

SMOKEFREE DEVON ALLIANCE PROGRESS REPORT 2023-24

Report of the Director of Public Health and Communities

Please note that the following recommendations are subject to consideration and determination by the Committee before taking effect.

1) Recommendation:

- 1.1 The Board notes the progress report of the Smokefree Devon Alliance.
- 1.2 The Board considers its contribution in supporting the introduction of the Tobacco and Vapes Bill.
- 1.3 The Board continue to consider opportunities for reducing harm caused by tobacco through existing linked programmes of work.

2) Background / Introduction

The Smokefree Devon Alliance is a partnership of organisations committed to reducing the harm caused by tobacco in Devon and Torbay. It is co-ordinated by the public health team at Devon County Council and has two co-chairs:

- Steve Brown, Director of Public Health and Communities at Devon County Council
- Joanne Watson, Health and Care Strategy Director at Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust.

The Smokefree Devon Alliance has been providing a co-ordinated, multi-agency approach to tobacco control since 2010 and currently has a varied and active membership. The strategy was launched in 2023, promising a yearly progress report to review progress towards the Alliance's priorities:

1. Protect children and young people from the harms of tobacco and de-normalise tobacco use to help prevent uptake
2. Reduce health inequalities caused by smoking, by supporting high quality evidence-based interventions, with a focus on achieving equity and fairness.
3. Ensure cross-sector, strategic collaboration around tobacco control, and support the development of a smokefree culture within key organisations

This report outlines the key findings of this review; the whole report can be found on the Alliance website [here](#).

The King's speech in July 2024 outlined the new Tobacco and Vapes Bill, which will make it an offence to sell tobacco products to those born on or after 1st January

2009. Furthermore, Local Authorities have been granted additional funding until 2029 to continue to reduce smoking rates. The Smokefree Devon Alliance is an important forum to help Devon, Plymouth and Torbay make the most of the opportunities that the proposed bill and additional funding presents the area, including supporting members to advocate for supportive national policy.

3) Smokefree Devon Alliance Progress Report

(The full report can be accessed [here](#))

3.1 Progress Towards Priorities

The collaboratively written report highlights the excellent progress made in the first year of the [Smokefree Devon Alliance strategy](#), including:

- A Smokefree Devon Alliance dashboard has been created, to enable easy analysis and comparison of smoking data across Devon, Torbay and Plymouth: [SFDA Report - Power BI](#)
Since the creation of the update report, there has been new data released, showing a reduction in adult smoking prevalence from 13.9% to 10.8% in Devon. Although there has been a significant reduction in smoking prevalence in routine and manual occupations, the current rate of 21.2% gives in insight into the inequalities that are still very much embedded within tobacco addiction.
- The treating Tobacco Dependence pathways are fully implemented in Devon and Torbay acute and mental health trusts, which has resulted in an increase in the number of smokers achieving a 4-week quit. The maternity pathways have seen particular success, with Torbay and Exeter pathways both achieving national ambitions, reaching a smoking status at time of delivery of below 6%.
- A Smokefree NHS Steering Group has been created, chaired by the ICB, supported by Public Health, with representatives from every trust in attendance. This group is planning to collaboratively drive energy into improving the conditions in which the TTD programme operates and is creating an ambitious action plan based on an evidence-based review of current tobacco control activity.
- Resources and support for vaping education and prevention in young people has increased across the system, with Alliance members monitoring local data and intelligence around youth vaping.
- The Swap-to-Stop scheme has been implemented in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay, meaning that priority groups are able to access free vape kits to support quit attempts, both through structured behavioural support programmes with the specialist services, and through partner organisations with a light touch approach.
- Expansion of the NHS Targeted Lung Health Checks across Devon, Plymouth and Torbay has been done in partnership with local stop smoking services, seeing a large increase in referrals into these services.

- The Smokefree Generation funding announced nationally has significantly increased capacity of community smoking cessation services to support priority populations, putting the system in an excellent position to support significantly more people to tackle their tobacco addiction and improve their physical, mental and financial health.
- The Smokefree Devon Alliance has enabled close collaboration between members to reduce the harm caused to Devon, Torbay and Plymouth by tobacco. The three public health teams have jointly funded an Advanced Public Health Practitioner, who is co-ordinating smokefree strategy and policy Devon-wide, to ensure a system wide approach.

