

ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**13TH MARCH 2019**

REPORT TITLE	Smokefree Wirral
REPORT OF	Julie Webster, Acting Director for Health and Wellbeing Rebecca Mellor, Senior Public Health Manager

REPORT SUMMARY

Smoking is a major contributor towards health inequalities in the borough and remains the greatest risk factor for poor health and early death. Smoking prevalence has fallen slowly since the 1970s, but a faster pace of change is possible which would mean more lives saved and greater productivity in the borough.

The purpose of this report is to provide members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee further detail on Wirral Partnership's Smokefree strategy and some of the key challenges and opportunities in relation to helping local people live a tobacco free life; helping to make smoking less acceptable and putting young people off starting.

This report affects all wards within the Borough; it does not contain any key decisions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that The Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the Smokefree Wirral Strategy update and the opportunities identified by the CLear assessment and the NHS Long Term Plan for developing excellence in local tobacco control.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

Our vision is to create a Smokefree Wirral – to achieve this we need to shift emphasis from action at the national level - legislation and mandation of services to focused, local action, supporting smokers, particularly in disadvantaged groups, to quit.

Smoke-free legislation introduced in 2017 was one of the most important public health measures ever to be introduced in the UK and today is often used as an example of how policy change can improve population health. To support a Smokefree Wirral we require collaborative effort from the public, private and voluntary sectors and amongst individuals, families and communities.

In 2018, Wirral Partners participated in the Public Health England CLear¹ improvement process to ensure local action on tobacco control was achieving our vision. This process led to a number of recommendations which are included in this report.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

This report has been developed in response to the suggestion by members of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to provide an update on local action to create a Smokefree Wirral.

Tackling tobacco is a key strand of the Wirral 2020 Plan pledge “*Wirral Residents Live Healthier Lives*” and sits within a much broader set of actions designed to address tobacco control and smoking cessation. However tackling tobacco is everybody’s business.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Too many people in Wirral are still smoking, one in six people smoke (approximately 41,000 adults smoke). Smoking rates remain higher amongst those in our communities who already suffer from poorer health and other disadvantages. One in four people doing jobs classed as routine and manual are much more likely than average to smoke. One in 8 pregnant women are still smoking at time of delivery (348 women per year) with all the attendant risks of miscarriage, premature birth, still birth and neonatal complications.

There is no single effective solution. Without action across **agencies, sectors and with local people** the health of individuals will continue to suffer, health inequalities associated with smoking will remain and the economic and social costs will increase to unsustainable levels.

The Smokefree Wirral Strategy was developed using local insight and evidence to determine the key areas for action. These are:

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/clear-local-tobacco-control-assessment/the-clear-improvement-model-excellence-in-tobacco-control>

- **Ensuring people understand the risks of smoking and how to quit**

There are significant cost implications associated with long term smoking particularly in patients with chronic long-term health conditions. Helping patients to stop smoking can impact on their quality of life and on healthcare resources. National research² shows that smoking not only contributes to the social care bill but also has a significant impact on the wellbeing of smokers who need care on average nine years earlier than non-smokers.

- **Supporting those who want to quit**

During 2017/2018, Wirral's stop smoking service ABL supported over 1,500 people to quit smoking. Supporting our local people who want to quit is a shared responsibility and progress depends on supporting people to live healthier lives. At a local level, there is the opportunity to go beyond educating people about the harms of smoking to tackling key local environmental drivers of smoking.

- **Creating healthy smokefree environments**

The National Tobacco Control Plan³ recommends creating an environment which encourages smokers to quit.

Our local environment is an important influence on health behaviours. Smokefree places can reduce cigarette litter, set positive role models for children and help to normalise a smoke free lifestyle. An essential element of this is to create more and more smokefree environments and spaces across our communities so that we can challenge the norm of smoking.

- **Taking action on illegal tobacco activity**

The sale of illicit tobacco undermines public health policy by offering a cheaper option for those who might otherwise see price as a reason to stop smoking. Illicit tobacco damages legitimate business and makes tobacco more accessible to children. Tobacco smuggling is serious organised crime and the proceeds made from it are used to fund further criminality, perpetuating the cycle of harm.

Trading standards officers play a key role working closely with businesses to raise their awareness of their legal requirements and ensure compliance. However, the issue of illegal tobacco is complex, continued engagement with the local media to raise awareness of tobacco duty evasion, its effect on society and the consequences for those involved in the fraud.

Next steps

In 2018 Wirral took part in a CLear assessment of its Tobacco Control Strategy. This is a process designed to assess local delivery plans via a self-assessment process and peer review that resources are being invested wisely in tobacco control and smoking cessation

² Reed. H (2017). The cost of Smoking to the Social Care System in England. www.ash.org.uk/SocialCareCosts

³ Department of Health, (2017). Towards a Smokefree Generation. A Tobacco Control Plan for England. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/630217/Towards_a_Smoke_free_Generation_-_A_Tobacco_Control_Plan_for_England_2017-2022_2_.pdf

and that local strategies are delivering. The recommendations from the 2018 assessment were:

- Ensure a wider ownership of the strategic goals
- Highlight the need for continued focus on tobacco control given the significant impact on health inequalities
- Develop a vision for Wirral that incorporates partner action
- Involve the wider partnership in refreshing the action plan and include SMART objectives
- Engage more advocacy for effective population tobacco control levers
- Develop an understanding and awareness of the tobacco industry among elected members and wider stakeholders.
- Smoking in pregnancy remains a challenging areas and greater commitment is needed at a senior level within the acute trust
- Engage partners in a strategic comprehensive approach to media and communication
- Embed tobacco control into the routine work of trading standards
- Engage more with local communities regarding action for a voluntary code for outdoor areas
- A smokefree NHS should lead by example
- Build a broader consensus for tobacco control across a wide range of council functions and partnership agenda, for example community safety, children and young people, debt management and economic prosperity.

In December 2018, the NHS Long Term Plan⁴ (LTP) was published with an emphasis on prevention of poor health. The LTP recognises good health is about more than healthcare alone, and that to be implemented effectively the NHS must work in partnership with local government. The LTP advocates stepping up smoking cessation in hospital trusts; a new smoke-free pregnancy pathway for expectant mothers and their partners, so the entire family can be treated together, and a new universal smoking cessation offer will be made available as part of specialist mental health services. This will include the option to switch to e-cigarettes while in inpatient settings.

4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is proposed that the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the Smokefree Wirral Strategy update and the opportunities identified by the CLear assessment and the NHS Long Term Plan for developing excellence in local tobacco control.

These opportunities include:

- Encouraging a clean, healthy environment with a focus on children and young people's settings
- Opportunities for local businesses and organisations to operate smokefree sites
- The development of regeneration plans to include smokefree parks, play areas, high streets, areas of beaches and country parks, NHS sites and Council sites

⁴The NHS Long Term Plan: 10 key public health points (2019) <https://publichealthmatters.blog.gov.uk/2019/01/08/the-nhs-long-term-plan-10-key-public-health-points/>

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

6.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no additional legal implications arising directly from this report.

7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: ICT, STAFFING AND ASSETS

There are no resource implication arising directly from this report

8.0 RELEVANT RISKS

If the actions outlined in this report do not progress it is highly likely that the trends, we are observing in increasing levels of people who smoke in our poorer areas continue.

9.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

Engagement issues are considered within the report.

10.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATION

An equality impact assessment has not been completed due to the nature of this report.

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APPENDICES

None

REFERENCE MATERIAL

[Wirral Smokefree Strategy](#)

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date