

REPORT TO: Health & Wellbeing Board
DATE: 12 March 2025
REPORTING OFFICER: Director of Public Health
PORTFOLIO: Health & Wellbeing
SUBJECT: Tobacco
WARD(S) All

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To provide members of the Board with an update on tobacco programmes included planned next steps.

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That

- 1) the report be noted; and**
- 2) the Board supports ongoing activity in local and regional plans.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 **Despite a decline in prevalence over recent years, smoking is still the main preventable cause of death, disability and ill health** in England. It causes around 75,000 deaths a year, 1 in 4 of cancer deaths and kills up to two-thirds of its long-term users.

3.2 The smoking prevalence in Halton is estimated at **around 13.7% of adults**. This means that Halton is close to the national average (12.4%) but there is no safe level of smoking so continued efforts to reduce local prevalence are needed.

3.3 ASH (Action on Smoking and Health- UK's main charity campaigning for tobacco control) **estimates that it costs Halton around £89M in productivity, £5M in healthcare and £45M in social care. In addition, there is an estimated loss of £102M due to premature deaths from smoking in Halton.**

3.4 **Halton Borough Council signed the Local Government Declaration on Tobacco Control in 2014.** It is a statement of a council's commitment to ensure that work on tobacco is part of wider public health work and commits the council to take comprehensive action to address the harms from smoking.

- 3.5 Halton's local tobacco alliance was paused due to the pandemic. **The local tobacco alliance was reformed in 2024**, as part of the 'Live Well' programme within One Halton and is chaired by a consultant in public health on behalf of the Director of Public Health.
- 3.6 Local partners (including NHS providers and commissioners, medicines management, VCFSE partners and an ongoing programme of reaching out to other agencies and organisations). have joined together to help Halton to become smokefree by 2030, reflecting government ambitions for a 'smoke free generation'. The alliance provides a focus and platform for partners to advocate, coordinate and monitor activities and programmes that contribute to Halton becoming 'smokefree by 2030'. This means an aim to reduce prevalence of smoking to 5% or less by 2030.
- 3.7 The alliance is working through a self-assessment to inform a new local strategy which will be underpinned by MPOWER measures. These measures were developed by the World Health Organisation and provide a framework to help implement effective interventions to reduce the demand for tobacco. MPOWER stands for:
- **Monitoring tobacco use**- the recent introduction of a new smoking dashboard for use across Cheshire and Merseyside providing information at ward level will help inform local system.
 - **Protecting people from tobacco smoke** there is already a smoke-free indoor public places ban in place protecting people from the harms of second- hand smoke. Efforts to reduce prevalence further should help to reduce effects in private spaces also
 - **Quitting tobacco** Efforts across the system are being reviewed to identify further opportunities for supporting those trying to quit tobacco whilst balancing efforts to 'stop the start' of both tobacco and vapes (the latter should only be used as a stop smoking aid).
 - **Warning about the dangers of tobacco** This spans from health warnings on tobacco (and recent consultation on vape packaging also) through to media campaigns at national and regional levels. Local efforts are to align with these existing campaigns to maximise the reach.
 - **Enforcing tobacco advertising, promotion & sponsorship bans** There are already bans on advertising of tobacco, there has been national consultation on advertising of vapes as there is ongoing debate on the benefits of vapes to those trying to stop smoking versus the risks to those (particularly children) being attracted to start

vaping in part it is believed, due to the packaging and range of flavours.

- **Raising taxes on tobacco-** there are already considerable taxes on tobacco and a new duty on vaping is also being examined.

- 3.8 Our local strategy will also be aligned to national guidance for local authorities as well as the regional programme known as All Together Smokefree. **All Together Smokefree**, funded by local authorities and the ICB within Cheshire and Merseyside, is currently working with Healthwatch to speak to the public to raise awareness of stop smoking services and gather opinions and stories from communities as well as highlighting the current Tobacco and Vapes Bill.
- 3.9 Within the local authority there are two principal areas of work; **tobacco control** and **stop smoking services**.
- 3.10 **Tobacco control**, led by the **Trading Standards team** which has a range of powers to deal with the illicit tobacco and vapes. **Illicit tobacco reduces the public health impact of tobacco tax rises** and increases demand for tobacco products. **Illegal vape products are also an issue**; consumers risk health and safety concerns as well as unregulated ingredients including illegal quantities of nicotine.
- 3.11 **The Trading Standards team has adopted a multi-faceted approach to tackling illicit tobacco and illegal vapes**. As well as prosecuting offenders, the team uses intelligence to target premises and disrupt illegal activity by seizing illegal and illicit products to remove them from the market, of using tobacco detection dogs.
- 3.12 **Since 2019 the team have seized nearly 151,871 illegal cigarettes with a value of around £136,684, and since 2024 the team have seized around 7,331 illegal vapes with an estimated value of £51,000.**
- 3.13 The most recent approach is the use of **Closure Orders under the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014 to close premises that are persistently found to sell illegal products, and also sell the illegal products to children**. Two premises have been closed to date, and there are other premises intended for closure in the coming months. One of which we have received intelligence from working closely with the stop smoking service, illustrating the crossover in our work, and how partnership is working within the public health directorate.
- 3.14 **There are also the additional sanctions for HMRC to fine businesses up to £10,000 for each seizure of illicit tobacco and**

