



Fresh's contribution to improving health outcomes for the people of the North East cannot be underestimated. The Fresh approach was visionary and bold when introduced and did require a commitment to investment on a large scale in a health improvement programme I had not seen in over 20 years in this arena. This approach engaged partners not previously involved in tobacco control, galvanised action and increased the profile dramatically of the need to address tobacco use as a major cause of health inequality. The Fresh office has provided strategic support and direction to a wide range of partners and working collectively ensured that evidence based practice is implemented consistently across the North East. This has made some partners re-focus their thinking to ensure that what we do actually works.

In terms of smoking and young people, Fresh has facilitated the mapping of current practice against the evidence hierarchy to assist in determining the future direction of travel in this area. Everyone is working together to develop and implement a comprehensive programme which will make a real and measurable difference to the 'Be Healthy' outcome of 'Every Child Matters'.

Ten years ago we could not have envisaged that such progress to reducing smoking prevalence in the North East would have been made. I truly believe that without Fresh and the regional office we would not have seen the biggest fall in smoking prevalence of any region in England over the last two years. I am proud to be a part of the Fresh partnership and to see the difference it has made to so many lives and I know that with continued and sustained investment this approach will help to make smoking history for future generations.

**Judith MacMorran, Chair**  
Regional Smoking and Young People's Group



## Stakeholders' thoughts on the impact of Fresh

JUNE 2009

Let's make smoking history for our children

# NATIONAL

**Fresh - Smoke Free North East is a comprehensive programme and regional office for tobacco control. Fresh is designed to reduce tobacco smoking by providing effective leadership and expertise for the multi-agency delivery of work across eight key strands with the aim to increase cessation, reduce uptake and protect from secondhand smoke.**

Fresh has been delighted to work with a huge range of valuable partners since it was launched in 2005, from the business sector, the NHS, local government, academics and the third sector. Here are just a few testimonials provided in June 2009 from some of these valued partners on what Fresh means to them in their goal to improve health and well-being.

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The Fresh programme has taken an innovative and evidence based approach to addressing our key contributor to health inequalities and over a short time period has achieved some notable successes, including a sizeable reduction in smoking rates whilst laying firm foundations for a sustainable programme for years to come. The leadership shown by the team and partners involved has been of national value and the lessons learnt enormously helpful for other regions and also across other public health issues.

**Andrew Black, Tobacco Programme Manager**  
Department of Health

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It's a pleasure to write in support of the Fresh programme. Fresh has brought a uniquely coordinated and comprehensive approach to tobacco control in the North East, creating models that have been widely adapted and used elsewhere in the UK, and in particular helping to lead developments in understanding and controlling illicit supplies of tobacco. Fresh have also been consistent and pragmatic supporters of radical alternative tobacco control strategies, particularly harm reduction, as a means to address the significant prevalence problems they face. Their application has my full support.

**Professor John Britton, Director**  
UK Centre for Tobacco Control Studies

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Fresh has been a trailblazer for tobacco control in the regions, developing a best practice model for all others to follow. ASH is pleased that the North West and South West have now followed the path laid out by Fresh. We would like to see all regions with their own office of tobacco control.

**Deborah Arnott, Chief Executive  
Action on Smoking and Health**

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Fresh represents an extraordinary achievement in the field of tobacco control and is without question contributing to prevention of death and suffering on a huge scale. The concept of a regional office for tobacco control was inspired and the implementation has been exceptional. The office covers the whole gamut from individual help to thousands of disadvantaged smokers to addressing problems of tobacco smuggling. In addition, Fresh has been influential in shaping policy at national level and has earned great respect from policy makers and academic researchers such as myself.

**Professor Robert West, Director of Tobacco Studies  
Cancer Research UK Health Behaviour Research Centre  
University College London**

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Fresh definitely deserve this recognition by the CMO. They have a unique ability to work with and draw on partners from all sectors in our shared ambition to make smoking history for our children. The Fresh brand is positive and inspirational and this has also helped them to attract the attention of the public and to gain their valuable support. Despite their regional focus, their work makes a very significant impact to the national picture. The unwavering commitment from Fresh to tackle tobacco through their eight guiding principles is an example for us both as a national and a charitable organisation. We are proud to sit alongside Fresh as a core member of the Smokefree Action coalition and they are a shining example of what can and should be done to tackle the burden of tobacco.

