

Local Government Declaration on Tobacco Control

Implementing and Embedding the Local Government Declaration

The Local Government Declaration is a statement of a council's commitment to ensure tobacco control is part of mainstream public health work.

For some authorities, implementing the Declaration will be an acknowledgment of ongoing best practice activities whereas for others there may be areas where further action is needed. However, while the actions you take will depend on local practice, it's important to bear in mind that the Declaration is designed to be an active document and it shouldn't be left to gather dust on the shelf.

Regardless of what actions need to be taken, it is important to remember that all the commitments in the Declaration are contained in existing policies, strategies and treaties which local authorities are subject to. The Declaration reaffirms these commitments and adds the weight of local council leadership.

For many local authorities the most appropriate route for ensuring implementation of the Declaration will be through the Health and Wellbeing Board, which can be tasked with assessing current practice and establishing a clear way forward.

The rest of this document contains examples of specific actions you may wish to consider taking for each of the commitments of the Declaration.

If you would like further advice on how your council can implement the Declaration, please email admin@smokefreeaction.org.uk for support and advice.

Actions to consider when signing the Declaration

Communicating the commitment the Council has made

The Declaration is signed at the most senior level of the Council and it commits the whole organisation to take action. Therefore, communicating the commitments made in the Declaration both internally to employees and externally to partner organisations and members of the public is an important step in implementing the Declaration.

Actions to facilitate this could include:

- Displaying the signed Statement prominently within your council buildings
- Review relevant existing council policies to ensure they are in line with the Declaration
- Including news of the Declaration signing in internal communications
- Publicising the Declaration in local media and council newsletters. Options for doing so include:
 - A press release and photo with the Declaration signatories. See an example from [York Council](#) and [Doncaster Council](#).
 - Combining signing the Declaration with action on illegal tobacco sales/under-age sales in the local area. For example, the [Royal Borough of Greenwich](#) combined

- news of series of spot-checks by trading standards officers on local stores with the news that the council had committed to the Declaration.
- Include local statistics on the harm caused by smoking to your area in your press release and other communications. For local figures see <http://www.ash.org.uk/localtoolkit> and www.tobaccoprofiles.info.
 - Tying in signing the Declaration with a national event or campaign such as [No Smoking Day](#) or [World No Tobacco Day](#). See this press release from [Knowsley Council](#) for an example.

If you'd like a quote from ASH to feature in a local press release, please let us know via admin@smokefreeaction.org.uk.

Agreeing next steps with senior colleagues

The signing of the Declaration will also provide a useful opportunity to consider, through the strategic leadership of your organisation, what actions will help ensure the council meets the commitments contained in the document. Including actions you think should be a priority as recommendations for next steps on the Declaration in any briefing materials prior to the signing might help pave the way for future action.

Specific actions to consider

1. Act at a local level to reduce smoking prevalence and health inequalities;

There is a strong evidence base to demonstrate the effectiveness of various tobacco control policies in reducing smoking rates. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) provides guidance on how to act locally. Steps you can take include:

- Ensuring that your Stop Smoking Service meets NICE guidance ([PH10 Smoking Cessation Services](#); [PH45 Tobacco: harm-reduction approaches to smoking](#))
- Supporting staff to stop smoking in line with NICE guidance ([PH5: Workplace interventions to promote smoking cessation](#)) and ensure staff are trained appropriately to encourage both colleagues and the public to quit (PH1 [Brief interventions and referral for smoking cessation](#))
- Implementing NICE guidance aimed at reducing health inequalities through tobacco control ([PH15 Identifying and supporting people most at risk of dying prematurely](#); [PH39 Smokeless tobacco cessation: South Asian communities](#); [PH26 Quitting smoking in pregnancy and following childbirth](#))

Useful Resources:

- The [NICE local practice collection](#) is a collection of case studies demonstrating how organisations implement NICE guidance.
- Guidance from ASH on how to implement NICE's harm reduction guidance <http://www.smokefreeaction.org.uk/harmreduct.html>.
- For further information on how to implement NICE guidance, this guide may be useful: [Into practice guide: Using NICE guidance and quality standards to improve practice](#)
- [Reducing Health Inequalities: A Smokefree Action Coalition briefing for local authorities](#)

2. Raise the profile of the harm caused by smoking to our communities;

Tobacco use places an enormous burden on our communities, disproportionately affecting the most vulnerable. Action you take to raise the profile of smoking both internally and externally honours your commitment to the Declaration and will help to keep smoking high on the public health agenda. Options include:

- Reporting back to signatories and stakeholders on progress towards Declaration commitments.