to remove their ability to sell tobacco. Trading Standards are able to refer cases to HMRC to administer the sanction and provide the valuable intelligence regarding those involved in the illegal manufacture, importation or distribution of tobacco in the UK.

- 3.15 **Stop Smoking Services** for residents of Halton are largely provided by the Public Health Improvement Team. Additional services for residents are also provided by 15 pharmacies and GP practices who may provide similar services. Tobacco dependence services within NHS trusts to help patients to stop smoking are also available to Halton residents. The Health Improvement Team supports clients to stop smoking over a 12-week programme offering behavioural support on a weekly basis, including carbon monoxide readings, alongside a choice of Nicotine Replacement Therapies (NRT), stop smoking medications and vapes. The service is delivered from a variety of community venues across Halton including Widnes Market, community centres and Family Hubs.
- 3.16 Referrals into the service are received from a variety of organisations and professionals (as well as self-referrals from Halton residents). **Around 1500 referrals have been received over the last year (until 6th February 2025).**
- 3.17 There is an ongoing national focus on stopping smoking. This year, Stop Smoking Services in Local Authorities received government funding to increase demand into their service by increasing capacity which should result in an increased number of people quitting smoking.
- 3.18 The team has been working with partners including CGL (Change, Grow, Live) a service to promote recovery from addiction and dependence. Smoking cessation training, including the use of vapes as a 'quit aid' was delivered to staff and is being enhanced by the supply of vapes via the national Swap 2 Stop Government funded scheme.
- 3.19 Finally, most people who quit smoking do so without using Stop Smoking Services. People who quit with the support of high-quality local stop smoking services have at least triple the success with quitting, compared to no support. The team are working with Healthwatch to gain insight as to why people may not use services and to also increase awareness of services.
- 3.20 **Whilst vapes are one of the most effective stop smoking aids however, it is important to remember that vaping is not risk free** and advice from the Chief Medical Officer is that vapes are only for those trying to stop smoking and not for those who have never smoked. In 2022, UK experts reviewed the evidence and found that 'in the short and medium term, vaping poses a small fraction of the risks of smoking'.

3.21 **There is growing concern that children are increasingly attracted to vaping** nationally around a quarter of 11 to 15 year olds have tried vaping and nearly 1 in 10 do vape regularly. A survey of primary and secondary schools in Halton to understand substance use received 10 or more responses from 3 secondary schools and 3 primary schools with a total number of 561 responses. The survey reported that around 1 in 10 children (aged between 10 and 16 years old) used vapes at least on a monthly basis with around 27% of those who had tried a vape, had done so aged 10 or younger.

3.22 The Health Improvement Team have delivered tobacco and vape training to members of the Children and Young People team, further enhancing their knowledge and providing them with the latest information on vaping for them to deliver in Halton schools.

4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 Actions across Halton are informed by the evidence base and underpinned by existing legislation. The Tobacco and Vapes Bill is going through the parliamentary process. At the time of writing, the Bill (as amended by the Public Bill Committee) is due to have its report stage and third reading on a date to be announced.

4.2 This legislation has been described as a significant opportunity to allow future generations to grow up smoke free, without the individual and societal impacts of smoking currently affecting the UK. The Bill has public support and is also widely supported across health organisations and systems; the Cheshire and Merseyside Public Health Collaborative (CHAMPS) submitted evidence in support of the Bill to the Tobacco and Vapes Bill Committee.