**Elsbeth Lee, Head of Tobacco Control  
Cancer Research UK**

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# REGIONAL

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Fresh works. We have been successful in many areas of tobacco control and rewarded by, according to the General Household Survey, the fastest falling prevalence of smoking in the UK. It has been copied by other regions and has inspired our approach to the safer consumption of alcohol. It was based on putting evidence into practice by learning from California. Fresh has worked because of two critical factors: great leadership and strong partnership. It is tackling the single biggest cause of health damage and inequalities in our region. It fully deserves recognition of the highest possible kind.

**Professor Stephen Singleton**  
Medical Director / Regional Director of Public Health  
NHS North East

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Tobacco is the biggest single cause of ill health and early death in our region. Instead of accepting this as the norm, Fresh has challenged this and developed a hugely successful public health programme that transcends organisations, sectors and professions. A major part of our success has been the dedication, determination and passion of everyone involved - we have a network of people across the region who are wholly committed to the comprehensive tobacco control measures that we need to make the North East a better place to live and work. We're not complacent about the work we've still got to do - but who would have thought that, in five short years, we would be able to bring about a major change in attitudes and behaviour around smoking in the North East.

**Nick Forbes**  
Newcastle City Councillor  
Chair of the Regional Advisory Group for Tobacco

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The fact that the North East no longer has the worst smoking rates in England is a tribute to the role of the Fresh regional office. Fresh provides a dedicated team working at a regional level to raise awareness, lobby, research, innovate and support tobacco control partnerships working at a more local level. We know that smoking is the major contributor to inequalities in health and poor life expectancy across the North East. The Fresh office has helped us to maintain a clear focus on this issue over the years.

**Councillor Mick Henry, Chair**  
Association of North East Councils

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I have been part of Fresh SFNE since 2004 when I was invited to join the fledgling Intelligence sub-committee involved in the development of the Office. When Fresh was launched in 2005 the opportunity arose for funding from the National Prevention Research Initiative to chart Fresh's progress and evaluate its achievements through a multi-disciplinary, action research project based in the Anthropology department at Durham University for which I was Principle Investigator. The Director and staff were enthusiastic about the rather novel research methodology proposed, and their open attitude to the presence of an 'embedded anthropologist' working with them over three years has enabled the research to achieve great things, feeding back its results in order to improve the workings of the organisation in an iterative way. One example of this is the Local Alliance Toolkit, developed by the Research Associate working on the project in collaboration with Lisa Holland of Fresh. This toolkit was designed to help local alliances self-appraise to improve their ways of working and be more effective at the local level.

The GHS figures indicating that smoking prevalence in the North East has fallen at a faster rate than the average for England - from 29% in 2005 to 22% in 2007 - lack sufficient time depth or time points for them to be attributable directly to the presence of Fresh in the region, but we have concluded they suggest the programme has had a real effect on smoking prevalence in the region. If only 5% of this decline were to be attributed to the presence of Fresh, this would still represent excellent 'value for money' in public health terms. This gives further support and justification for the development of tobacco control offices in other regions, something which has already happened in the North West and South West during the course of our research.

Fresh has also been the inspiration for similar offices for other public health concerns such as the new North East regional alcohol office (again a first of its kind in the UK). Our partnership with Fresh has been a valuable and productive one, and has led to further research projects and other forms of engagement. We see this as a long-term relationship and one that will mature and solidify (although never become stale) now that our initial project is concluded.

**Dr Andrew Russell, Senior Lecturer**  
Department of Anthropology  
Durham University



Fresh has established a national and international reputation as a leading light in tobacco control.

