Yorkshire and Humber Tobacco Control Update

Directors of Public Health inspire a legacy we can all be proud of

The Yorkshire and Humber Directors of Public Health Network have outlined a clear ‘Vision’ for the Yorkshire and the Humber, that aims to inspire a Smokefree Generation – a legacy we can all be proud of.

Dr Andrew Furber and Dr Paul Edmondson Jones, the two lead Directors of Public Health for tobacco control spoke about the vision saying, ‘The Yorkshire and the Humber will work together to Inspire a Smokefree Generation.’

By acting together we can make smoking history for all our children. It will be a legacy we can all be proud of’.

Cllr Jane Evison East Riding Of Yorkshire Council and member of the Regional Tobacco Control Board said, ‘We know that smokers start as children and most struggle to quit as adults.

Nearly all smokers say they want to quit and wish they’d never started. There is a clear and important role for public health to play in diverting people away from a lethal habit and providing those who have been drawn in with an exit strategy.

Whilst smokers will often rebel at being told to stop smoking themselves there is little or no opposition to the concept of a tobacco and smokefree generation. This above everything is a goal we should aim for, to protect our children from the known harm smoking can do’.

A number of resources to help local areas inspire a smokefree generation will be launched in the autumn. Watch this space…
publishes the results online. Researchers conduct household surveys to collect information from around 1,800 people.

http://www.smokinginengland.info/

NICE guidance released on harm-reduction approaches to smoking

New guidance on approaches to lessening the harm from tobacco has been launched by the National Institute of Health and Care Excellence (NICE). Its advice is that abrupt quitting through local stop smoking services is best. However they recommend harm reduction for individuals who can’t quit or don’t want to quit yet.

MHRA announcement on e-cigarettes

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) has announced that e-cigarettes sold in the UK are to be regulated by the MHRA.

The announcement complements the guidance issued last week by NICE which supports the use of licensed nicotine containing products (NCPs) to help smokers cut down and as a substitute for smoking, possibly indefinitely.

Once licensed by the MHRA, e-cigarettes and other NCPs will remain available for sale as over-the-counter medicines and healthcare professionals will be able to recommend them as nicotine replacement therapy. E-cigarettes will not be required to obtain a medicines license until the European Commission’s Tobacco Products Directive is agreed and transposed into UK law.

Local Government Declaration on tobacco control – sign up NOW

We would like to encourage all local authorities in the Yorkshire and Humber to demonstrate their leadership and sign a national cross-party Declaration on Tobacco Control.

Local authorities have always played a crucial role in tackling smoking through their enforcement and other work but now they have the public health remit they are the most important local institution working to reduce smoking rates. This Declaration makes a strong statement that the local authority is aware of the importance of local action and knows what it must do to make a difference.

This is an opportunity for local authority leaders to signal to internal and external stakeholders that this is an important issue and that they will take action. Smoking is the biggest cause of premature death in the UK, responsible for half the difference in life expectancy between richest and poorest and a major drain on the local economy and individual incomes, particularly of the poorest. For every £1 spent on tobacco locally less than 10p stays in the local community. Tackling smoking is one of the key things a local authority can do to create strong and healthy communities.

While local structures will vary for many local authorities the most appropriate route for ensuring implementation of the Declaration with the Health and Wellbeing Board. The Health and Wellbeing Board can be tasked with assessing current practice within the local authority and establishing a clear way forward. Areas for consideration might include:

- Ensuring there is a comprehensive tobacco control plan which is implemented
- Developing a policy on protecting health policy for the influence of the tobacco industry
Yorkshire & The Humber: Inspiring a Smokefree Generation

- Supporting local and regional networks of support
- Reviewing monitoring processes
- Joining the Smokefree Action Coalition

For more information contact scrosby@wakefield.gov.uk

Action needed to reduce pregnant smokers

Smoking during pregnancy causes up to 2,200 premature births, 5,000 miscarriages and 300 perinatal deaths every year in the UK. A new report, by a coalition of baby charities, campaigners, leading academics and health experts, outlines recommendations for commissioners, providers, royal colleges, government bodies, training organisations and third sector organisations, published by ASH specifying what action is required in order to reduce the prevalence of smoking during pregnancy.


It's official: less appealing cigarettes come in plain packages

Plain packaging makes smokers think their cigarettes have deteriorated in quality and it leaves them less satisfied, the first research into the impact of plain packaging in Australia has found.