3.2 Areas for Action

The report also uncovered areas for future action, including:

- Ensuring strategic join up across key organisations and partnerships continues, to further progress towards strategic priorities
- Supporting and implementing smokefree policy across all Devon trusts
- Monitoring vaping prevalence in young people and working collaboratively to prevent uptake
- Developing partnerships with organisations that work across Devon, Plymouth and Torbay - to encourage referral activity into community smoking cessation services.
- Targeted work for priority groups, such as adults with mental health conditions
- Targeted work in areas with high smoking prevalence, such as Torbay, Torridge and Exeter

The Smokefree Devon Alliance will continue to meet three times a year to enable and oversee the progression of actions towards the identified strategic priorities.

4) Options/Alternatives

None.

5) Consultations/Representations/Technical Data

None.

6) Strategic Plans

Smoking is not only the biggest cause of inequalities in health, but it also has a significant detrimental impact on many other elements in society. Some of these impacts are detailed below, according to DCC's strategic priorities.

Be ambitious for children and young people

By protecting them from the harms of tobacco, through actions identified such as:

- Supporting smokefree pregnancies to protect harm caused to unborn babies
- Promoting smokefree environments for children
- Enforcing legislation to prevent underage sales of tobacco and vapes
- Monitoring youth vaping and promoting vape education
- Advocating for the introduction of the Tobacco and Vapes Bill
- reducing adult smoking prevalence, the biggest influence on smoking uptake in young people.

Tackle poverty and inequality

Smoking is the single biggest cause of health inequality in England. The more disadvantaged someone is, the more likely they are to smoke and to suffer from smoking-related disease and early death. Nationally, research showed one in five (21%) of smoking households in the UK were living below the poverty line, with long-term smokers being 7.5% less likely to be employed than non-smokers and smokers earning, on average, 6.8% less than non-smokers. Smoking has a huge financial cost to the individual; smoking 10 cigarettes per day will cost approximately £364 per month and £4368 per year. In total, an estimated £287.8 million is spent on legal and illicit tobacco per year in Devon ([ASH, 2023](#)).

Support sustainable economic recovery

Smoking negatively affects earnings and employment prospects; the cumulative impact of these effects amounts to productivity losses of £475.3million per year in Devon ([ASH, 2023](#)).

Respond to the climate emergency

The tobacco industry is a major contributor to both human and environmental damage. Tobacco products pollute the air with toxic smoke and the ground with waste, but the entire life cycle of products is damaging to the environment ([Tobacco Tactics, 2022](#)).

Improve health and wellbeing

Smoking is the leading cause of premature, preventable death, killing up to half of its users. On average, lifelong cigarette smokers die 10 years younger than non-smokers. Smoking harms nearly every organ of the body and affects a person's overall health. It has a significant cost to the healthcare system, with smoking-related hospital admissions and the treatment of smoking related illness via primary care costing £29.7million in Devon ([ASH, 2023](#)).

Similarly, many current and former smokers require care in later life as a result of smoking related illnesses; the estimated cost of this to social care in Devon is £248.3million ([ASH, 2023](#)).

Help communities be safe, connected and resilient

The illicit tobacco trade is often part of organised criminal activity and is linked to a range of other illegal trades including alcohol production, people-trafficking and drug smuggling. There is also evidence to suggest that the illicit tobacco trade funds terrorism ([Fresh, 2024](#)). Reducing illicit tobacco helps protect our communities, as

well as prevent uptake and maintenance of smoking behaviours, particularly in children and young people.

7) Financial Considerations

None.

8) Legal Considerations

There are no specific legal considerations.

9) Environmental Impact Considerations (Including Climate Change)

The tobacco industry is a major contributor to environmental damage, so reducing the use of tobacco products has a positive impact.

10) Equality Considerations

The Smokefree Devon Alliance strategy encourages a proportionate universalism approach, aiming to have a significant impact on health inequalities.

There are no significant equality implications which are not already covered within the report.

11) Risk Management Considerations

This report has been assessed and has been deemed low risk to the Council and Alliance partners.

12) Summary

Tobacco dependence is still the biggest cause of preventable illness and death, and high rates persist in some of our more vulnerable populations, making it a significant driver of health inequalities. Creating a smokefree future would not only significantly lower the pressure on our health and social care systems, but it would support a greater quality of life for many local people. We must therefore continue to focus on this important area.

There are significant policy changes currently proposed around the age of sale of tobacco and legislation around e-cigarettes/vapes. The Smokefree Devon Alliance strategy and progress reports demonstrate how the Council is contributing locally to this national tobacco control policy context and formalises our support for the NHS around the prioritisation of treating tobacco dependence.

Steve Brown

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Electoral Divisions: All

Local Government Act 1972: List of background papers

Background Paper: Nil

Date: Nil

File Reference: Nil

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