

refresh

The newsletter of Smoke Free North East



“The last form of advertising” – the lure of cigarette brands pg 2

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WELCOME

Happy New Year, and welcome to the Spring edition of Re-Fresh, the newsletter from Fresh. This edition takes a special look at the forthcoming national consultation about plain standardised tobacco packaging and why it is likely to help reduce the number of children starting to smoke. There's an update on awareness levels and impact of the "Every Breath" campaign among smokers and the most accurate figures yet on the cost of smoking to the North East.

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Plain Packs Protect an end to colourful killers

PLAIN standardised packs protect and will help deter children from starting to smoke. That is the message of a hard hitting new nationwide campaign backed by Fresh.

Cancer Research UK, the British Heart Foundation and Action on Smoking and Health are just a few of the organisations nationwide supporting plainpacksprotect.co.uk - aimed at closing a glaring loophole for the tobacco industry to promote killer products.

It comes as the Government prepares to launch a national consultation to ask whether plain packaging could help reduce the 340,000 children who try smoking each year.

Most North East smokers start around the age of 15. And few people realise there are alluring packs on North East shop shelves resembling perfume or make up, and boxes with colourful logos resembling sticklebricks or Lego.

The tobacco industry spends a fortune on glossy colourful designs to entice young people to try and buy cigarettes. Although cigarettes contain 4,000 chemicals, there is no requirement to list any of these.

North East MPs, doctors and parents spoke out last year to help expose "fashion cigarettes" aimed at young females. Three cigarette suppliers have

now launched brands targeted at young women, exploiting their beliefs around smoking, fashion and staying slim.

Australia will become the first country to introduce plain drab olive-brown packs from December 2012. Graphic health warnings will cover most of the packs, which will have no company or cigarette branding other than the name.

Ailsa Rutter, Director of Fresh, said: "Brands are the biggest remaining form of cigarette advertising. There is growing anger at the blatant designing of cigarette packs to recruit our young people into a lifetime of smoking and on average, taking 16 years off their life.

"The tobacco industry has always tried to discredit any measures to reduce smoking. It fears plain packaging and will fight hard to protect their profits. But if this type of advertising did not work, they would not spend so much money on branding and packaging.

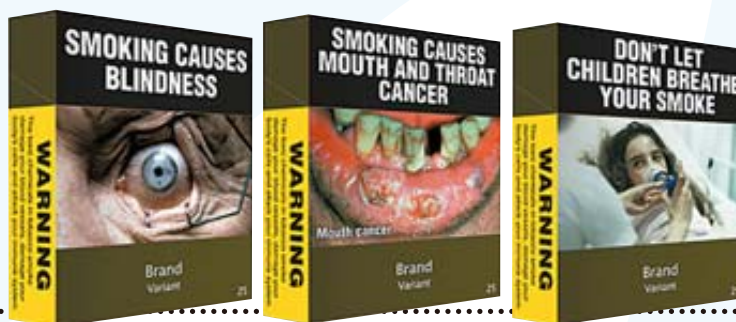


Plain packs work in three ways:

1. They reduce the attractiveness to young people. Peer-reviewed studies found plain packaging is less attractive to young people than branded cigarettes.
2. They end misleading health messages. Many smokers assume that white or silver packs are safer, but all cigarettes caused lung cancer.
3. Plain packaging would increase the prominence of health warnings - far less noticeable on the most colourful packets.

"This is all about the messages pack designs give to children. It is vital we look to closing off these remaining loopholes in cigarette advertising if we are serious about reducing youth smoking in the future."

Unless there is action, tobacco companies will work harder to make pack designs attractive and alluring with tobacco due to be moved out of sight in supermarkets by 2012 and smaller shops by 2015.



How can I make a difference?

MANY organisations and individuals can all play a part by responding to the consultation, making it clear the evidence that plain packaging would protect children is already there.

- Work with local decisions makers to raise the profile of Plain Packs Protect.co.uk. We're hoping for detailed submissions from key agencies across the North East including the NHS, local government and members of the North East Tobacco Control Partnership
- Get involved in discussions with one of the 12 local tobacco alliances who are working to foster community responses
- Email your MP about this issue and make your own voice heard in the newspaper letter pages
- Add your name to the consultation either at www.freshne.com or at www.plainpacksprotect.co.uk. Send to your friends, families and colleagues and ask them to do so too.

