fresh Making Smoking History BULLETIN

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Welcome to the November edition of the Fresh e-Bulletin

December marks a major milestone in tobacco control, with just one month to go until the Smokefree Generation law comes into effect on 1 January 2027. As the countdown begins, partners across the North East are ramping up activity to raise awareness of this landmark legislation, which will make it illegal to sell uniquely lethal tobacco products to anyone born on or after 1 January 2009.

Alongside preparation for the new law, we're sharing updates on regional quitting support, new campaign activity, inspiring stories from people affected by smoking, and the fantastic work being delivered across our communities and services.

Thank you for all you are doing to help create a smokefree future for everyone.

The Month Ahead

On 1st December it will be one month to go before the new Smokefree Generation law comes in on 1st January 2027- this will make it illegal to sell lethal tobacco products to anyone born after 1st January 2009. There is now a busy countdown underway, and we will be doing lots of publicity to raise awareness of this. We are delighted to also support the Department of Health and their campaign which launched on 16th November. You can access all their assets here.



This is a great short explainer film you can watch to find out more about the new law. Watch it here.



One of the key things you can do is to look at the Communications Toolkit that Fresh developed with ASH (UK) and the Centre for Excellence. This gives so many ideas and is a live document with regular updates to it.

We were pleased to have regulatory services representatives from across the 12 Local Authorities at our Fresh Tobacco Crime and Regulation Forum on 24th November and this was a timely opportunity to share our plans and hear about all the work on the ground.

For Trading Standards and enforcement officers, Chartered Trading Standards Institute are offering FREE Tobacco and Vapes Act 2026 bitesize webinars throughout December, January and February covering topics including fixed penalty notices and underage sales. There is also free CTSI training for retailers of tobacco and nicotine products during December and January.

Watch: Kirsty's Story Supporting a Smokefree Generation. Kirsty, 34, a mum of two and teacher from Blyth, recently filmed with Fresh to share why she supports the Smokefree Generation law. Watch Kirsty's video here to hear why she believes this change will make a real difference for children and young people across the North East.



Fresh to showcase regional stop smoking pharmacotherapy approach at the North East Public Health Conference 2026

Fresh has been selected to deliver a workshop session on 7th December, sharing learning from the collaborative work to increase access to stop smoking pharmacotherapy across the region. The workshop, "A regional approach to increasing access to stop smoking pharmacotherapy," will share learning from the

development and implementation of the North East regional PGD supply service for varenicline and cytisinicline.

The interactive session will share learning from the regional model and invite delegates to consider where similar collaborative approaches could help address variation and improve access across other areas of public health. Find out more here.

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New Developments

Smoking claims almost 4,000 lives a year in the North East: Ahead of the Smokefree Generation law coming into force on 1 January 2027, new figures show smoking still claims an estimated 3,956 lives across the North East every year. The new law will help protect future generations from tobacco addiction and the death and disease it causes. Read the full press release here.



Fresh Quit Campaign returns this December: We are gearing up for New Year quitting campaign activity – a key time to be raising motivation to quit and we will be going back on air across multiple channels including TV, radio, digital and social media from 28th December. Smoking Survivors will run alongside our successful More Ways to Quit campaign, developed in partnership with local authority tobacco leads to promote and signpost effective support.

A toolkit will be circulated to key partners and available to download from www.freshquit.co.uk

FreshQuit.co.uk refreshed to help more people quit: Our regional quitting hub FreshQuit.co.uk has been refreshed to make it easier for people to take the next step towards quitting, acting as a single front door to support across the North East. It brings together information on ways to quit, stop smoking aids, the Smoke Free app and local stop smoking services in one place. People can also refer themselves directly to their local service via a new online form, and we're pleased to see that 100 referrals were made in the first five weeks of the new route going live.

Smokefree Councillor Network- Supporting Local Leadership: ASH (UK) has been reaching out to Local Councils to find out about the excellent work local elected members are doing in tobacco control. They have a Smokefree Councillor Network and are always keen for new members. Find out more here.

Addressing the illicit tobacco market: Fresh takes a strategic approach to addressing the illicit tobacco market, recognising that that the best way to reduce the use of illicit tobacco is to encourage more people to stop smoking. A key part of our approach is to work closely with retailers to support compliance with tobacco laws and signpost people to our Keep It Out online reporting form if they know where illegal tobacco is being sold. We are working with partners across the North to

explore a refresh of the Keep It Out campaign and the latest phase is the production of an updated Retailers Guide. This aligns with the new smoke-free generation laws coming into force on 1st January and can be downloaded here.

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Mary Kelly Foy MP for Durham City and Co-Chair (with Bob Blackman, MP for Harrow) of the APPG on Smoking and Health, spoke powerfully about the link between smoking and poverty during a recent Westminster Hall debate on progress towards a smoke-free UK. Mary called on the Government to publish a roadmap to a smokefree country; that sets out how smoking cessation support can be targeted to help the most vulnerable populations to quit.

ASH's report 'Ending Smoking Inequality' has shown that smoking pushes 417,000 households below the poverty line, and that people who smoke are almost three times as likely to use food banks than those who don't. Read the report here.



The APPG on Smoking and Health also hosted a roundtable meeting in September alongside the APPG on Poverty and Inequality. APPG members heard from Gillian and Hannah, experts with lived experience, about the toll that tobacco addiction placed on their finances, family relationships and health.

