

**Report to:**

**Health and Wellbeing Board**

**Relevant Officer:**

Liz Petch, Consultant in Public Health, Blackpool Council

**Relevant Cabinet Member:**

Councillor Jo Farrell, Cabinet Member for Levelling Up:  
People

**Date of Meeting:**

13 December 2023

## **STOPPING THE START- PLAN TO CREATE A SMOKEFREE GENERATION**

### **1.0 Purpose of the report**

1.1 To raise awareness of the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) consultation on “Stopping the start- plan to create a smokefree generation” and provide details of the burden of tobacco addiction on health and society and the reasoning behind the need for large scale change to tackle the issue.

### **2.0 Recommendation(s)**

2.1 To acknowledge the health harms associated with tobacco addiction and note proposals national Government are recommending for action in order to tackle this significant public health issue. All of the proposed recommendations for action are in line with the previously agreed and adopted Tobacco Free Lancashire and South Cumbria Strategy 2023-2028.

### **3.0 Reason for recommendation(s)**

3.1 A national consultation exercise has just closed (6<sup>th</sup> December 2023) but is considered to be the first stage in ongoing discussions and debate as part of the parliamentary process around any planned legislation. This could take months and may not be completed within this parliament.

3.2 Based on previous tobacco legislation, this is an important period to build further public and partner support. It is an opportunity to keep smoking within the media and in the public eye as we know that many smokers also use this time as a trigger for further quit attempts. The rationale for stopping is reinforced when there is framing of messages around how uniquely dangerous and lethal cigarette smoking is.

3.3 The Board must continue to invest in evidence based treatment and prevention programmes for tobacco. This includes new ring-fenced monies for community based tobacco addiction and treatment services; for which we will need to demonstrate

increased leadership capacity and oversight, and increased co-ordination and commissioning capacity to our offers to support smokers to quit. The new monies will come with stringent requirements as it must be in addition to existing funding and will be provided through a new section 31 grant on top of the current public health grant allocations.

### **Impact of tobacco smoking on England and Blackpool**

Tobacco is the single greatest entirely preventable cause of ill health, disability and death in this country, responsible for 64,000 deaths in England a year. No other consumer product kills up to two-thirds of its users. Smoking causes harm throughout people's lives. It is a major risk factor for poor maternal and infant outcomes, significantly increasing the chance of stillbirth and can trigger asthma in children. It leads to people needing care and support on average a decade earlier than they would have otherwise, often while still of working age. Smokers lose an average of ten years of life expectancy, or around one year for every four smoking years.

Smoking causes around 1 in 4 of all UK cancer deaths and is responsible for the great majority of lung cancer cases. Smoking is also a major cause of premature heart disease, stroke and heart failure and increases the risk of dementia in the elderly. Non-smokers are exposed to second-hand smoke (passive smoking) which means that many come to harm through no choice of their own - in particular children, pregnant women, and their babies.

As a result, smoking puts significant pressure on the NHS. Almost every minute of every day someone is admitted to hospital because of smoking, and up to 75,000 GP appointments could be attributed to smoking each month - equivalent to over 100 appointments every hour.

Those who are unemployed, on low incomes or living in areas of deprivation are far more likely to smoke than the general population. Smoking attributable mortality rates are 2.1 times higher in the most deprived local authorities than in the least deprived. In Blackpool, there are 6,400 households pushed into poverty due to spending on tobacco which totals around £2,500 a year for the average smoker.

Most smokers know about these risks and, because of them, want to quit - but the addictive nature of cigarettes means they cannot. Three-quarters of current smokers would never have started if they had the choice again and on average it takes around 30 quit attempts to succeed. The majority of smokers start in their youth and are then addicted for life. More than 4 in 5 smokers start before the age of 20. In short, it is much easier to prevent people from starting smoking in the first place.

It is estimated that the total costs of smoking in England are over £17 billion. This includes an annual £14 billion loss to productivity, through smoking related lost earnings, unemployment, and early death, as well as costs to the NHS and social care of £3 billion.

Action on Smoking and Health (ASH) have estimated that the costs to Blackpool are £184.4million.

