

Achieving Smokefree 2030 – Cutting smoking and stopping underage vaping

Purpose of Report

For direction.

Summary

This report provides the context to the presentation from Richard Boden, Head of Tobacco Control and Gambling, Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID), who will give an update on the policy announcement made on 19 April 2023 and will seek the views of the Community Wellbeing Board.

The report sets out the proposed policy lines in respect of the strategy and seeks the views of Board members.

LGA Plan Theme: Putting people first

Recommendation

That the Community Wellbeing Board discuss ‘achieving a smokefree 2030: cutting smoking and stopping children vaping’.

Contact details

Contact officer: Paul Ogden

Position: Senior Policy Adviser (public health)

Phone no: 02076643277

Email: paul.ogden@local.gov.uk

Achieving Smokefree 2030 – Cutting smoking and stopping underage vaping

Background

1. Smoking remains the leading cause of preventable death in England. Every day more than 200 people in England die from smoking-related disease and 280 children under 16 have their first cigarette. Two thirds of those smoking one cigarette will go on to become addicted, taking on average thirty attempts before they successfully quit for good.
2. In 2019 the government committed to making England smokefree by 2030.
3. Last month the government [announced plans](#) for a world-first ‘swap to stop’ scheme encouraging smokers to make the switch to vaping by providing starter vape kits and behavioural support.
4. This campaign, along with offering financial incentives for pregnant women who quit smoking, are hoped to deliver on the Government's ambition to make the country smoke free by 2030.
5. The ‘swap to stop’ scheme will encourage one million smokers to make the switch from smoking to vaping with the hopes of not only cutting smoking rates but also improving the health of the nation. Almost one in five of all smokers in England will be provided with a free starter vape kit and behavioural support in this [world-first national scheme](#) to help adult smokers quit.
6. Another scheme announced as part of this crackdown on smoking is the introduction of financial incentive being offered to pregnant smokers who quit, following the success of similar local schemes. This initiative is expected to be offered to all pregnant women who smoke by the end of this year, and will include vouchers along with behavioural support to assist in a stop smoking attempt.
7. It is hoped that by supporting more women to have a smoke free pregnancy we will see a reduction in the number of smoking-related complications such as babies born underweight or underdeveloped and requiring neonatal and ongoing care. It is hoped it will also reduce the risk of miscarriage and stillbirth and result in more healthy pregnancies.
8. The Government also revealed plans for a new ‘illicit vapes enforcement squad’ which will be backed by £3 million of government funding with the intention of enforcing the rules on vaping and tackling illegal sales. The enforcement squad

will be led by Trading Standards and will work across the country undertaking projects such as test purchasing at convenience stores and vape shops, and will have the power to remove illegal products from shops and at our borders.

9. The full statement is available [here](#)

Current LGA position

10. Richard Boden, Head of Tobacco and Gambling, OHID will attend the meeting to provide an update on the scope and content of the strategy, provide information on arrangements to engage local government stakeholders and to seek the views of the Community Wellbeing Board.
11. The meeting will also be an opportunity for members to re-visit the LGA's key policy messages in respect of Tobacco.
12. The LGA believes that vapes need to be out-of-sight and out-of-reach of children in the same way as cigarettes. It is not right that stores are able to prominently display vaping paraphernalia for all to see, such as in a shop window, often in bright, colourful packaging and attractive flavours that can appeal to children.
13. Vapes should only be used as an aid to quit smoking. While research has shown vaping poses a small fraction of the risks of smoking, it is deeply worrying that more and more children – who have never smoked – are starting vaping. The evidence suggests that vaping is by no means risk-free, and so it is very alarming that young people are getting access to and using e-cigarettes.
14. An area that is of growing concern in relation to vaping is the effect on the environment, particularly “disposable” vapes. Councils report they are experiencing pollution from vapes in the form of plastic materials, electronic waste (including circuit boards and lithium-ion batteries), and hazardous chemicals. E-cigarette manufacturers and vendors could do more to ensure consumers dispose of their waste in a more environmentally friendly way.
15. Across the country, council public health teams work hard to help reduce smoking rates in their areas, alongside local charities and community groups, and it is testament to their efforts that smoking rates continue to fall. Councils commission integrated lifestyle services that offer support to all smokers. It includes face-to-face support, specialist support for pregnant women, Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT), support from local pharmacies and in some areas, their own digital apps, including specialist text helplines for young people.
16. Whilst the £3m for Trading Standards is welcomed, it falls a long way short of the funding needed. Local councils' public health grant has been cut by 24 per

cent on a real-terms per capita basis since 2015/16 (equivalent to a reduction of £1 billion). This has had an adverse effect on councils' ability to invest in services and functions that prevent ill health, reduce health inequalities and support a sustainable health and social care system. This includes smoking cessation and tobacco control.

17. The Board is requested to consider and agree the above messages as the key priorities in the LGA response to the Smokefree 2030 strategy.

Implications for Wales

18. Health is a devolved responsibility and, therefore, the Strategy will apply only to England.

Financial Implications

19. We do not yet have sufficient information on the Smokefree 2030 proposals to identify whether there will be any financial implications for local government in implementation any of the proposals in the strategy.

Equalities implications

20. We do not yet have sufficient detail on the strategy to understand the equalities implications. Smoking is far more common among people with lower incomes. The more disadvantaged someone is, the more likely they are to smoke and to suffer from smoking-related disease and premature death. Smoking related health inequalities are not restricted to socio-economic status.
21. The poorer health of people in the north of England compared to the south is in part due to higher rates of smoking in the north. Smoking rates are also higher among people with a mental health condition, people in contact with the criminal justice system, looked-after children, and LGBT people.

Next steps

22. The Community Wellbeing Board is requested to agree that LGA's key priorities in our response to the Smokefree 2030 Strategy.