

### Smoking Cessation News

## Good news for smokers from NICE

NICE has published its final guidance on Varenicline (trade name Champix) and this gives the go-ahead to the North East PCTs to allow prescribing

of this new cessation aid. To assist the local NHS Stop Smoking Services and prescribing staff, Fresh arranged a clinical update on the drug on 13 July.

This was well attended by nearly 100 staff from across the region. For more information visit [www.nice.org.uk](http://www.nice.org.uk).

## New developments and latest research shared at the recent UK National Smoking Cessation Conference

A number of North East delegates attended the recent UKNSCC in June, learning about a number of new developments in smoking cessation over the two day programme. The conference, which was attended by over 600 delegates from across the world, discussed the implications of varenicline, professional standards, and the role of social marketing among many other

topics. There was also much interest in the work of the North East's NHS Stop Smoking Services which have consistently performed well and Fresh presented some of the key factors for this success. Fresh also participated in a panel discussion on the development of a national tobacco strategy. Copies of the presentation are available at [www.uknsc2007.org](http://www.uknsc2007.org)

### Alliance Highlights

## Local Tobacco Alliance update

Following the successful implementation of the smokefree law, Fresh is working to develop an 'Alliance Toolkit'. This will assist the current 17 local tobacco alliances to

move forward and is being produced with Durham University and in partnership with the Smoke Free North East Network

As part of the toolkit, a range of partners will be given the opportunity to understand more about the broader Tobacco Control agenda and what this means for them locally. It will also encourage and support each tobacco alliance to examine their existing partnership and structure,

identify any gaps in membership and help prioritise key tobacco control actions to be delivered in 2007/08... As a result, this will ensure that local and regional action dovetails with National policy via the National Support Team for Tobacco. Local alliances have been invited to pilot the toolkit during the late summer with the intention of a roll-out in the autumn via the SFNE Network.

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### National Support Team for Tobacco

The team has now undertaken visits to two local areas in the region and the feedback from both has been that the visit was very useful and it

was good to bring all partners together to review the work on tobacco control. The team will be attending the next SFNE Network meeting on 21 September to give an update on developments.

### News Update

## Tackling the problem of cheap and illegal tobacco in our region

The North East suffers from the amount of smuggled and counterfeit tobacco coming into the region - smokers are kept addicted for longer because it is so cheap, and it also has the worrying effect of making it much cheaper and therefore easier for children to start experimenting with smoking.

Fresh is now working more closely with Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs colleagues on media work and with our tobacco control colleagues from the rest of the North of England, will be hosting a one day joint Summit in the Autumn.

## Working in partnership on smoking and pregnancy

The North East has excellent support for pregnant women and their families to quit through the local NHS Stop Smoking Services. However smoking rates amongst this group remain high with around 23% of babies being born to women who

are smoking. Fresh is prioritising this issue for action and is planning a Regional Summit on Smoking and Pregnancy in October 2007. This will discuss the complex nature of this issue and many partners will be involved.

### The Fresh Office Team

**Ailsa Rutter**, Director  
**Lisa Holland**, Regional Co-ordinator County Durham, Darlington and Tees Valley

**Pam Tarn**, Administrative Support.  
**Kate Lowery**, Administrative Support.

For more information on any of these stories, to register for events or to receive regular updates contact us on **0191 387 2139** or email [info@freshne.com](mailto:info@freshne.com)

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**WELCOME to the Summer edition of ReFresh, the bi-monthly newsletter from Fresh - Smoke Free North East. This newsletter aims to keep our partners updated on the range of initiatives addressing smoking related issues in the region together with an update on key national and international matters.**

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### Legislation Update

## England smoke free - at last!

The North East is enjoying its first smoke free summer. And while the weather may not be great, the outlook for the health of the region has greatly improved.

The implementation of the legislation appears to be going smoothly across the region, thanks to the enormous efforts made by everyone involved in tobacco control to convince people that the legislation was 'needed, wanted and workable'.

While it is still early days, compliance rates appear to be high, with 97% of the nearly 6,000 North East businesses inspected in the first two weeks smokefree. Anecdotally we

have also heard back from all the local councils who have indicated that enforcement is going very well with the general public largely self-policing this as expected.

"Our thanks go out to everyone, from both within the Fresh network and outside, who has helped make the introduction a great success," says Director of Fresh, Ailsa Rutter.

For Fresh, the build up to the big day culminated in a major media event at the Centurion Bar in Newcastle. To celebrate the fact that people with health problems are now free to visit pubs without damaging their health, Fresh invited representatives from heart disease

and respiratory patient groups to join them for Sunday lunch.



Media event at The Centurion Bar

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## England smoke free - at last cont'd

The patients were joined by Dr Stephen Singleton, Regional Director of Public Health, and Councillor Mick Henry, Chair of the

### Public relations activity was supported with a countdown themed advertising campaign in key newspapers.

Says Regional Director of Public Health Dr Stephen Singleton: "The introduction of the law has been a great success to date, but we mustn't be complacent. It is right to celebrate the introduction of the most important piece of health legislation in a generation, but in many ways this is just one further milestone in the long journey to tackle the health problems caused by tobacco use across the North East."

### Air Quality Monitoring

Fresh is currently involved in a national research project funded by Cancer Research UK which has entailed visiting a range of premises in the region, before and after the law to check air quality, exposure of staff to secondhand smoke, and also speak to staff and customers about their views on the law. This field work has been really enjoyable and the team has gleaned a lot of useful information by talking to a wide range of individuals. The results will be published in October.