3.4 Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy approved by the Council? No

3.5 Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Yes

#### **4.0 Other alternative options to be considered**

4.1 No other options available that will meet the requirements of this strategy

#### **5.0 Council priority**

5.1 The relevant Council priority is:

- 'The economy: Maximising growth and opportunity across Blackpool'
- 'Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience'

#### **6.0 Background and key information**

6.1 **The smokefree 2030 ambition for England** - In 2019, the government published its green paper on preventative health; Advancing our health: prevention in the 2020s. Here, it announced an ambition for England to become 'smokefree' by 2030 – achieved when adult smoking prevalence falls to 5% or less.

**The APPG on Smoking or Health** published a report on delivering a Smokefree 2030 in June 2021 which set out detailed recommendations on how to reduce smoking to 5% by 2030.

The government commissioned Javed Khan to carry out a review into the government's ambition to make England smokefree by 2030. Mr Khan published his independent review, the **Khan Review: making smoking obsolete**, in June 2022 which found that "without further action, England will miss the smokefree 2030 target by at least 7 years, and the poorest areas in society will not meet it until 2044". The review set out a package of 15 recommendations aimed at supporting the 2030 ambition. This included four "critical must dos" for the Government, centered on increasing investment in smokefree policies, increasing the age of sale of tobacco by one year every year, promoting vaping as a smoking cessation tool, and improving the prevention of ill health by offering smokers advice and support to quit at every interaction within the NHS.

Blackpool Council Public Health endorsed the Khan Review and welcomed the overall recommendations.

**Raising the age of sale of tobacco for those born on or after 1 January 2009.** In October 2023, Prime Minister Rishi Sunak set out plans to introduce legislation to prohibit children born on or after 1 January 2009 from legally buying cigarettes in England. This would effectively raise the smoking age by one year, every year, until it applies to the whole population. The government would also prohibit people above the age of sale from purchasing tobacco products for people below the age of sale ('proxy purchases').

The proposal formed part of the government's ambition to create the first 'smokefree generation'; and published the policy paper Stopping the start: our new plan to create a smokefree generation (October 2023), where the government set out an intention to create the first 'smokefree generation'. Within this paper, the government also included several proposals to reduce youth vaping, including restricting vape flavours, regulating vape packaging and point of sale displays, and restricting the sale of disposable vapes.

The government has committed to funding several initiatives to improve smoking cessation support, including an additional £70 million annually to support local authority led stop smoking services, and £45 million over two years to roll out the national 'Swap to Stop' scheme, supporting people to stop smoking with the free provision of a vape kit and behavioural support.

The Department of Health and Social Care launched a consultation on the proposals set out in the policy paper on 12 October 2023 - 6 December 2023 and specifically sought views on introducing new legislation to raise the age of sale for tobacco, further regulating vaping to reduce its appeal to children, and introducing new powers for local authorities to issue fixed penalty notices to enforce age of sale legislation for tobacco products and vapes.

## 6.2 Age of sale of tobacco proposal

Blackpool Council has responded to this important consultation and given its full support for the key recommendation around raising the age of sale of tobacco to those born after 1 January 2009.

Rationale for this support is clear:

- **Smoking is not a free choice it is an addiction** - Smoking is an addiction, not a free choice. The only free choice is whether to smoke that first cigarette. Two thirds of those trying just one cigarette, usually as children, go on to become daily smokers, and daily smokers are addicted smokers. Most adult smokers want to stop smoking, but on average it takes 30 attempts, and many never succeed.

- **This is a package of measures including significant investment in measures to help smokers quit** - The proposal is coupled with a package of measures to help smokers quit which includes doubling the grant for local authority stop smoking services for the next five years, increasing funding for awareness raising campaigns about the harms of smoking, providing one million free vapes to smokers to help them quit, financial incentives and stop smoking support to all pregnant smokers. These are all welcomed and will help Blackpool to reduce smoking rates to 5% by 2030 as per our local and regional ambition.
- **Raising the age of sale will not increase the black market** - Concerns have also been raised that it would lead to an increase in the black market, but experience from previous tobacco control policies tells us this is unlikely. Raising the age of sale will have a gradual impact over time, so is unlikely to significantly impact the black market. When the tobacco age of sale increased from 16 to 18 in 2007 it had no impact on the black market. The size of the illicit market is mainly an issue of enforcement. The UK has strong enforcement which has led to the illicit market for cigarettes shrinking from 22% of the market in 2000 to 11% in 2022. The introduction of tough anti-smoking policies such as smokefree laws in 2007 and plain cigarette packs in 2015 did not lead to an increase in black market sales.
- **This is a major step towards a smokefree future** - This is only possible because smoking rates among children have now fallen from one in five at the turn of the century to only 3% now. Already shortly after it was first announced it has majority public support, far higher than for the ban on smoking in pubs and clubs when it was first introduced. When first proposed the ban on smoking in public places was considered a step too far and people said it would be unenforceable. Compliance was 97% from the outset and it was largely self-enforcing. No-one would now consider repealing the law on smoking in public places.
- **It is workable** - The raising of the age of sale will be coupled with an increase in budget and enforcement powers for local trading standards, who are ready to support this legislation. Further, there have been some suggestions that this would criminalise smoking and take up police time. This is not the case, only the sale of tobacco will be legislated against and the possession or smoking of tobacco will not be illegal for anyone. The legislation will also not be a police matter but will only be enforced by trading standards.