4.3 The intention of the Bill is to

- create a smoke-free generation, gradually ending the sale of tobacco products across the country and breaking the cycle of addiction and disadvantage.
- strengthen the existing powers to ban smoking in public places to reduce harms of passive smoking, particularly around children and vulnerable people.
- ban vapes and nicotine products from being deliberately branded, promoted, and advertised to children to stop the next generation from becoming hooked on nicotine.
- provide powers to introduce a licensing scheme for the retail sale of tobacco, vapes and nicotine products, extend the retail registration scheme in Scotland, and strengthen enforcement activity to support the implementation of the above measures.
- the Bill sits alongside wider support across the health service to support smokers to quit

- 4.4 It is anticipated that the final legislation (which may be further amended) will have a significant impact on local activity (particularly around tobacco control services) which will need to be acted upon at the time of commencement of new legislation.
- 4.5 At the same time, there is additional legislation either in process or has been announced with local implications.
- 4.6 From 1 June 2025, it will be illegal for businesses to sell or supply, offer to sell or supply, or have in their possession for sale or supply all single-use or 'disposable' vapes. This applies to:
- sales online and in shops
 - all vapes whether or not they contain nicotine
- This includes both online and in-store sales.
- 4.7 Local authority Trading Standards will lead on enforcing the ban. In the first instance, enforcement authorities will apply civil sanctions (non-criminal penalties) such as a:
- stop notice
 - compliance notice
 - fine of £200
- 4.8 There has also been an announcement to introduce a vaping duty. The duty is designed to make vaping less accessible to young people and non-smokers, while also raising revenue for funding vital public services like the NHS and smoking initiatives supporting a smokefree generation. Recognising that vaping has a role in helping smokers give up tobacco, the government will also introduce a one-off increase in tobacco duty to ensure the duty on vaping does not make smoking more attractive.

5.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Funding for smoking cessation and tobacco control is funded via the public health ringfenced grant.

6.0 **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

6.1 **Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence**

As described above, smoking is the main preventable cause of death, disability, and ill health. Reducing the prevalence will have a significant impact on individual and population health.

6.2 **Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy**

Estimates as described above suggest that tobacco causes £89M costs to the economy. Reducing the prevalence of smoking would have a significant impact on the local economy.

6.3 **Supporting Children, Young People and Families**

Smoking affects both those who smoke and those who are forced to inhale second hand smoke. Reducing the prevalence would improve the health of those smoking and those living with them including children and young people.

6.4 **Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most In Need**

Those living in the most deprived areas are some of the most likely to smoke and suffer the consequences of poor health as a result. Reducing the prevalence would help reduce the resulting health inequalities.

6.5 **Working Towards a Greener Future**

Tobacco is harmful to the environment through several mechanisms from production, usually in developing countries through to air pollution during their consumption and then the impact of the waste products. Cigarette butts are not considered biodegradable and can cause land and water pollution if not disposed correctly. A reduction in prevalence will have a positive effect on reducing the local environmental impact of smoking.

Vaping products, particularly disposable vapes can be difficult to recycle as made from multiple materials including lithium batteries. It is anticipated that the new legislation due to commence later this year will also have a positive local effect in reducing the volume of vapes thrown away as litter.

6.6 **Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community**

None identified.

7.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 None identified.

8.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

None identified.

9.0 **CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 It is complex to estimate the total impacts from the manufacture, consumption and residual waste from the tobacco industry.

9.2 One estimate, reported to the World Health Organisation suggests the following environmental impact of one person smoking a pack of 20 cigarettes every day for 50 years, would result in:

- A total carbon footprint of 5.1t CO₂ equivalent emissions, which to offset, would require 132 tree seedlings planted and grown for 10 years.
- A water footprint of 1,355 m³, which is equivalent to almost 62 years' water supply for any three people's basic needs.
- Total fossil fuel depletion of 1.3 tonne oil equivalent, which is comparable to the electricity use of an average household in India for almost 15 years

9.3 A reduction in prevalence will have a positive effect on reducing the local and international environmental impact of smoking.

10.0 **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

[Statistics on Public Health, England 2021 - NHS England Digital](#)

[Fingertips | Department of Health and Social Care](#)

[Data and Cost Calculators - ASH](#)

[Minutes 15/01/2014, 13.00](#)

[All Together Smokefree | Champs Public Health Collaborative](#)

[Tobacco Scams](#)

[quit smoking](#)

[stop smoking services effectiveness 2024-25 v1](#)

[Chief Medical Officer for England on vaping - GOV.UK](#)

[Smoking, Drinking and Drug Use among Young People in England, 2023 - NHS England Digital](#)

[New Tobacco and Vapes Bill backed by public, health charities and politicians - ASH](#)

[240121en.pdf](#) (Tobacco and Vapes Bill Explanatory Notes)

[Nicotine vaping in England: 2022 evidence update - GOV.UK](#)

[Single-use vapes ban - GOV.UK](#)

[Vaping Products Duty consultation response.pdf](#)

Tobacco and the Environment - ASH