

Tobacco Alliance FAQ: Trading Standards

What is Tobacco Control?

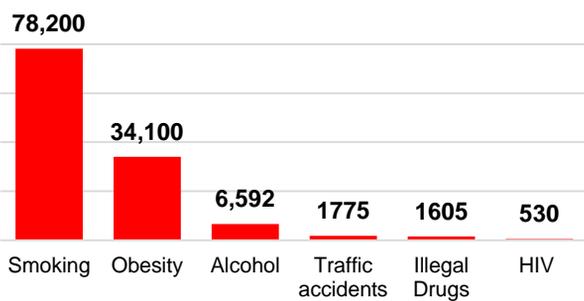
A co-ordinated and comprehensive approach to reducing the prevalence of smoking. There are six internationally recognised strands of tobacco control which are: stopping the promotion of tobacco; making tobacco less affordable; effective regulation of tobacco products; helping tobacco users to quit; reducing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

Why is tobacco control important?

Annual deaths (England)



See [ASH Factsheet: Illness & Death](#) for sources

The role of Trading Standards in reducing smoking

- Enforcing tobacco-related legislation e.g. point of sale & packaging requirements
- Reducing underage sales of age-restricted products, including tobacco
- Reducing the availability of counterfeit and illegal tobacco products
- Monitoring compliance with Tobacco Advertising and Promotion Act
- Monitoring compliance with EU Tobacco Products Directive

What is the role of Trading Standards on an alliance?

- Working alongside alliance partners such as the police and schools to **take action on illicit and niche tobacco**.
- **Educating local traders** to develop their knowledge on a range of tobacco control issues
- **Contributing to work on reducing youth smoking prevalence** alongside alliance partners in education, schools, etc.
- **Sharing information** to help public health professionals identify at-risk groups



What can Trading Standards gain by being members of an alliance?

- **Intelligence leads** from teams working directly with the public. Public health teams and smoking cessation advisors may also be able to include phone numbers for reporting lines on public facing publications.
- **Increased profile for tobacco control work.** Alliances champion the issue of tobacco control locally. Messages coming from an Alliance of organisations working collaboratively to tackle are more powerful than individual departments or officers.
- **Increased impact for tobacco control work.** Alliances provide an opportunity to increase the effectiveness of smoking prevention and cessation activities by co-ordinating the work of different partners.

Trading Standards: Alliance Case Studies

The North East North Central London Illicit Tobacco Group

Camden and Islington led on establishing a North East and North Central London Illegal Tobacco Group comprising 8 London Boroughs.

The core purpose of the group is to coordinate work and share knowledge relevant to reducing the supply of and demand for illegal tobacco across the participating boroughs. It aims to complement the work already being done at borough level and achieve better efficiency and outcomes through the joining up of both strategies and work on the ground.

It will provide decision makers with better evidence on which to make decisions. It will also aim to achieve better engagement with key national or regional partners such as PHE, HMRC, the Fire Brigade and the Metropolitan Police. The group commissioned an illegal tobacco survey in 2015 in seven participating boroughs and publicised the [survey report](#) in January 2016.

For information on illicit tobacco strategies at the regional level, please see:

[Tackling Illicit Tobacco for Better Health](#)

Medway Tobacco Alliance's Illegal Sales Campaign

In summer of 2015, Medway's tobacco alliance ran an Illegal Sales Campaign combining messages about illegal alcohol and tobacco, which local enforcement teams often find together. Bespoke resources informed by public feedback were created to explain how to recognise illegal tobacco/alcohol and how to report illegal and underage sales.

5 public engagement events featuring a mobile display unit and sniffer dogs really grabbed the public's attention. The campaign generated 19 intelligence reports which were fed to the local Trading Standards team and local HMRC contact. Kent Police were also present on a number of the enforcement visits to retail premises. As a result, 90,000 cigarettes and 23kg of hand rolling tobacco were seized and 3 retailers were eventually evicted from their premises. Press releases of the activity showed the public that action was taken in response to intelligence reporting.

Smokefree Middlesbrough

In Middlesbrough, the Local Authority Environmental Health and Trading Standards Team act as the lead agency for the coordination of the Tobacco Alliance. As a result, there is a strong combined prevention and enforcement approach to the work of the Alliance. Regular and effective tobacco control enforcement exercises have been undertaken, particularly on illicit tobacco sold from both private houses and retail premises.



There have been numerous seizures and prosecutions, and the subsequent media publicity has raised public awareness of the wider community issues in relation to illicit tobacco. This enforcement work has also enabled Trading Standards and other organisations to use their Responsible Authority role under the Licensing Act 2003 to review premises licences of the retail premises selling the illicit tobacco. There have been three reviews to date and all have been successful in the revocation of premises licences, preventing the business from selling alcohol. This local work is delivered alongside the regionally commissioned Fresh tobacco programme.

