cayton division and last year’s chair of North Yorkshire Council, raised £8,080 by organising a number of fundraising activities during her year in office in aid of Yorkshire’s Brain Tumour Charity.

Cllr Swiers’ son, Craig, was aged 24 when he was diagnosed with a rare malignant brain tumour. He had experienced headaches for more than 10 years, which were always dismissed as normal, but coincidentally the tumour was discovered after an industrial accident at his workplace.

What started as a routine morning at work took a devastating turn when a hydraulic roller fell at one side trapping his right hand and arm. He sustained serious injuries and was rushed to hospital where he underwent 14 operations to save and reconstruct the damage to his arm.

He continued to experience headaches. After several visits to the hospital and an ambulance sent to his home, all dismissing them as just headaches, his local doctor was called out following another episode who discovered what she thought was a major problem. A CT scan confirmed the presence of a brain tumour which doctors believe had been slowly growing for the past 12 to 15 years.

Cllr Swiers said: “It was a very worrying time for our family and we were in disbelief. It’s news no-one wants to hear and the biggest shock was that he could have had the tumour growing inside his brain since he was a teenager. Looking back, he used to complain about mild headaches and tiredness. The symptoms increased rapidly after his accident at work, but we just put it down to the aftereffects of the number of operations he had.

“It was a lot to deal with at the time. He was self-conscious of the scars left after the arm surgery and then had to deal with this new diagnosis and the treatment ahead.”

The tumour could not be removed and Mr Swiers had to have extensive radiotherapy treatment, however, the recovery was slow and the side effects of the radiotherapy are still causing problems 25 years later. Cllr Swiers hopes sharing her son's experiences will help others affected by a brain tumour diagnosis to reach out and seek support.

"While the medical staff were brilliant in Craig's care, there was no-one to check up on the family post-operatively and offer support and provide reassurance or guidance," she said.

"Craig is now 52, happily married with two children, however, he has several health issues and continues to be under the care of the doctors. He has been left hard of hearing and has to inject daily to boost his growth hormone.

"He is also now a volunteer of the charity, hoping to create a group and support sufferers and their families in the Scarborough area."

She added: "During my year of office and before I stepped down in May, the Yorkshire's Brain Tumour Charity was my chosen charity so that I could raise awareness of the support it can provide to families during devastating times of a diagnosis and treatment.

"A number of fundraising activities were held last year including a raffle at my charity dinner, bake sales before every council meeting, an Easter egg raffle and so on.

"I am delighted with the amount raised and I would like to thank all officers and elected members at the council for supporting this life-saving cause."

Yorkshire's Brain Tumour Charity offers vital support to patients and their families at every stage. It invests in pioneering clinical research across Yorkshire striving for kinder treatments and better outcomes for everyone affected by a brain tumour.

The charity's chief executive, David Grant-Roberts, said: "We're incredibly grateful to North Yorkshire Council for choosing to support Yorkshire's Brain Tumour Charity and raising such an amazing amount.

"Their generosity and community spirit will make a huge difference to families across the region affected by a brain tumour diagnosis."

Meanwhile, Cllr Swiers is encouraging people to be generous and support this charity so that it can continue its mission to fund research, raise awareness and provide support services across the region."

You can donate to Yorkshire's Brain Tumour Charity by logging onto <https://www.yorksbtc.org.uk/>

Millions of pounds in funding creates new jobs and boosts skills

A multi-million pound investment in North Yorkshire has helped to create new jobs and boost skills and training while increasing opportunities for the county's communities.

New data has shown the benefits that have been brought by two national funds that were administered by North Yorkshire Council over a three-year period. A total of £16.1 million of increased investment in the county has been brought about through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund.

This increased investment has been triggered after the Government allocated a total of £22.3 million in funding for the two programmes which were administered by the council up until the end of March this year before handing responsibility to the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority.

The fund brought in the further £16 million from other funding sources, bringing the total money spent on projects launched through the SPF and the REPF across the county to nearly £39 million. North Yorkshire Council distributed the funding through a wide programme of grant and support schemes aimed at businesses and community groups.

The funding has benefited residents and businesses, providing the opportunity to create new jobs, increase skills and develop valuable projects in our communities. The report clearly demonstrates the achievements in North Yorkshire, justifying our continued commitment to both the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund. With more funding available, we will work with our colleagues at the combined authority to ensure that the money is directed at the schemes that will benefit the most across the county.

The research has shown that the two programmes led to 1,031 jobs being created or safeguarded with a further 11,212 opportunities for volunteering, while the funding led to an extra 235,000 visitors coming to North Yorkshire to enhance the county's annual £4 billion tourism industry. A total of 1,300 people were involved in work experience or training to develop their skills, and the green sector was also supported by the introduction of 6,634 square metres of technology to cut carbon emissions – the equivalent size of a football pitch.

The overall programme supported a wide range of initiatives with the majority of funding given as grants to business and community projects with more than 2,000 grants awarded and successfully delivered.

The report drawn up by consultants commissioned by the council to analyse the impact of the two schemes has highlighted a key success of the programme in

bringing together a wide range of delivery partners and stakeholders across North Yorkshire to create an effective partnership to deliver benefits for organisations, businesses and communities. Among the organisations to benefit was the Mashamshire Community Office, which received £145,000 in funding to purchase a former police house in Masham in the Yorkshire Dales.

The money was also used to install 10 solar panels on the building's roof, new double-glazed windows and an automatic front door to improve access, and the project was match-funded by the local community. The funding also paved the way for an upgrade of the office's IT systems and new websites as well as additional investment in staffing, including the recruitment of an intern from the University of York. The office's staff and volunteers support almost 100 community groups and 100 businesses. They also respond to 10,000 visitor enquiries and more than 6,500 queries from residents each year. Its community library serves almost 3,500 visitors, volunteers lead 50 wellbeing walks, and the building is also the base for Acorns Pre-School, Citizens Advice, a local branch of the MIND charity and Masham Parish Council.

The overall funding from the Government was used to support five-themed programmes to boost productivity, build pride in the county's places and support communities. The other themes were to allow people to develop their skills and to help cut carbon dioxide emissions.

In the Autumn Statement in October last year, the Government announced a one-year extension of the UKSPF up until March 2026. This will be delivered by the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority which has been allocated £8.7 million in funding.

The report on the successes of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and the Rural England Prosperity Fund can be viewed online at www.northyorks.gov.uk/ukspf-report