

SUMMARY OF INTELLIGENCE ON TOBACCO

KEY FACTS

- Smoking is the UK's single greatest cause of preventable illness and early death. More than 120,000 people in the UK die from smoking each year.
- Currently around 10 million adults in England smoke.
- 26% of adults smoke (25% of women, 27% of men).
- 9% of 11–15 year olds are smokers.
- 70% of smokers say they want to give up.
- Smoking causes a wide range of illnesses, including various cancers (lung cancer is the most significant), respiratory diseases and heart disease.
- Smoking costs the NHS between £1.4 and £1.7 billion a year in England.

Inequalities exist

- Smoking is the single biggest cause of health inequalities.
- 31% of routine and manual groups smoke, compared with 26% of the total population.

WE ARE NOW GOING TO...

Health in the consumer society

- Boost the campaign to motivate smokers in different groups to quit (working with charities) supported by clear comprehensive information about access to NHS support to quit, including Stop Smoking Services and nicotine replacement service.
- Consult on how to use picture warnings on tobacco products most effectively.
- By the end of the year the size of tobacco advertising still allowed in shops, will be restricted to a total area of an A5 piece of paper around 30% of which will be a health warning featuring the NHS smoking help line number and in 2005 end internet advertising and brand-sharing.

Children and young people - starting on the right path

- Propose to bring forward legislation to create new powers to ban retailers from selling tobacco products on a temporary or permanent basis if they repeatedly flout the law, after consulting with local authorities, the retail industry and other key stakeholders. We will support this with a communications programme for local authority enforcement.

Local communities leading for health

- By 2006, all government departments and the NHS will (subject to limited exceptions) be smoke-free.
- We will consult on detailed proposals for regulation with legislation where necessary, so that by the end of 2008, all enclosed public places and workplaces will be smoke-free except those specifically exempted.

A health-promoting NHS

- In 2005–06 the Healthcare Commission will examine what PCTs are doing to reduce smoking prevalence amongst the local population, including their own staff, through tobacco control campaigns, championing smoke-free environments and provision of NHS Stop Smoking Services. Ongoing progress will be assessed against national standards and indicators.
- Establish a national taskforce to help increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the NHS Stop Smoking Services and provide practical guidance for local implementation,¹ in particular how to make services more people-centred.
- Identify and disseminate good practice on what works through Regional Tobacco Co-ordinators and the NHS.
- Develop pilots on using the electronic booking system to trigger advice for smokers on stopping, with a view to national roll-out.
- Work towards embedding an offer of stop smoking advice as part of clinical assessment in surgical care pathways from 2006.
- *Together* programme of support for smokers to quit and roll it out across England to other smokers through phone, e-mail and text in quit attempts.
- Nicotine Replacement Therapy manufacturers will look at new and innovative ways of making NRT more widely available.

Work and health

- Consult with central government staff and unions on how to end smoking in all its enclosed workplaces.
- Start a campaign with the Royal College of Nursing to ensure that nurses are at the forefront of a smoke-free NHS by providing support for nurses wanting to stop smoking.

Health Development Agency evidence briefings summarise evidence on the effectiveness of approaches to promote health, and include *Smoking and Public Health* (2004)

(www.hda-online.org.uk/documents/smoking_eb_summary.pdf).

WHAT THE CONSULTATION RAISED

The major themes of consultation responses on smoking were requests for a ban on smoking in public places or workplaces, more smoking cessation services in a greater variety of settings, and information provision, particularly for young people. A national ban on smoking in public places or workplaces was the largest single issue raised in the consultation. Other themes included underage sales, advertising, taxation, smuggling and nicotine substitutes.

WHAT WE ARE DOING ALREADY

- The Government launched a comprehensive tobacco control strategy in 1998: the White Paper *Smoking Kills*. Since then, there has been a real reduction in smoking rates from 28% of adults in 1998 to 26% in 2002, which was three years ahead of target.
- Our tobacco strategy is delivering real reductions in smoking. We continue to pursue a six-strand approach through:
 - helping smokers quit with a choice of easily accessible support;
 - reducing tobacco promotion;
 - innovative media education campaigns;
 - regulating tobacco products;
 - reducing exposure to second-hand smoke; and
 - maintaining a high price for tobacco products and tackling smuggling.

Helping smokers quit

- NHS Stop Smoking Services are in place across England to help the 70% of smokers who want to quit. NHS Stop Smoking Services offer support from trained stop-smoking advisers. They take place in a range of settings and include both group sessions and one-to-one meetings depending on the smoker's need.

- £138 million will be invested in NHS Stop Smoking Services over the next three years. Between April 2003 and March 2004, around 204,200 smokers kicked the habit at the four-week follow-up stage with the help of the NHS. Specialist services are also available to help pregnant women stop smoking.
- Stop-smoking aids such as nicotine replacement therapy and Zyban are available on the NHS. There is a free, dedicated helpline for all smokers (0800 169 0 169), and specific helplines for pregnant smokers and for different ethnic groups.
- Regional tobacco policy managers, working at a high level within Government Offices and with key stakeholders, drive regional change in reducing smoking rates.

Reducing tobacco promotion

- The Tobacco Advertising and Promotion Act 2002 has been introduced to stop the advertising and promotion of tobacco and tobacco products, including a ban on in-pack promotions, direct marketing, sponsorship of global events, free distributions, and advertising in the press and on billboards.

Media campaigns

- Recent mass-media campaigns have worked to reduce smoking prevalence and increase smokers' motivation to quit, and have included campaigns on smoking around children and testimonials from real-life smokers, and have involved partners such as Cancer Research UK to deliver the 'death repackaged' light and mild campaign, and the British Heart Foundation to run the 'Give up before you clog up' campaign.

Regulating products

- Bigger and more direct warnings, such as 'smokers die younger' and 'smoking causes fatal lung cancer' have been compulsory on cigarettes from 2003 and on all tobacco products from September 2004.
- Misleading descriptors such as 'light', 'mild' and 'low tar' were removed from cigarette packs in 2003 and from other tobacco products from September 2004.

Second-hand smoke

- Over 30 cities in England are working towards smoke-free status by encouraging employers and others to ensure that smoke-free becomes the norm. The smoke-free cities network grew out of these local initiatives. The proportion of people's workplaces that are completely smoke-free has risen from 40% in 1996 to 50% in 2003.

Tackling smuggling

- The Tackling Tobacco Smuggling Strategy was launched in March 2000 to reduce smuggled cigarettes to no more than 17% of the total market by March 2006. Latest figures for 2002/03 show the proportion is now 18%. Government investment of over £200 million helped fund almost 1,000 extra customs officers, a national network of x-ray scanners and the introduction of 'duty paid' marks on legitimate packets of cigarettes. HM Customs is working to reduce this further to under 13% of the market by 2007/08.

Pricing

- The UK has the highest priced cigarettes in the EU, which contributes to lower smoking rates.

WE WILL HAVE DELIVERED IF...

...we achieve the 2004 Government PSA target to 'reduce adult smoking rates from 26% in 2002 to 21% or less by 2010, with a reduction in prevalence among routine and manual groups from 31% in 2002 to 26% or less by 2010'.