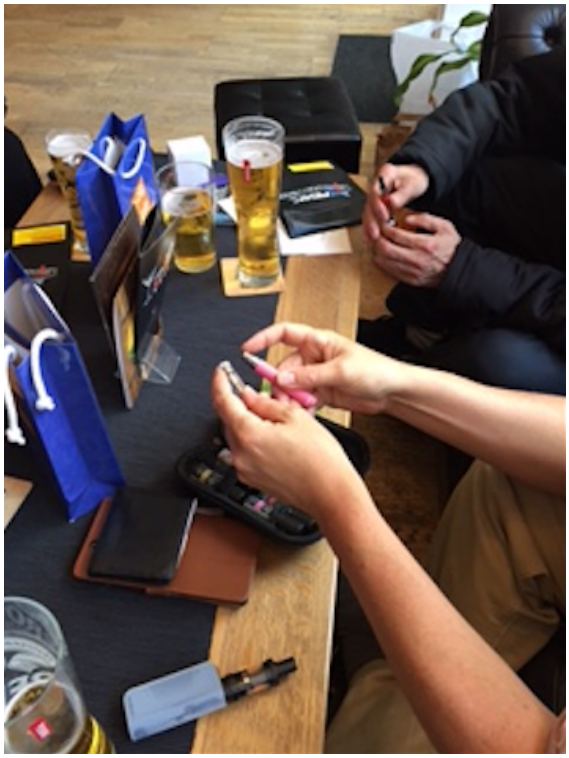
Beyond the Quit: what happens when e-cigs go wrong? – Louise Ross

written by Clive Bates | 27 May 2016



Meet people where they are or want to be

Guest post by Louise Ross, Service Manager at Leicester City Stop Smoking Service – the pioneering e-cig friendly service for smokers who want to quit. Louise explains how her service is teaming up with a vape bar and vaper to give practical help to smokers as they master vaping as an alternative to smoking. This is *real public health* to me – and I hope the public health establishment is paying attention and reflecting carefully on what is happening here.

Louise starts here…

Opportunity – switching from smoking to vaping

Imagine you're a heavy smoker, and you see a stop smoking advisor because you really, really want to stop smoking. It's hard but when you try your first

vapouriser you realise you could well get used to this, and it makes the loss of a cigarette remarkably easier to bear.

Then add to this promising picture the fact that you have sensory impairment, or are elderly with no internet connection, or struggling with a liquid that makes you cough so much that your throat feels like it's being ripped out. What do you do when you start getting a burnt taste when you vape? Or the battery only lasts half the time it used to?

Barrier – mastering the technology

The common factor here is that setbacks in the transition from smoking to vaping transition can push ex-smokers into going back to smoking again – unless support is available.

> *'It was OK, but it's just easier to buy a packet of 20, you know what to do with them.'*

In the Leicester City Stop Smoking Service ("Stop"), we've been proud and pleased with the development of our e-cig-friendly approach, and I know we have influenced many other services to go down the same path.

However, we've been increasingly aware of the risks to people's ability to persevere after they stop seeing us. Have they got the confidence, or the contacts, to solve problems when they arise?

Solution – technical sessions in a good venue

We're lucky to have two perfect partners to help tackle this.

Foxy Browns is the first vape-bar in Leicester, and when they opened, they offered Stop a chance to use their very lush space to hold meetings.

We were also offered help by an experienced vaper (@BoatingFuzzy), who was the one who suggested technical sessions in the first place. He could see how hard it must be for newbies to get the information they need, and was very keen to spend a relaxing hour or so in Foxy Browns, talking about what he knows so well with people who need the knowledge.

We had our first session on Monday 23 May (we had to postpone the first date suggested as it would have clashed with the Leicester City Football Club Victory Parade…)

People came! They asked questions. They got shown stuff. They described what had gone wrong, and they got told how to put it right. Even I knew, and the Stop advisor who came knew, that the man who found vaping too harsh for his throat needed a liquid with higher VG, and within minutes, he'd been shown how this could make a difference. He was ecstatic.

My favourite visitor though was the man I thought was a Foxy Browns' regular when I arrived. He was already settled comfortably on a sofa, vaping quietly on his own, and I tried not to disturb him while I pinched the stools from his table to seat the visitors as they crept nervously in. When I took the last stool, he reached out and gently took my hand, whispering 'I think I might be on your list, dear'. Turns out he was deaf and nearly blind, but showed himself to be a committed student as our expert vaper gave him some tips.

We'll be running the sessions monthly. We'll text people who have used Stop and are down as e-cig users. I suspect interest will grow, and I hope they bring some of their friends.

Big thanks go to Natasha at Foxy Browns for making us so welcome, and @BoatingFuzzy for his techie genius.

Louise Ross (@GrannyLouisa)

Stop Smoking Service Manager
Leicester