The collaborative, comprehensive and importantly, region-wide approach taken by the region's Primary Care Trusts to tackle smoking prevalence and tobacco related health inequalities has demonstrated both innovation and real success.

As someone who had worked with Fresh since its inception (in my previous role as Director for Smokefree Liverpool), I was inspired by its achievements to adopt a similar approach when I came into the post of Regional Tobacco Manager for the North West in July 2007.

The Fresh Team has provided support, inspiration and an English evidence base for the collaborative NHS Smokefree North West Programme funded by all 24 PCT's in the region to create a tobacco free future for our children and young people.

We have been able to work together to campaign to Make Smoking History for Children and support the greatest ever public engagement in any Government consultation.

Our joint work across the three North of England regions through the Tackling Illicit Tobacco for Better Health Programme has been significantly strengthened by the collaborative programme approach.

As NHS funding comes under ever greater challenge and scrutiny, Fresh offers real learning for cost effective collaborative public health programmes.

**Andrea Crossfield, Director**  
Smokefree North West





I wholeheartedly endorse the entry of Fresh in the CMO National Public Health Awards 2009/10. Never before have I seen such a small office team produce such a comprehensive and coordinated programme of work and this is all down to their ability to lead from the front, to be bold and ambitious in their plans and to engage all partners effectively in the Regional Tobacco Control Strategy.

The approach that Fresh has taken since its inception in 2005 is an example for other public health programmes to follow and we have been able to take real advantage of this in the North East. As Director of Balance, the UK's first regional alcohol office, I can say that Fresh has been a role model to us in the planning and establishment of our office as well as the inspiration behind the direction we want to follow. We are now enjoying working collaboratively in our joint goal to make the North East the healthiest region in the country.

**Colin Shevills, Director**  
Balance - the North East Alcohol Office



From the outset of my engagement with Fresh, the most apparent characteristic was a sheer determination and absolute commitment to tackle the significant health problems of the North East community caused by smoking. This in itself was a major factor in securing our commitment as a partner.

The second factor to impress the TUC was the very high quality of argument, superbly articulated and very effectively presented. The case for preventing smoking in workplaces and confined public spaces - absolutely on health grounds - was delivered in a hugely compelling and totally accessible way.

For my organisation, the TUC, the experience with Fresh has been instrumental in shaping our strategic and operational actions. Through our engagement in with Fresh, the Northern TUC now focuses on health and wellbeing, promoting good occupational health policies and practices as well as lifestyle choices, as opposed to the more traditional health and safety role - with very encouraging responses from workplace trade union representatives.

This has helped us as an organisation make a real impact on the whole quality of life of trade union members, not just their safety at work.

Thank you Fresh.

**Kevin Rowan, Regional Secretary**  
Northern TUC





The North East Trading Standards Association (NETSA) has had an excellent working relationship with Fresh over many years and it has been their proactive work that has helped push the issue of tobacco control up the Trading Standards and Local Authority agenda. Trading Standards has a wide range of competing priorities but by using the evidence provided by Fresh of the harmful impact of particularly cheap and illicit tobacco on the health of communities, it has been possible to target resources into a wide range of tobacco control activity.

Fresh has supported NETSA with training and awareness raising events, links into new partners, a clear evidence based set of priorities and considerable resources. These resources have allowed NETSA to increase the value of other funding streams and have led to the setting up of a regional enforcement and coordination team who have already carried out enforcement work in relation to vending machines, under age sales and point of sale displays.

The North of England 'Tackling Illicit Tobacco for Better Health' programme on which Fresh has taken the lead role will allow NETSA members to work with HMRC and other enforcement agencies to take action against the serious problems created by the availability of cheap tobacco products, within their areas. Without the support of Fresh this problem could not be tackled in a structured way and the sale of cheap and illicit tobacco products would continue to damage other enforcement work particularly in relation to under age sales.