### 6.3 Vaping proposals

The government is consulting on a range of measures aimed at reducing youth vaping whilst ensuring that adult smokers have easy access to vapes as part of their quit attempts, as they are shown to be a popular and effective product to add stopping smoking. Factors in facilitating these quit attempts and the benefits of helping smokers to move away from smoking must be balanced against the need to tackle youth vaping.

The proposals the government is looking at include:

- restricting vape flavours
- regulating vape packaging and product presentation
- regulating point of sale displays
- restricting the sale of disposable vapes
- introducing an age restriction for non-nicotine vapes
- exploring further restrictions for other nicotine consumer products such as nicotine pouches
- preventing industry giving out free samples of vapes to children

#### 6.4 Public support for more action on smoking is high

There is strong support across the England for national measures to reduce tobacco harm, with 75% supporting the smokefree 2030 ambition. Raising the age of sale by one year, every year, was popular before the Prime Minister made his announcement, but support has grown since.

A YouGov poll for The Times found that 64% of people in the North support this policy:

	North	Midlands	London	Rest of South
Support (%)	64	63	65	63
Oppose (%)	25	26	18	24

[https://d3nkl3psvxxpe9.cloudfront.net/documents/TheTimes\\_VI\\_AdHoc\\_231005\\_W.pdf](https://d3nkl3psvxxpe9.cloudfront.net/documents/TheTimes_VI_AdHoc_231005_W.pdf) (see page 5 of the poll)

In the North West three quarters (77%) of adults believe the Government could be doing more to limit smoking, with wide support across a range of tobacco control policies including raising the age of sale: (See [ASH local public opinion tool](#) showing public support for tobacco control measures broken down by region).

6.5 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

#### 7.0 List of appendices

7.1 Appendix 6a: Blackpool Healthwatch Children and Young People Vaping Report

## **8.0 Financial considerations**

- 8.1 Local authorities currently receive funding to provide local stop smoking services and support through the public health grant. New funding will be awarded to very Local Authority in addition to that and will be provided through a new section 31 grant on top of the current public health grant allocations. The Department for Health and Social Care will provide the grant
- 8.2 Payments will be given to local authorities every 6 months. In the first 6 months, local authorities will receive 70% of their allocated financial year's funding. They will then be expected to provide grant reporting to the Department for Health and Social Care grants team to receive the second payment.
- 8.3 Local authorities will receive the grant agreement in January 2024. This will provide local authorities with the full grant conditions. Once received, local authorities will be asked to read and return a signed copy. The grant agreement will start from 6 April 2024.

## **9.0 Legal considerations**

- 9.1 None.

## **10.0 Risk management considerations**

- 10.1 None.

## **11.0 Equalities considerations and the impact of this decision for our children and young people**

- 11.1 Officers have been working with children and young people in order to gain insight from them on vaping. This includes uptake and access to vapes and what influences on their behaviours and any issues and concerns that they have.
- 11.2 A summary report on the findings is in the Appendix
- 11.3 Further work is now underway with children and young people to co-create resources in order to inform and influence these behaviours; ensuring they have accurate information about the risks associated with vaping, but also dispelling any myths they may have (e.g. nicotine vaping relieves their stress).

## **12.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations**

- 12.1 The environmental impact of single use vapes are part of the national consultation exercise and the Council responded strongly to recommend limited use of these products or a ban.

**13.0 Internal/external consultation undertaken**

13.1 With children and young people, parent, carers and schools in Blackpool as explained in paragraph 11 above.