Major progress being made to tackle illicit tobacco market

Two major studies show

TWO reports have revealed how a major programme across the North of England has made a dent in the illicit tobacco market since 2009 and encouraged more organisations to tackle it.

The “North of England Tackling Illicit Tobacco for Better Health Programme” has resulted in less illegal tobacco being bought and sold on estates, fewer people turning a blind eye and more action aimed at bringing sellers to justice.

The Illicit Tobacco: North of England Study 2011 analysed the attitudes and buying patterns of 4111 people across the North of England, while the UK Centre for Tobacco Control Studies has presented positive findings on the impact the programme has made so far.

The programme was a world first when it was launched in 2009 to bring together the work of FRESH, Tobacco Free Futures (formerly Smokefree North West), Smokefree Yorkshire and the Humber, the NHS, councils, HMRC and police to tackle the demand and supply of illicit tobacco across the North of England.

All cigarettes kill, but illegal tobacco helps to entice children to start smoking and adults to keep smoking because it is cheap and unregulated. The programme launched the “Get Some Answers” campaign to encourage people not to buy and to protect their communities by informing on dealers.



A massive survey of over 4,111 people across the North of England, first carried out in 2009 and repeated in 2011 in the North East and North West, has found that fewer people are

buying illegal tobacco and those buying it are buying less:

- **The total amount of all tobacco consumed has gone down by 27% in the North East**
- **The number of smokers buying illegal tobacco has fallen by 10%, down two percentage points from 20% to 18%**
- **The volume of illegal tobacco bought has gone down by 39% in the North East, estimated to be worth over £36m in duty and VAT evasion**
- **The number of 16-34 year olds buying illegal tobacco has reduced by 5-6%, although 23% of 16-24 year old smokers say they still buy**
- **Nearly half (47%) of smokers who buy do so infrequently (one to three times a year), with only a quarter (24%) being regular buyers (weekly or more frequently)**
- **14 and 15 year olds are twice as likely to buy “illicit” than adults**
- **Awareness of illegal tobacco has increased from 54% to 69% in 2011**
- **Likelihood to report sellers has increased since 2009 amongst non-smokers and smokers, including those who admit to buying illegal tobacco**
- **Only 1% of people who think illegal tobacco is an important issue do so because they feel the trade “is at epidemic proportions around here”, contrary to tobacco industry claims.**

Despite assumptions it's all about tab houses, pubs and clubs are the most likely places smokers (51%) are approached. And the volume share of illicit tobacco sold by shops has increased from 6% up to 13% - suggesting a dishonest minority of traders are selling it to make a fast buck.

A separate report by the UK Centre for Tobacco Control studies, a network of nine universities specialising in public health research, described the programme as “an exemplar of partnership working” which has raised the profile of illegal tobacco regionally and nationally in its importance.

Ailsa Rutter, director of Fresh, said: “The fact we have seen a drop in the illegal tobacco market two years into a recession, when more people are struggling financially and feeling under pressure, just shows the powerful impact of partnership work of all the agencies to tackle this trade.

“The results contradict tobacco industry scaremongering that illegal tobacco is a growing problem. It isn't, but we need to keep up the momentum.”

Richard Ferry, of the North East Trading Standards Association, said: “Fewer people are prepared to turn a blind eye to illegal tobacco. However, its clear this is not just about tab houses and that there are other places like pubs, clubs and shops where illegal tobacco is being sold.”



Forthcoming Fresh event: Illicit tobacco and plain packaging seminar on Tuesday 7th February. See the events section of our website to register.



Chemical Soup - highlighting the toxic cocktail of smoke

A new training programme is taking the facts about lethal smoke out to families and communities.

A cigarette may look harmless enough. But when it burns, it releases a dangerous cocktail of about 4,000 chemicals including:

- at least 80 cancer-causing chemicals like tar, arsenic and formaldehyde
- hundreds of other poisons such as hydrogen cyanide and carbon monoxide
- nicotine, a highly addictive drug, and many additives designed to make cigarettes taste nicer and keep smokers hooked

Chemical Soup is an intervention created by Barnardo's and Manchester NHS stop smoking service. It brings alive the range of noxious chemicals in smoke through a dramatic and eye-catching display of poison bottles, all blending in to make the "soup".

Catherine McConnell, lead trainer for Chemical Soup said: "Fresh has provided each of our 12 local tobacco alliances with a Chemical Soup kit for use locally, via lead Smokefree Families trainers.

"We are encouraging the use of the Chemical Soup intervention to raise awareness of the dangers of tobacco smoke amongst families and people working with children and families."