**Richard Ferry, Tobacco Control Project Manager**  
**North East Trading Standards Association**



The drive to reduce smoking prevalence, reduce health inequalities and reduce the suffering caused by smoking cannot be delivered without the collaboration, determination and commitment of partners involved in effective tobacco control. Those involved in tobacco control in the North East are proud to be part of Fresh and share the vision of what Fresh aims to achieve on a local, regional and national level. The results of the 2007 General Household Survey showing the North East region as having the biggest reduction in smoking prevalence is an indicator of what can be achieved.

**Dianne Woodall, Chair 2007-2009**  
**Smoke Free North East Network**



# LOCAL



The high smoking prevalence across the North East is a major contributor to the health inequalities which our communities experience. It is therefore no surprise that action to reduce smoking has been prioritised within all local areas. Action solely within localities, I am sure would have produced outcomes, but these have been significantly enhanced by the work of Fresh. The passion, commitment, leadership, and drive provided by Fresh has synthesised action by partners across the region to create a 'movement' for change. This 'movement' is achieving outcomes that each of us working in localities would find it difficult to achieve on our own, for example lobbying to influence national policy and social marketing to influence culture and attitudes towards smoking. Data from the General Household Survey over the last few years indicates that the North East has seen the biggest reduction in smoking prevalence of any region. I am sure that Fresh has provided a significant contribution to this achievement and it is no surprise to me that the Fresh 'model' is being replicated in other regions.

**Peter Price, Acting Locality Director of Public Health  
Redcar & Cleveland Primary Care Trust and Redcar & Cleveland  
Borough Council**



I support the submission from Fresh for this award. I initially came into the Fresh North East Advisory board as the representative from the British Lung Foundation. From the first meeting, it was clear that this was a very different approach from anything else I have worked with in health either before or since. The challenge of tobacco requires coordinated and creative efforts from a broad range of interested groups and expertise. Fresh has been remarkably successful in harnessing the interest of these diverse parties and drawing them together under a single, brilliantly conceived "brand".

The use of a positive, aspirational brand identity to create a coherent message to support people in attaining better health has proved highly effective right across the range of activity, from political lobbying to engaging with local communities to implement smoke free work places, hospitals, etc. Here in Gateshead there is now an active local Tobacco Alliance Group that links trading standards officers, HMRC, social workers, schools, hospital doctors and public health doctors and others. This, and other similar groups in the region, would never have come together without the work from Fresh.

Like many brilliant ideas, it is hard to describe exactly how Fresh has achieved so much change in the arena of tobacco control. Much is down to the personalities of the team at Fresh, the leadership from Ailsa and the superb marketing work from Robson Brown. I have no doubt that Fresh is the main driver behind our achieving the significant reduction in smoking prevalence seen in this region.

In terms of value for money, the fall in smoking prevalence achieved in Gateshead means there are now at least 15,000 fewer smokers than there were 10 years ago. Half of all smokers die prematurely as a result of their habit. The activities of Fresh therefore may in due course account for around 7,000 avoided premature deaths in Gateshead. A typical medical intervention (e.g. treatment for raised cholesterol) would be regarded as good value for money if it cost £200 per year of life saved. Thus to avoid 7,000 deaths by treating cholesterol, we might reasonably spend £1.4 million. Set against these estimates, the Fresh programme is remarkably good value.

**Dr Robert Allcock  
Clinical Lead for Cardiology and Respiratory Medicine  
Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Gateshead**





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I am delighted to be informed that Fresh have been nominated for this award.

I can state without any reservation that Fresh have had an enormous impact not only on the health of the North East population in terms of admirable reductions in smoking prevalence but also as a valuable professional resource for partnership organisations.

Since its conception, Fresh have developed its role in supporting the Stop Smoking Services in their delivery and have been an invaluable provider of information from all levels, including the Department of Health.

Fresh have been consistent in communicating latest research and developments in tobacco control and have encouraged networking of organisations and services on a regular basis to share expertise.

A comprehensive training programme has been developed which ensures that the Services have access to the wider tobacco control issues as well as specific professional updating.

Fresh staff have the expertise and the experience to cascade to all organisations involved in the tobacco control agenda and this is much appreciated by myself as a manager of Gateshead, South Tyneside and Sunderland Specialist Stop Smoking Service and all staff working within the service.