Association of North East Councils.

The event attracted journalists from across the region, including both BBC TV and Tyne Tees TV, eager to hear patients' personal stories.

But that was only one part of a media blitz in which everyone

across the region played their part by contacting their local media, acting as spokespeople and providing case studies. The results were there for all to see with almost £500,000 worth of PR value delivered in a four day period:

Media Area	1st July 2007 only
No. articles	79
Positive opportunities to see	14.5m
PR value	£483,424

### Smokefree Conferences

Fresh is now looking forward to hearing about international smokefree developments and will be presenting "Ten key lessons for successful smokefree advocacy" at the forthcoming "Towards a Smokefree Society" international conference in Edinburgh on 10-11 September. Visit [www.smokefreeconference07.com](http://www.smokefreeconference07.com) for more information.

Smokefree Mental Health continues to be a national priority and the Tobacco Control Collaborating Centre (TCCC) has been

contracted by the Care Services Improvement Partnership (CSIP) to organise two national Smokefree Mental Health conferences. The event for the North of England is being held in Manchester on Monday 17 September. Fresh will be in attendance and have also funded additional places for the NHS Mental Health Trusts and the Stop Smoking Services in our region. A regional smoking and mental health workshop will be hosted by Fresh and delivered by the TCCC in November; further details will follow.



Media event at The Centurion Bar

## North East must learn Irish lesson

As the region celebrates the introduction of the smokefree legislation, complacency is the biggest enemy to achieving Fresh's tobacco control goals for the North East.

Smoking rates in the region are currently around 28%. The target set by the government says that figure must be down to 21% by 2010, and it is estimated that the new law will deliver a reduction of

1.7% in the number of smokers.

The story in Ireland provides a cautionary tale. After their smokefree law was introduced in March 2004, smoking rates

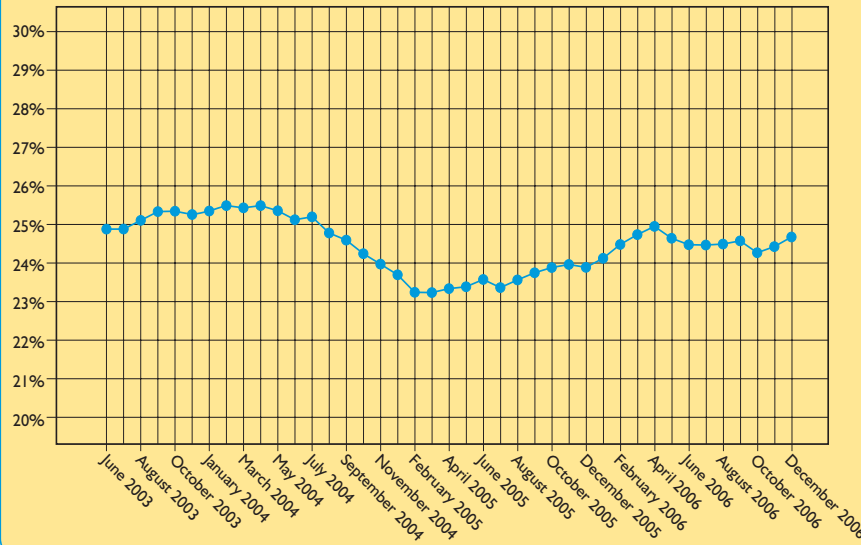
dropped by some two per cent. However, a lack of mass media activity, no overarching tobacco control strategy and Stop Smoking Services which are not as well established or successful as those in

the North East, has resulted in a 'bounce back' effect. As a result, smoking prevalence is almost back to those levels seen before the smokefree law was introduced.

The lesson is obvious: there is no room to let up in our efforts in tackling tobacco use if we want to save some of the 6,000 lives which are lost to tobacco-related diseases in the North East every year.

### All Smokers: Cigarette Smoking Prevalence (as a % of the Population)

12 month moving average trend ending December 2006



## Age of sale

### North East prepares for age of sale increase

Another element to the Health Act is the increase in age to 18 for legal sales of tobacco products from 1 October 2007. To assist key partners, in particular trading standards colleagues, Fresh held an Age of Sale planning seminar on 9 July. Representatives attended from every trading standards department in the region and presentations

given included the national media and communications activity, detail of the law, and in-depth table discussions informed local planning. We were fortunate that Jane MacGregor from LACORs was able to participate and all the presentations are available to view at [www.freshne.com](http://www.freshne.com).

A wide range of activity is now underway to prepare both retailers and consumers - including a national mail out of materials and information to retailers and also media promotion to the teenage market.

A dedicated website was launched [www.tobaccoagechange.co.uk](http://www.tobaccoagechange.co.uk), on

23 July to provide retailers with information on the change in legislation: and LACORs has issued guidance and information to local authorities. Fresh will be undertaking media activity to promote awareness of the law.



## Media and communications

### The Big Quit

We are now gearing up for The Big Quit which is an England-wide radio campaign that will be present on every commercial radio station on the English mainland. This will be running

through September and October 2007 and will be a big promotional boost for the local NHS Stop Smoking Services. Fresh is working very closely with the local services to ensure that we get as much publicity and referrals to the services as possible, and is currently training a number of service staff in media skills.



No Smoking Day 2007 was a great success in the North East with the highest numbers of people trying to quit and campaign awareness in the

whole country. We intend to build upon this success for one of the UK's longest running campaigns and are holding the NSD 2008 launch event on 30 November. This will be a one day event with the afternoon session run as a social marketing workshop. More information will be available shortly.