Those who signed the Declaration on behalf of the council will have an ongoing interest in how the council is meeting these commitments and the Declaration can be used a tool to ensure ongoing engagement of the strategic leadership. A regular meeting or briefing paper to report back on progress towards Declaration commitments could provide an opportunity to push for action in areas of concern.

- Briefing new elected members on tobacco issues

The individuals in the roles who signed the Declaration may change. There is no need to re-sign the Statement – those who signed did so on behalf of the local authority rather than themselves as individuals. However, as personnel changes, it will be useful to brief new councillors in particular on the commitment the council has made. The Declaration may also provide a useful starting point to talk about the Council's tobacco control work in general. Following May 2014's local elections, ASH produced a short guide on introduction the Declaration to new councillors, available here [[link](#)].

- Convene a Tobacco Alliance

Smoking negatively impacts the whole community, so it's not just councils that have a key role to play. Convening a tobacco alliance can help get both internal and external partners on board and working effectively together to reduce smoking rates and tackle health inequalities as well as broader issues associated with tobacco such a smoking related litter and smoking related fires. The Declaration can provide a useful starting point for the work of a newly formed alliance.

Useful resources:

- The ASH local toolkit contains information and resources on smoking and tobacco control, by English region and down to local authority level, for use by Councillors, officers, tobacco alliances and local decision-makers www.ash.org.uk/localtoolkit.
- Information on the burden of illness and disease caused by smoking, for each local authority in England, can be found at <http://www.tobaccoprofiles.info/tobacco-control>.
- Fresh Smoke Free North East have produced a [Local alliance delivery planning guide](#) that may be useful in planning the work of your Tobacco Alliance.
- ASH Briefings on smoking related [litter](#) and smoking related [fires](#).

3. Develop plans with our partners and local communities to address the causes and impacts of tobacco use, according to our local priorities and securing maximum benefit for our communities;

- Ensure there is a comprehensive tobacco control plan being implemented

The comprehensive approach to tobacco control has been shown to work, significantly reducing smoking prevalence in places such as California, Canada and the UK over the past

two decades. Your organisation should have in place a comprehensive local plan, designed in line with local priorities and objectives. For more information, see the [Tobacco Control Plan for England](#) which outlines the comprehensive approach.

- Work to encourage local NHS organisations to sign the NHS Statement of Support.

The [NHS Statement of Support](#) has been developed as an auxiliary to the Local Government Declaration and is designed to enable the health community to support colleagues in local government in their tobacco control work. Aimed at local NHS organisations, the Statement commits them to take action.

Although public health has transferred to local government, the NHS remains a key partner in tackling the harm caused by tobacco with smoking responsible for 5% of all hospital admissions in those over 35. The ongoing role of the NHS in tobacco control was highlighted recently by the Chief Executive of NHS England in his recent report, [Five-Year Forward View](#). The Statement provides a visible opportunity for NHS organisations to publicly acknowledge the considerable role that addressing smoking can play in improving clinical outcomes and preventing ill health. It is also a public pledge to work with local authorities to protect the local community from the harm caused by smoking.

- Encourage partner and community organisations to commit to tobacco control

Local organisations who are committed to tobacco control can play a key role in helping to reduce smoking prevalence, for example by providing support for staff who want to quit. Nottinghamshire County Council and Nottingham City Council have worked in partnership to create a localised declaration for partners, local community organisations and businesses to sign. The Community Declaration builds on the commitments made in the Local Government Declaration but allows many more organisations to take part, providing a county-wide approach to addressing tobacco use. For more information please email admin@smokefreeaction.org.uk.

- County Councils – encourage District Councils to commit to tobacco control

Although existing services and additional public health capacity varies between district councils, the transfer of public health from the NHS to local authorities enhances every districts' role in improving health outcomes for local residents. If you work for a County Council, encouraging District Councils to commit to action on the harm caused by tobacco could play a key role in improving the health of local communities. As an example of how district engagement in Somerset the County Council has used the Declaration as tool to engage District Councils in tobacco control work, offering a small pot of money to implement Smokefree playgrounds projects for district councils who chose to sign. A full case study of Somerset's experience is available [here](#).

