

This newsletter gives a brief update on information and events relating to tobacco control. If you would like to receive regular copies of this update, please contact me at lesleythomas@nhs.net.

Lesley Thomas
Co-ordinator, Smokefree Devon Alliance
County Hall, Devon
Tel: 01392 267780

The Plain Packs Campaign

The Government launched its consultation on Plain Packaging for tobacco in April. This campaign aims to protect children as there is evidence that tobacco branding is used as an effective marketing tool and that removal of branding could reduce the numbers of children taking up smoking. From brightly coloured packs that appear to be crayon boxes at first glance, to 'slims' designed to conjure up an image of a more elegant lifestyle, supermarket shelves are crammed full of enticing and sophisticated designs. Further information on this can be found at <http://www.smokefreeaction.org.uk/files/docs/BriefingPPsum.pdf>. Smokefree South West has spearheaded this national campaign.



The Alliance supported activity in Devon by running a 'coconut shy' stand at the Devon County Show in May. This generated over 1,300 pledges of support. The Alliance also sent a detailed response on 16th May to the questions posed in the consultation. **If you have not yet logged your support with the Government, please take a moment to do so at**

www.plainpacksprotect.co.uk. Nearly 75,000 have supported it so far. This consultation closes on 10th July 2012.

Central Devon MP Mel Stride has been publicly supportive. He said:

"I want to see a huge cut in the number of children and young people who take up smoking, and will support innovative approaches, such as plain packaging, to achieve this. Australia has passed legislation to bring in plain packaging for cigarettes by the end of this year, and I commend the Government's intention to consult on whether plain, standardised packaging for tobacco would work here."

The tobacco industry is extremely concerned about this consultation.

"In the absence of any other Marketing messages, our packaging -- comprised of the trademark, our design, color and information -- is the sole communicator of our brand essence. Put another way -- when you don't have anything else -- our packaging is our Marketing." Philip Morris¹

Budget 2012: Tobacco duty rises by 5%

In the March budget the Chancellor of the Exchequer, George Osborne, increased the duty on tobacco products to 5% above inflation, in line with a submission made by Action on Smoking on Health (ASH). The Chancellor acknowledged that *"smoking remains the biggest cause of preventable illness and premature death in the UK"*, adding that *"there is clear evidence that increasing the cost of tobacco encourages smokers to quit and discourages youths from taking it up"*.

North Devon District Hospital goes Smokefree



North Devon District Hospital has become a smokefree site by banning smoking in the grounds and removing a smoking shelter.

In a campaign supported by Smokefree South West and the Devon NHS Stop Smoking Service, new smokefree signage has been installed and support is offered to staff, patients and visitors to help them stop smoking or manage their cravings whilst at the hospital. This includes referral to the stop smoking service and the provision on prescription of nicotine replacement therapy. New clinics are running on Thursdays and Fridays. The hospital is following the example of all other acute hospitals in the South West who have gone smokefree.

¹ Mark Hulit, [Marketing Issues Corporate Affairs Conference](#), Philip Morris, Manila, 27 May 1994

Electronic Cigarettes

An electronic cigarette (e-cigarette) is an electronic device that produces an inhaled nicotine vapour. Since the nicotine is heated by a battery, it produces a faster 'hit' for the user. There are some concerns about their use and the British Medical Association's Board of Science has prepared a report which can be seen at



http://www.bma.org.uk/health_promotion_ethics/tobacco/ecigarettespublicplaces.jsp. There are concerns over a lack of regulation as e-cigarettes are not a tobacco product, nor a medicine, and there is no peer reviewed evidence that they are a safe and effective nicotine replacement therapy. Therefore health professionals should not recommend the use of e-cigarettes as a smoking cessation aid or a lower risk option than continuing to smoke due to a lack of evidence of their safety and efficacy.

Brief Training on Smokefree Homes and Cars

A new smokefree homes & cars training module is now available on the National Centre for Smoking Cessation Training (NCSCCT) website and can be accessed through this link: www.ncsct.co.uk/SHS.



This free online training module has been developed for anyone who comes into contact with smokers and their families. There are short film clips to demonstrate possible interactions with families, building

knowledge and skills to deliver the intervention, along with information on the harms caused by second-hand smoke and why it is important to raise the issue. There is also a short assessment with a certificate available on successful completion to provide evidence of continuing professional development (CPD).

All relevant health professionals can access the training in order to improve/refresh their knowledge and skills in this area.

The introductory film can also be viewed on the You Tube site www.youtube.com/NCSCCTfilms.

Smokefree Homes

Following phase one and two, the South West Smokefree Homes campaign has evaluated positively. Over 20,000 leaflets and posters were distributed. Results are:-

- 29% of smokers claimed to have made some change in their smoking behaviour as a result of the campaign (Source: LVQ Research)
- 50% of smokers are now claiming 'I never smoke in the home' - up from 42% before the campaign was launched (Source: LVQ Research)
- The 2012 Annual YouGov survey has shown a 6% drop in numbers of people smoking in the home in the South West since the campaign was launched.



A further wave of the campaign will be launched this summer. Resources can still be obtained from www.smokeoutside.co.uk/resources.

Launch of new website that monitors the tobacco industry

A ground-breaking new online resource called www.TobaccoTactics.org has been launched by researchers at the Tobacco Control Research Unit.

TobaccoTactics aims to provide up-to-date information on the tobacco industry, its allies or those promoting a pro-tobacco agenda. The website explores how the industry influences, and often distorts, public health debates using a whole raft of lobbying and public relations tactics.

It also details the downside of publishing scientific research on smoking and health; from online character assassination to death threats. The website reveals how public health researchers and campaigners are being inundated with Freedom of Information requests.

For more information on the work of the Smokefree Devon Alliance contact:

Lesley Thomas

Co-ordinator, Smokefree Devon Alliance

Room 266, County Hall, Topsham Road, Exeter, Devon EX2 4QL

Tel: 01392 267780 email: lesleythomas@nhs.net