

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET

Stopping the Start: the Government's plans to create a smokefree generation and local intentions for implementation. Strategic Briefing

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- To provide a briefing for members concerning the government's announced plans to create a smokefree generation. This includes making additional investments in stop smoking support, protecting children from vaping, and increased enforcement of new legislation concerning the supply of tobacco products.
- To seek approval for the Director of Public Health to write to local MPs asking them to support the proposed legislation.
- To introduce the proposed Position Statement on Vaping and Smoking on behalf of the Northern Lincolnshire Smokefree Alliance.
- To outline intentions to expand the smoking cessation offer in North Lincolnshire in terms of capacity and reach, enhancing partnership and strategic links, and aligning with emerging behaviour change models and the One Family Approach

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2.1 Overview

The Rt Hon Steve Barclay MP, Secretary of State for Health and Social Care has written to Directors of Public Health, and to other leaders in health care, to inform them of the Government's proposals, described as an historic plan, to create a 'smokefree generation' and to update on vaping proposals.

The proposals were outlined by the Prime Minister in his speech to the Conservative Party Conference on 4th Oct this year and will form the basis of the Tobacco and Vapes Bill, announced in the King's Speech on 7th November and to be voted on in Parliament within the current parliamentary session.

2.2 **Stopping the Start: the Government's plans to create a smokefree generation**

- Proposed new legislation means that any child who turns 14 this year will never legally be able to buy tobacco, effectively raising the smoking age by a year each year.
- From an enforcement perspective, the emphasis will be on those who sell tobacco products. People who smoke, and who obtain cigarettes in contravention of the proposed legislation will not be committing an offence. The Government does not want to criminalise smoking.

2.3 **Helping current smokers to quit**

- The Government will more than double the funding available for stop smoking services, investing an additional £70 million a year over the next five years to expand locally delivered and cost-effective services.
- The proposed increase applying to North Lincolnshire will be £223k. This will come to North Lincolnshire Council specifically to increase capacity in stop smoking support.
- The Government will also be providing an additional £5 million this year and then £15 million a year thereafter to fund national anti-smoking marketing campaigns.

2.4 **One Family Approach**

A one family approach will be taken to reducing the harm caused by tobacco within families and homes in North Lincolnshire. This will consider the impact on families from ill health caused by smoking, both to the smoker and to those affected by passive smoking. If a person who smokes becomes ill through smoking the effect will be felt throughout the family in terms of emotional effects, the economic impacts through lost earnings, and caring responsibilities. This can be detrimental to child development and have wider health impacts to the family beyond the smoker.

- For this reason we will take an intelligence-led approach to smoking cessation, targeting support in proportion to need, with communities most likely to experience the greater impacts of smoking receiving the most targeted support.
- We will work with those in the statutory and voluntary sector, providing support to families to equip them with training in brief advice models and MECC to better enable them to discuss the impacts of smoking with families, to signpost stop smoking support. Where possible this will link with smoking cessation support to ensure that services are delivered in the right places in the right manner, be this community centres, family hubs, or other locations.
- We will use the additional investment for stop smoking support in a way that enables families to be better protected from the harms of tobacco, not only for the duration of a stop smoking support programme, but to remain smokefree for life.

- We will ensure that wherever possible, where people choose to stop smoking they do so together with others in their home and family, providing mutual encouragement and support.
- We will promote smokefree spaces, including smokefree homes, playgrounds and school entrances, to remove the risk to children from passive smoking and to reduce the visibility of smoking to children and young people, so they do not see it as a normal activity.
- Through a proposed resilience programme we will offer support to schools to reduce the uptake of smoking among children and young people, and deliver interventions in our colleges.
- We will use the new government funding to work across the system to transform our stop smoking support offer using a One Family approach

2.5 Behaviour Change Campaigns

The most effective way to reduce the harm caused by smoking is to combine smoking cessation support with techniques for influencing long term behaviour change.

- We will develop a communications strategy for smoking cessation, in line with that to be put forward by the Department of Health but responding to local need, attitudes and patterns of behaviour.
- We will use insights gained through our health inequalities work to produce behavioural insights campaigns, co-designed with communities, to reduce the uptake of smoking and to encourage people to stop smoking.
- We will apply methods of communication that lie beyond merely imparting information, for example influencing social norms which work across communities to promote health in a positive manner.
- A key component of this work will be to influence the way in which many people regard illicit tobacco, seeing it for the way in which it enables organised crime gangs to access our communities. Therefore, we will increase support for enforcement activity, and increase the flow of intelligence which enables enforcement work to take place.

2.6 Protecting children from vaping

- The government has also announced a further major crackdown on youth vaping in England. Whilst ensuring that vapes continue to be available to current adult smokers, vital to reducing smoking rates, the number of children using vapes has tripled in the past 3 years and 20.5% of children have tried vaping in 2023.
- Due to the nicotine content, vaping carries a risk of harm and addiction for children. The health advice is clear: young people and those who have never smoked should not vape.
- The proposals include restricting flavours, regulating point of sale displays, regulating packaging and presentation, considering restricting the sale of disposable vapes, and closing loopholes in the law on free samples and non-nicotine vapes.