I truly hope that Fresh do win this award as they have been pioneers in terms of the development of the first Regional Tobacco Control Office in the UK and are a model of excellent practice to all.

**Maria Williams, Manager**  
**Gateshead, South Tyneside and Sunderland Specialist**  
**Stop Smoking Service**

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Fresh has provided a valuable resource to PCT's over the past four years. The team offers objective advice and guidance whilst bringing organisations together to share best practice and maximise opportunities to impact on tobacco use with a view to reducing health inequalities. Fresh is an ideal catalyst for new developments, determining priorities and helping shape services. Fresh is in a unique position to advise on the wider tobacco agenda and help localities take a comprehensive approach to tobacco control.

**Pam Lee, Public Health Specialist**  
**South of Tyne and Wear PCT**

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As the eight key strand programme demonstrates there are a number of issues linked to tobacco and smoking all with the ultimate aim of reducing health inequalities.

It is therefore essential that there is an overarching organisation which can link these strands and the respective agencies working on them, so that there is a concerted and united effort towards what we hope to achieve.

I believe that there is a good working relationship between the Northumberland Stop Smoking Service and the team at Fresh based on mutual respect for what we each can offer in terms of knowledge skills and experience. It is essential that tobacco and smoking remain high on the agenda as there is still a great deal of work that has yet to be done.

Fresh acts as a resource and ensures that information is disseminated regionally and theory is turned into practice at a quicker rate than if we were all acting in isolation.

**Alison Nichol, Acting Stop Smoking Service Manager**  
**Northumberland Stop Smoking Service**

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Fresh has been a huge influence to officers of all professional disciplines in our smokefree journey in Sunderland. Their very positive, helpful, inspiring support on the many ways that can make a difference in tobacco control has enabled some real successes in areas where it was thought impossible. The lobbying around important issues such as smokefree legislation, raising the sale of tobacco to 18 has given us the tools we need to enable officers to address health inequalities caused by smoking.

**Norma Johnston, Assistant Head of Environmental Services  
Sunderland City Council**

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Fresh makes its biggest contribution in areas that can not be tackled at a local level. This has included spearheading campaign work to change attitudes to smoking, and a lead role in lobbying that has successfully engaged both stakeholders and the public across the North East in thinking about the legislative issues tobacco raises. Fresh as an agency specialising in tobacco control is also a valuable source of information, and advice. I especially value this in terms of rapidly developing practice, exchange of good ideas and research.

**Alyson Learmonth  
Director of Public Health  
Gateshead PCT and Council**



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Fresh has worked in close partnership with the Northumberland Tyne and Wear Health Trust, the largest Mental Health and Learning Disabilities Trust in England, providing invaluable support and expertise in assisting the Trust to become smoke free in over 95% of its wards and clinical areas from July 2007, with the few remaining residential mental health units achieving smoke free status by July 2008. This support has included representation on the Trust's Smokefree planning group, acting as a source of expert advice and signposting, visibly supporting clinical staff through a programme of on site visits, and collaborating with local Stop Smoking Services to deliver smoking cessation training to staff and supporting staff and service users who have wished to give up smoking.

Through their commissioning of a pilot programme of smoking cessation interventions, specifically designed for long term users of Mental Health Services, they have striven to address the difficulties and inequalities this group often faces in trying to improve their health.

As a result of the support from Fresh, a significant number of staff has given up smoking and old smoking areas turned into gyms or health promotion rooms for service users. Some service users with years of smoking behind them have been helped to reduce or stop smoking altogether and there has been a real shift in the attitudes of staff and service users towards smoking in a mental health setting.

The Trust looks forward to continuing its excellent relationship with Fresh over coming years and establishing a new relationship with Balance, the North East office for alcohol based on the Fresh model of delivery of public health.

**Dr Damian Robinson  
Associate Medical Director for Public Health  
Northumberland Tyne and Wear NHS Trust**

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