Raising awareness of what's in secondhand smoke can have a powerful impact on smoking behaviour, as well as quitting intentions. Many smokers aren't aware about the poisons in tobacco. Some wrongly assume it's just the nicotine or tar that's harmful, or that that the worst toxic substances are found only in illegal tobacco.

Others think tobacco sold in white or silver packs, or hand rolled tobacco, will help reduce the risks they are storing up for the future.



In South Tyneside, the kit has already been used during a secondhand smoke awareness session with peer educators in year 8. Pupils said seeing just some of the chemicals really hit home how harmful smoking can be to health, with reactions including "with chemical soup, it was easy to visualise what's in a cigarette" and "I've learned that if you smoke, you can get really ill."

In North Tyneside, Smokefree Families trainers are incorporating it into their local training sessions. One delegate was a smoker and was shocked to see what a cigarette contains. She said she wouldn't want the soup to be anywhere near her children and would think twice about her own smoking.

There are number of ways in which the kit can be used – not just by Smokefree Families trainers but other partners such as Stop Smoking Services. It's ideal for field marketing or local training sessions to highlight the impact of smoking on health such as health promotion events or open days/fairs in local children's and community centres.

When it's not in use the soup can make a striking display in the reception of public areas like health centres, children's centres reception and libraries – especially alongside "Take 7 Steps Out" or Smokefree Families leaflets.

A "good practice" guide will be developed by Fresh to demonstrate the successful experiences of local Smokefree Families trainers and their partners who have used the kit.

"Take 7 Steps Out" is a top message in Gateshead

The last 18 months has seen extensive work done with schools, children's centres and community groups to promote second-hand smoke messages in Gateshead.

A 2010 baseline survey out in Wrekenton found 52% of homes didn't allow smoking. In November 2011, that figure had increased to 62%. The Gateshead Take 7 Steps Out Smokefree Home pledge has also resulted in a majority reporting positive changes to their smoking habits after contact with an advisor.

The "Take 7 Steps Out" message has been shown to have a strong marketing recall with the public. A total of 58.4% of respondents in Wrekenton said that they had heard about the campaign, with 89% of those saying that they had seen the TV adverts.



Out of sight and out of mind

Point of sale display regulations

JUST before Christmas, the major tobacco companies dropped their case against the Department of Health for a judicial review around the point of sale legislation. This is really welcome news and means that full preparation can be given to the implementation of the new legislation from 6th April 2012 for large retailers. Guidance has now been published to help trading standards and businesses to prepare for this welcome legislation which will help to protect children and young people from tobacco promotion.

Pound for pound, still our biggest killer



New statistics show the shocking cost of smoking to the North East in lives, health and wealth

NEW figures show for the first time the true cost of smoking to the North East in lives lost, illness and the toll on finances - costing the region over £210 million every year.

The statistics from Brunel University combined with existing figures from the North East Public Health Observatory reveal the toll smoking inflicts in lives lost, illness and the resulting cost on the NHS, local authorities and private business.

Despite the North East having the largest drop in smoking in England over the past few years, smoking-related diseases still cost the NHS in the North East over £105 million every year, with more than:

- **£53 million spent on 27,000 smoking-related hospital admissions each year**
- **Over £17.9 million in Outpatient appointments annually**
- **Over £19.5 million spent on GP consultations annually.**
- **Over £12.6m in prescription costs annually**
- **Over £1.9m in nurse consultations annually**

It is not just the NHS and taxpayers who bear the cost of smoking. Smoking is estimated to cost employers in the North East around £70 million a year through increased absenteeism, with 335,000 days lost each year to increased absenteeism due to smoking. Absenteeism alone is estimated to cost employers around £34.5 million per year, with the remaining losses due to smoking breaks.

The effects of passive smoking are calculated by Brunel to cost the North East around £35.9 million each year, with by far the biggest burden falling on children exposed to the dangers of secondhand smoke.

✱ Deaths from Smoking



Smoking causes almost **90%** of deaths from lung cancer, around **80%** of deaths from COPD and around **17%** of deaths from heart disease. That breaks down every year in the North East to:

- **538 deaths from COPD**
- **593 deaths from heart disease**
- **848 deaths from lung cancer**
- **183 deaths from stroke**
- **2056 deaths from other diseases such respiratory disease and cancers of the oesophagus, kidney, throat, bladder and stomach.**

✱ Diseases from Smoking

If smoking levels remain unchanged, the North East will experience an ongoing burden to the NHS from new cases of smoking related disease being diagnosed each year.

