

# Tobacco Alliance FAQ: Police

## What is Tobacco Control?

A co-ordinated and comprehensive approach to reducing the prevalence of smoking. There are six internationally recognised strands of tobacco control which are: stopping the promotion of tobacco; making tobacco less affordable; effective regulation of tobacco products; helping tobacco users to quit; reducing exposure to second-hand smoke; and effective communications for tobacco control.

## What is a Tobacco Control Alliance?

Local partnerships within local authority boundaries working on effective local activity to reduce smoking rates and tackle health inequalities. Alliances typically include a wide range of members, from trading standards and environmental health to fire and rescue, education, health staff, childrens' services, as well as elected members and local NGOs and businesses.

### The role of the police in tackling tobacco

Illicit and counterfeit tobacco sales funds organised crime and exacerbates health inequalities and the police has a key role to play in driving down its availability in local communities. The police also have a role to play in ensuring compliance with smokefree laws.

#### ***Tobacco smuggling funds organised crime***

- Tobacco smuggling costs society [over £2 billion](#) in lost revenue from Duty tax each year.
- It [undermines legitimate businesses and is dominated by internationally organised criminal groups](#) often involved in other crimes such as drug smuggling and people trafficking.
- In addition, sellers have been often found selling other illegal products.



#### ***Tobacco smuggling damages health and exacerbates health inequalities***

- Tobacco is often available at cheaper prices, undermining the effectiveness of taxation, making it harder for smokers to quit.
- Cheap tobacco also makes it easier for non-smokers to start and ex-smokers to relapse.
- Illegal tobacco is available from a range of sources within some local communities, making it easier for children to start smoking and enabling them to become hooked at a young age.
- Poorer smokers are also more likely to purchase illicit tobacco exacerbating inequalities (ONS, 2004).



For more information see: [Tackling Illicit Tobacco for Better Health](#)

## What role can the police play as members of a tobacco control alliance?

Police officers actively engaged with tobacco control partners through a local alliance can play a key role in tackling the illicit trade and enforcing tobacco control legislation. By being members of an alliance the police can join forces with other tobacco control stakeholders to enhance the effectiveness of this work.

Examples of work include:

- **Sharing intelligence** with partners for effective and coordinated enforcement of tobacco legislation.
- Working alongside alliance partners such as HMRC, Trading Standards and Environmental Health to **tackle illicit and counterfeit tobacco as well as other unlicensed activity.**