- A consultation is now open, ending 7th December, to gather the best evidence on tackling smoking and the most effective options to reduce youth vaping, whilst ensuring they are still accessible to adult smokers. [Creating a smokefree generation and tackling youth vaping - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/creating-a-smokefree-generation-and-tackling-youth-vaping)

2.7 Position Statement on Vaping and Tobacco Control

Currently in production, this will provide a clear statement of the intentions of the Director of Public Health, and of the Northern Lincolnshire Smokefree Alliance about the current and future approach across Northern Lincolnshire. In summary the focus will be:

- Continuing to support those who want to stop smoking through evidence-based support which includes the use of vapes, only as part of a quit attempt.
- Evidence based smoking cessation support will be delivered with specific targets for routine and manual groups, and those in communities where smoking behaviour is more entrenched, to reduce smoking rates and increase quitting.
- Supporting pregnant smokers, their partners and others who are significant in their lives to quit.
- Developing a smokefree environment that denormalises smoking and prevents others being affected by second-hand smoke.
- Preventing young people from taking up smoking.
- Making both cigarettes and vaping devices less attractive to all non-smokers, with a particular focus on preventing their use by children and young people.
- Refreshing and re-energising local tobacco control action.

2.8 Swap to Stop

North Lincolnshire Council, through Public Health and the Healthy Lifestyle Service, will benefit from participation in the Government's Swap to Stop initiative, being part of the pathfinder project. This will make vapes available to people who use local stop smoking services as (and only as) part of a supported quit programme. Although in the early stage of planning, this initiative will be focussed on addressing the health inequalities associated with communities in which smoking behaviour is most entrenched. This is in addition to participation in a similar Vape to Quit campaign funded by a Yorkshire Cancer Research.

2.9 Enforcement

- The government intends UK-wide action to ensure that illegal supply of tobacco does not increase. Enforcement activity will be strengthened, with an investment of £30 million per year over the next five years to support agencies including local Trading Standards, HMRC and Border Force to

take action to stop underage sales and tackle the import of illicit tobacco and vaping products at the border.

- The Government will also introduce on-the-spot fines in England for retailers who commit underage sales and take further steps to enhance online age verification so that age of sale law is enforced across both online and face-to-face sales.
- Through the Northern Lincolnshire Smokefree Alliance and regional partnerships we will explore opportunities to take advantage of this action, combined with existing local action, in a targeted and proactive manner.

2.10 The Northern Lincolnshire Smokefree Alliance

- Work to reduce the harm of smoking in North and North East Lincolnshire is led by the Northern Lincolnshire Smokefree Alliance. This is a public health led collaborative group, consisting of a wide range of members from local government, health, business and voluntary sector. It leads the delivery of the local tobacco control plan.
- This group meets quarterly and delivers work through a number of subgroups. It is chaired by the Director of Public Health for North and North East Lincolnshire.
- The alliance will review and develop the local tobacco control plan, taking full advantage of the opportunities of the new legislation and policy drive.

2.11 The Tobacco and Vapes Bill

- The King's Speech to parliament on 7th November 2023 included the historic Tobacco and Vapes Bill. The Bill will include the steps outlined above. The Bill will be introduced in this parliamentary session, as soon as parliamentary time allows.
- The vote will be a free vote, many Directors of Public Health are writing to local MPs asking them to support the passage of the Bill.

3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- 3.1 It is recommended that the elements of the government's plan as outlined in this report be noted and it is recommended that support be given to this plan.
- 3.2 It is recommended that NLC's public health team begin a review of models of stop smoking support, in line with the intentions described above, utilising the existing expenditure from the public health grant and the additional expenditure announced in these plans.
- 3.3 It is recommended that endorsement be given to the Director of Public Health to write to local MPs asking them to support the government's proposed plans in the upcoming vote.

4. ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

- 4.1 The government's plan has clear implications for public health in North Lincolnshire. Tobacco use is the single biggest cause of mortality and ill health, and is the greatest contributor to health inequalities. The plan will

introduce measures to further reduce smoking and tobacco use, thereby removing this cause. The impact on health, wellbeing and the economy in North Lincolnshire will be entirely positive.

- 4.2 Significant additional investment will come to public health in North Lincolnshire to provide increased capacity for stop smoking support. The current model of stop smoking support in North Lincolnshire was developed in 2017 and there have been a number of external developments since, including the approach to using vapes as stop smoking aids, and the introduction of the NHS Long Term Plan, which has seen the development of stop smoking support provided in hospitals and to pregnant smokers, formerly the domain of our services. To gain maximum impact from the current and additional investment, taking full account of the political, legislative and technological environment now in place, a review of the model of local top smoking delivery would be advantageous.
- 4.3 Support from local MPs will be vital to the passing of the Bill.

5. FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (e.g. LEGAL, HR, PROPERTY, IT, COMMUNICATIONS etc.)

- 5.1 There are no financial or resource costs associated with this report. As outlined above, funding will be provided by the government for local implementation, specifically for providing increased capacity for top smoking support.

6. OTHER RELEVANT IMPLICATIONS (e.g. CRIME AND DISORDER, EQUALITIES, COUNCIL PLAN, ENVIRONMENTAL, RISK etc.)

- 6.1 The government's proposed plans present a significant public health opportunity to improve health, improve life expectancy and contribute positively to the local economy.
- 6.2 There are no implications under the Equalities Act 2010.
- 6.3 The report directly supports the priorities of the Council Plan, particularly those relating to keeping our population safe and well, specifically through targeting the single biggest cause of ill health and premature death for our population.
- 6.4 There are no implications that would impact on the Council's commitment to be a carbon net zero organisation by 2030.

7. OUTCOMES OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IF APPLICABLE)

- 7.1 Not applicable.

8. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION AND CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS DECLARED

- 8.1 There are no conflicts of interest.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 It is recommended that options 3.1 to 3.3 above be fully endorsed.

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Background Papers used in the preparation of this report –

The attached appendix provides further information through the following sections:

2.12 The need for action

2.13 The economic impact of smoking

2.14 Specific targets and performance in North Lincolnshire