Disease	Cases each year over next decade in the North East if smoking rates remained the same
Lung cancer	1,785
Coronary heart disease	48,374
COPD	10,462
Heart attacks	20,974
Strokes	12,586

The statistics from Brunel University also estimate the value provided by Fresh, the first regional tobacco control programme in England which was set up in 2005 to tackle the worst rates of smoking in the country.

Over just a two year period, the presence of a regional tobacco programme supporting effective local delivery will save £9.8m in costs of smoking and passive smoking to Primary Care Trusts, hospitals and workplaces, as well as providing more than 20,000 additional smokers quitting successfully.

To find out more go to:
<http://www.brunel.ac.uk/about/acad/herg/research/tobacco>





MARKETING AND CAMPAIGNS

Smokers say “Every breath” made them more likely to quit

TWO thirds of North East smokers who saw a hard hitting, stop smoking campaign by FRESH and backed by Sting have said it made them more likely to quit.

The Every Breath TV campaign which ran throughout October 2011, aimed to encourage people to quit smoking by highlighting the links with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). It was supported by the British Lung Foundation and doctors from across the region.



Beforehand, two thirds (67 per cent) of smokers in the North East said they did not know what COPD was. An independent survey of North East smokers found that 67% of people saw the campaign, and of those:

- **76% said seeing it made them more concerned about their smoking**
- **92% said it was believable**
- **77% found it relevant to them**
- **76% said it made them stop and think**

A shocking radio campaign also invited listeners to participate in a breathing exercise, which simulated the effects of having COPD in its late stages, had similarly high results.

Most smokers who saw the campaign were left in little doubt that being short of breath is often a sign of a more serious problem, which could be related to smoking.

Ailsa Rutter, Director of Fresh said: “Research with smokers still shows a worrying lack of awareness about the range of diseases and the 4,000 chemicals found in real, legal cigarettes. We need to keep ensuring we reach adult smokers with factual messages and to stop young people taking up smoking in the first place.”

Most cases of COPD are caused by smoking and hospital admissions from COPD cost the NHS in the North East £50m a year - but it is estimated that there are more than 32,000 undiagnosed cases in the region.

All too often sufferers dismiss the early warning signs of a cough and breathlessness as a “normal” part of being a smoker.

Vanessa Whittle, from North Shields, who visited North Tyneside Stop Smoking Service after seeing it, said: “I had been considering quitting smoking on and off, but didn’t really have the inspiration to actually do it. Then I saw the advert on TV and it really hit it home that the woman in the advert could be me and I don’t want to end up like that.”

Keep it Out next phase of illegal tobacco public campaign

THE next phase of the campaign against illegal tobacco is due to launch in the late Spring.

Expected to run across PR, radio and digital media, Fresh has been liaising with local tobacco alliances on local needs and requirements for materials.

While the Get Some Answers campaign was about raising then low public awareness about illegal tobacco, Keep It Out will have a more overt call to action to phone Crimestoppers, aimed at generating intelligence for local trading standards departments and HMRC.

No Smoking Day

No Smoking Day takes place on 14 March 2012. On the day more than a million smokers are expected to make a quit attempt.

Most smokers would really like to stop, but find it hard to. So this year the charity is encouraging smokers to “Take the Leap” and give it a go. The theme recognises that giving up is tough, but the positive image and slogan speaks strongly to smokers helping them to aspire to a smokefree future.

“Take the Leap” and its energetic accompanying image aim to echo the UK’s focus on the Olympics, asking smokers to think about their physical health. The campaign also coincides with a leap year – leap day will be an excellent opportunity to help smokers prepare to Take the Leap two weeks later on 14 March.

Fresh is supporting Alliances through a contribution towards their No Smoking Day plans and once again, will be generating publicity around the event from February.

Latest News

- Fresh has been awarded the Charles Cully Memorial Medal by the Irish Cancer Society for its contribution to tobacco control.
- The lives of almost 80,000 heart attack victims in England have been saved in just under a decade as deaths have halved due to quitting smoking, better diets and treatment, according to Oxford University. There were 18,576 fewer deaths from heart attacks in 2010 compared with 2002. The drop in the North East is 54.4% - greater than the national average of 49.4% in England.

For more information on any of these stories, to register for events or to receive regular updates, contact us on 0191 387 2139 or email info@freshne.com