The research, published in the BMJ Open journal and funded by Cancer Council Victoria, was commissioned in the first three months of the rollout of plain packaging in Australia last year to look at any immediate effects.

It found 30.6% of smokers using plain packaging perceived their cigarettes to be of lower quality than a year earlier, compared with 18.1% of smokers using branded cigarettes.

Those smoking plain-packaged cigarettes were also more likely to think about quitting than those using branded packs.

Public Say Government influenced by the Big Tobacco?

A YouGov poll published in the in the Sunday Times shows that only 25% of the public believes the government when it says it wants more evidence on plain packaging.

Some 60% of respondents feel the government has been influenced by tobacco companies, while only 18% think it is acceptable for Lynton Crosby to advise the Conservatives at the same time as working for other commercial clients. A majority (58%) of those polled support plain packaging, with 26% against.
Revision of the EU Tobacco Control Directive - The biggest challenge is still to come

The European Parliament Plenary is expected to vote on the 11th September 2013, opening the way for negotiations with the EU Council on a compromise. There is an attempt to push this back to October which we don’t support as the timetable is tight to ensure a successful conclusion of the negotiations, so that the Directive is adopted before the end of the European Parliament’s current mandate in May 2014.

The ENVI votes were much better than expected - and much of this was due to the hard work of the health community in successfully getting across the public health message, and providing an alternative voice to counter the industry lobbying.

Despite the positive outcome, the vote was close on many of the key issues:

- 75% combined health warnings passed by just 4 votes (+37/-33), meaning that if two MEPs who supported had voted the other way, it would have been lost;
- the slims ban was maintained by 23 votes (+47/-24);
- and the flavourings ban (in consolidated amendment 33) was maintained by 21 votes (+45/-24).
- regulating e-cigarettes as light-touch medicines passed by 17 votes (+44/-27)
- in the final vote, 13 MEPs voted against, 8 abstained, and 50 voted in favour.

We hope you will be able to continue your engagement in the run-up to the plenary stage - the week before will be critical as this is when the different Political Groups will decide their positions.

PMI’s plan to kill standardised packaging revealed

The Observer has obtained confidential documents outlining Philip Morris International’s (PMI) plans to stifle proposals for standardised cigarette packaging.

The documents detail a sophisticated campaign that targeted key politicians and decision makers to “ensure plain packaging is not adopted in the UK”. Contrary to this intent, the tobacco industry has always maintained a “wait and see” policy, indicating that more time was needed to assess the impact of standard packs in Australia.

The company, which has recently come under scrutiny for hiring David Cameron’s chief strategist Lynton Crosby, also discussed utilising a number of third parties, including the Institute of Economic Affairs and the polling agency Populus, to drive its messages, gain intelligence and target key MPs.

Deborah Arnott, chief executive of ASH, said: “These documents show Philip Morris and the tobacco industry plotting to delay a decision on standard packs for two to three years, with the excuse of waiting for more evidence from Australia. Shamefully, the government has given in to this pressure”.

Standard Pack amendment

An amendment has been tabled to the Children and Families Bill which would give the Government the power to introduce Standard Packaging for tobacco products.

The Children and Families Bill is now in the House of Lords and the amendment has been tabled by a cross-party group of peers demonstrating the breadth of support for this measure. The amendment will be debated in the autumn. Over the summer we will definitely need your support
in continuing to raise the issue with local politicians and any peers that have links to your area.

The SFAC will be providing briefing materials and support over the coming weeks. The tobacco industry will mount a strong opposition and the public health community will, as ever, need to actively challenge the industries lobbying work and ensure that the evidence is heard.

The full amendment is here: http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/lbill/2013-2014/0032/amend/am032-d.htm

Home Affairs Select Committee announce inquiry on tobacco smuggling

The Home Affairs Select Committee have announced that they will be taking evidence on tobacco smuggling. The chair of the committee, Keith Vaz MP, is on the record as an opponent of standard packaging for tobacco products. The tobacco industry have produced highly questionable data on illicit tobacco, including claiming that smuggling is going up when it's going down (see ASH report here). They have also used it as an argument against many public health measures including standard packaging. It will be important for the public health community to ensure that balanced and independent evidence is submitted. We will provide a more detailed briefing in the next few weeks.

See the full announcement here: http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/home-affairs-committee/inquiries/parliament-2010/tobacco-smuggling/

Tobacco industry launches marketing campaign

In a new stealth marketing campaign launched with the aid of a major lobbying firm. The makers of Marlboro cigarettes are seeking to mobilise a grassroots fightback by customers against moves towards the introduction of blank packaging.