Useful resources

- Comprehensive tobacco control SFAC [postcard](#). Please [email us](#) to order hard copies.
- [Tobacco Control Plan for England](#)
- APPG on Smoking and Health Report: [Inquiry into the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of tobacco control](#)
- NICE's [Tobacco Return on Investment Tool](#)
- ASH's [Ready Reckoner toolkit](#)
- Public Health England's [JSNA Toolkit](#)

- Local Government Declaration Case studies are available [here](#).

4. Participate in local and regional networks for support;

- Acknowledge and share ongoing best practice activities

Acknowledge and share what you're already doing well. Internally, this could involve including work of the tobacco control team in an internal newsletter or sending an email to your wider team outlining the progress you have been making. Externally, you could share best practice with other organisations at regional networks and meetings and by speaking at conferences.

- Work to tackle the illicit trade

Local authorities are key partners in tackling the illicit trade, through trading standards departments and through their local partnerships with police, HMRC and health professionals. However, evidence¹ suggests that tackling illicit tobacco should be done over a larger geography, for example regional partnerships such as the [Tackling Illicit Tobacco for Better Health Programme](#). ASH are happy to signpost and advise on developing an effective supra-national approach in your area.

5. Monitor the progress of our plans against our commitments and publish the results.

- Undertake a CLeaR review

CLeaR is a way for local public health organisations to assess, review and improve their tobacco control work. Public Health England (PHE) is now providing the support and training to undertake those assessments. To find out more, please visit the PHE's [CLeaR local tobacco control assessment page](#) or email CLeaRTobaccoTeam@phe.gov.uk.

- NCSCT audit

This [questionnaire](#) has been developed by the NCSCT to be completed by local stop smoking service providers to help audit their services.

6. Protect our tobacco control strategies from the commercial and vested interests of the tobacco industry by not accepting any partnerships, payments, gifts and services, monetary or in kind or research funding offered by the tobacco industry to officials or employees;

- Developing a policy on protecting health policy from the influence of the tobacco industry

[Article 5.3](#) of the World Health Organisation's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, an international treaty that extends to local Government, and commits organisations to protect health policy from the commercial and vested interests of the tobacco industry. Local authorities should therefore have a clear policy on interaction with the industry.² This is particularly important in light of the recent decision by the MHRA to licence a smoking cessation device owned by the tobacco industry as a medicine.

¹ All Party Parliamentary Group on Smoking and Health, Report on the Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products, <http://www.ash.org.uk/APPGillicit2013> (Accessed 11th April 2013)

² WHO FCTC: <http://www.who.int/fctc/en/>

For guidance please see [ASH Briefing: Developing a policy on contact with the tobacco industry](#) or email admin@smokefreeaction.org.uk. Guidance for Trading Standards on engaging with the tobacco industry is available [here](#).

- Consider your pension investments

The Declaration does not contain specific commitments in relation to Councils' pension fund investments in the tobacco industry. Councils may wish to review these investments. Decisions of this kind must be made by trustees on advice and in accordance with their legal duties. More information is contained in the [ASH/Fair Pensions briefing](#).

7. Support the government in taking action at national level to help local authorities reduce smoking prevalence and health inequalities in our communities;

National action costs very little locally but can have a significant impact on local objectives.

- Responding to Government consultations on new tobacco control policies

To join the SFAC mailing list to be notified of new tobacco control consultations, please email admin@smokefreeaction.org.uk. Strong responses from local government to recent tobacco control consultations have been critical in helping to secure life-saving measures such as standardised packaging and the ban on smoking in cars with children. Template consultation responses will be provided by ASH.

- Amplify national campaigns locally

National campaigns you may wish to adapt for your local area include [No Smoking Day](#), [World No Tobacco Day](#) and Stoptober, which is run by Public Health England.

- Join the Smokefree Action Coalition

The Smokefree Action Coalition is a group of over 300 organisations. You can find out more about the SFAC [here](#) and if you'd like to join please email us at admin@smokefreeaction.org.uk.