"Ending Smoking Inequality" Report: On 5 November, Noah Traill, Senior Policy Officer at ASH (UK) joined us for a Fresh/Smokefree NHS Lunchtime Learning session exploring this excellent report. The session explored the report's recommendations and practical, evidence-based action across services, communications and wider systems to reduce smoking inequalities and help ensure no one is left behind. You can watch the presentation back here.

New report: Public support for prevention policies: Nearly six in ten UK adults (57%) want to see stricter rules to limit government lobbying by the alcohol and unhealthy food industry.

That's according to NEW research by Public First, commissioned by Action on Smoking and Health (ASH), the Alcohol Health Alliance (AHA) and the Obesity Health Alliance (OHA), examining voters' views on the nation's health, support for prevention policies and the influence of business on health policy.

The research reveals widespread public concern about the impact of health-harming industries on children, with nearly two thirds of UK adults worried about the influence of unhealthy food and drink companies (65%) and tobacco industry (63%), and 58% expressing concern about the alcohol industry. You can watch a webinar about this report.

Hundreds at Society Study of Addictions annual conference in Newcastle: On 12th November our Director Ailsa Rutter OBE was part of a plenary opening session at the Society for Study of Addictions annual conference, and she shared what Fresh is planning to do to maximise quitting on the back of smokefree generation plans. She was joined on the stage by Sue Mountain, a tireless campaigner for both Fresh and Cancer Research UK and esteemed academic colleagues, Dr Sarah Jackson and Nathan Davies.



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Leanne's Story

Leanne, 39, from County Durham, started smoking at just 12 years old and remained addicted for more than 25 years. With support from Smokefree County Durham, she successfully quit earlier this year and says the impact has been life changing. From improving her health and fitness to saving money for family days out and Christmas presents; Leanne's story shows that it's never too late to stop smoking.



Read how free local stop smoking support helped her take back control of her addiction and transform life for herself and her family.
Read Leanne's full story here Leanne's story - Fresh

New Resources for Smokefree Workplaces: Supporting a smokefree workforce benefits both employee wellbeing and business performance.



Helping staff to stop smoking can make a real difference to their health, their wellbeing and their finances - with benefits for employers too.

We've developed a range of infographics to help employers across the North East understand what smoking could mean for their workforce and business.



Covering businesses with 10 to 5000 employees, they provide illustrative estimates of sickness absence, lost working days and associated costs.

The figures use regional prevalence and pay data, so the impact will vary from one workplace to another.

Whatever the size of your business, you can help by talking about the support that is available, encouraging, and making it easier for staff to get help and quit.



You can share these with employers, HR colleagues, and anyone who supports wellbeing at work.

If you or someone in your workforce wants to stop smoking, there are more ways to quit than you might think. Find support at www.freshquit.co.uk.

Supporting health and social care staff to stop smoking: A free offer is available to support any staff who smoke tobacco and work in health and social care across the North East and North Cumbria. Smoking remains the leading cause of preventable illness, disability, and death in the UK, and is the biggest driver of health inequalities in the North East and North Cumbria (NENC). Quitting smoking leads to improved life expectancy and reduced preventable disability caused by smoking. Quitting smoking also increases productivity and reduces poverty in the smoking workforce and smoking-related work absence.

The free offer is funded through the NHS North East and North Cumbria (NENC) Integrated Care Board Work Well programme which aims to help people whose health may be affecting their ability to stay in work, as well as those who need health-related support to return to work.

As part of this approach, the NENC Smokefree NHS programme is providing staff with flexible and accessible stop-smoking support through the Smoke Free app. The

digital offer is particularly suited to health and social care staff, including those working shifts, nights, weekends or long hours who may find it difficult to access traditional stop-smoking services.

Premium Smoke Free app licenses are currently available, giving eligible staff access to:

- FREE 24/7 digital stop-smoking support, including access to NCSCT-certified advisers, confidential and flexible support that can fit around shifts, nights and weekends.
- FREE nicotine replacement therapy (NRT), including products such as patches and inhalators.
- FREE nicotine vaping products, including a vape kit, replacement pods and e-liquids.

Register your interest here

How line managers and team leads can help: Managers and team leads have an important role in ensuring staff know that this support is available and feel comfortable accessing it. To make this easier, a communications toolkit have been developed, alongside promotional materials including flyers, posters, business cards and a promotional video.

These resources will help managers introduce the offer positively and sensitively, signpost staff to support and promote the programme within their teams. These can be shared via email, staff intranet, bulletins or on staff platforms like closed Facebook and Whatsapp groups.

To request these resources or find out more, email cddft.nhsstaffquitnenc@nhs.net

Celebrating our Stop Smoking COI award winners: Congratulations to our latest Stop Smoking Community of Interest award winners: Johnny Gavigan from CNTW, Advisor of the Quarter; Healthworks Newcastle, Team of the Quarter; and Leanne Barkham and Kieron Wright, our joint Quitters of the Quarter. A huge well done to all our winners and nominees, celebrating the fantastic people, teams and quitting journeys across our region.







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Upcoming Events

Engaging LGBTQ+ communities: Lessons from a community-focussed smoking cessation campaign - Wednesday 9 December, 12–1pm

Join the SCAH Community of Practice to hear how the London Tobacco Alliance used community-led research, partnerships and targeted communications to engage LGBTQ+ communities. The session will share practical learning to help stop smoking services and public health teams develop more inclusive approaches and address smoking inequalities. Please note this session will not be recorded.

Register here

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