Buyers of Marlboro cigarettes have been finding messages inside their packets inviting them to visit a new campaigning website, Know-more.co.uk, which describes itself as "the community for Britain's smokers".

Philip Morris, which also makes brands including Chesterfield and Virginia for the UK market, is running three different inserts in packets highlighting tough policies that aim to hit a nerve with smokers – tax, the possibility of banning smoking in cars and homes, and how plain packaging might fuel the black market trade in cigarettes.

One insert reads: "Plain packaging is the latest in a stream of proposals targeting smokers. Other excessive schemes have been suggested. Know-more by learning the issues, then say no more to the government by joining our community and speaking out."

Health groups dismayed by news 'big tobacco' funded think-tank’s

The Adam Smith Institute and the Institute of Economic Affairs received money from cigarette firms, it has been revealed

Two of Britain's leading free-market thinktanks have been criticised for taking money from "big tobacco". The Adam Smith Institute (ASI) and the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA) have received tens of thousands of pounds in funding from leading tobacco companies.

Their admissions have dismayed health groups, which question the degree to which both organisations have influenced government thinking, especially on plain packaging for cigarettes. It also highlights the entrenched links between "big tobacco" and the libertarian strand of British politics that has been strengthened by
the recent rise of UKIP, a party that has positioned itself firmly on the side of smokers.

Both thinktanks have criticised plans to force retailers to sell cigarettes in unbranded cartons, an initiative that cancer charities claim will curb smoking among the young, but which was recently abandoned by the government. They have also criticised anti-tobacco measures such as the ban on smoking in pubs, arguing that they represent an attack on civil liberties.

However, news that they have been receiving tobacco money has raised questions about whether World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines governing transparency on tobacco funding are being breached. British American Tobacco, the company behind brands such as Lucky Strike and Dunhill, has confirmed that in 2011 it gave the IEA £10,000, plus £1,000 in event sponsorship. Last year it donated a further £20,000 to the institute.

The ASI confirmed that 3% of its funding came from tobacco firms, although it declined to reveal how much. It said that it had a policy of capping private donations, although a spokesman declined to reveal the level of the cap.

However, company accounts reveal that Adam Smith Services Ltd had an income of just under £750,000 in 2011, the latest year available, which suggests that it received around £24,000 from "big tobacco".

See the full data here: http://www.hscic.gov.uk/catalogue/PUB11334

CRUK cancer data

Cancer Research UK has recently launched “Local Cancer Statistics” an online tool providing local cancer statistics for use by local health professionals/local councils. It is free and easy to use. Check it out here: http://www.cancerresearchuk.org/cancer-info/cancerstats/local-cancer-statistics/

SFAC Conference

The Smokefree Action Coalition is holding a conference in London on 14th November.

Hazel Cheeseman, Special Projects Officer said, “We’ve had lots of interest from new staff in PHE regional and centre teams as well as elected members.

We are keen to encourage elected members to attend with a number already signing up.”

The SFAC are inviting elected members to attend the conference for free. Organisations can send two delegates free of charge if they are members of the SFAC. Get in touch to find out more or book your place. Contact scrosby@wakefield.gov.uk
Smokefree Cars – Next Steps

The Private Members Bill tabled by Lord Ribiero could come back in future – it has been too far down the list the last few times it has been tabled and has not been reached. PHE have recently re-run a second-hand smoke marketing campaign this summer. The Children’s and families bill from Department for Education have received an amendment from Lord Ribiero and Alex Cunningham MP on smoking in cars.

The amendments Smoking in Cars:  

Join the Smokefree Action Coalition

The Smokefree Action Coalition is an alliance of over 100 organisations including medical royal colleges, the British Medical Association, the Trading Standards Institute, the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health, the Faculty of Public Health, the Association of Directors of Public Health and ASH. The Coalition was created during the successful campaign for legislation ending smoking in enclosed public places (Health Act 2006), and has also engaged with Government on a wide range of tobacco control issues, including the introduction of standardised (“plain”) packaging for tobacco products.

More information about the Coalition and how to join can be obtained from Scott Crosby scrosby@wakefield.gov.uk

Tobacco Industry Lobbying

Lastly, if you haven’t listened to the File on BBC Radio Four about lobbying on the Tobacco Products Directive, it’s worth a listen particularly for some of the lobbying behaviour of the e-cigarette companies. Disgraceful!  
http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006th08