**ASH webinar: Creating a smokefree generation and tackling youth vaping (20th October) – event summary**

**Chaired by Ailsa Rutter, Director of Fresh and Balance**

* Welcomes the announcement from the Government on creating a smokefree generation.
* Everyone on the call is keen to lend the Government their support to ensure this is a success.

**Prof Sir Chris Whitty, Chief Medical Officer: Overview of announcements and consultation**

* New legislation will mean that anyone born on or after 1 January 2009 will never be able to legally buy tobacco. This will not criminalise smoking or remove the right to purchase tobacco from anyone who currently has it.
* Confirmed the government is not consulting on the specifics of the financial package to local authorities.
* The government wants to get the balance right on vaping and in order to do so wants to hear from as many perspectives as possible in order to ensure that all stakeholders are represented in the process.
* As many people as possible should respond to the consultation to convey the wide support for these policies. Let’s make sure the strength of feeling and strength of evidence behind these measures is clear for MPs.

**Sarah Price, Chief Officer for Population Health and Inequalities and Deputy Chief Executive of NHS Greater Manchester Integrated Care: NHS perspective**

* The new package of policies in consistent with work already being done in the NHS to address health inequalities and build towards a smokefree future. The NHS Long Term Plan clearly prioritises prevention and tackling smoking is the single biggest thing we can do to work towards this.
* These measures will put wealth and health back into our communities, help people to stay in work, increase productivity and relieve pressure on our social and health care services. This will lead to improvements at a system wide level, lead to better health outcomes for all and benefit the NHS.
* The NHS has a critical opportunity to respond to the consultation. Encourages trusts and ICSs to engage a range of stakeholders across their systems to bring a range of perspectives on how these changes would have a positive impact.

**Simon Bryant, DPH Hampshire County Council and Isle of Wight Council and ADPH Addiction PAG: DPH perspective**

* This is an opportunity to build local momentum both around generating responses to the consultation but also to provoke a public debate around this which will itself have a positive impact through public attention on the harms of smoking.
* Encouraged local authorities to work with partners across the system to ensure the increased funding that will be made available is allocated in the right places to magnify impact and ensure those facing the greatest health inequalities are targeted.

**Kate Pike, Lead Officer for Tobacco and Vaping, Chartered Trading Standards Institute: Trading Standards perspective**

* Trading standards is ready to advise and support businesses in the run up to the change in legislation and to take robust action against anyone who flouts the law once the legislation has passed.
* Trading standards want mandatory age verification when purchasing tobacco to be considered to take pressure off retailors to decide when to ID.
* Practical and enforceable regulations which will be easy to control are also important. This means ensuring that 0% nicotine vapes and vapes where the nicotine can be added with an additional pod are included in the legislation in addition to closing any loopholes.
* Welcomes the proposal to introduce new powers for councils to issue fixed penalty notices. Retailers who are caught selling to children are typically repeat offenders so this should be the starting point when determining fines.

**Cllr Jim Dickson, London Borough Lambeth and Chair of London Smokefree Councillor Network: Local councillor perspective**

* It is important for this to be a priority issue within busy councils, there is no reason for local authorities not to act considering the wide benefits of these policies to public health.
* Cllr Dickson gave four things that people can do:
  1. Submit a supportive consultation response which includes as much detail as possible on your local authority. Key people to engage are your lead member for public health and director of public health.
  2. Galvanise support across the council and show and promote cross party consensus- Lib Dem and Conservative colleagues are important to reach.
  3. Support MPs with letters and briefing materials, ensure they are aware of the evidence and wide support.
  4. Spread knowledge amongst residents - encourage personal responses to the consultation as these can have powerful stories of how smoking addiction has affected families. Stories in local media, social media posts - make it easy and clear how people can get involved.

**Hazel Cheeseman, Deputy CEO of ASH: Key points for the consultation and next steps**

* Engage and inform the public and MPs. The timeframe is tight so we need to keep momentum up and we ensure that MPs understand the support in their communities and that this is needed, wanted and workable.
* Hazel also talked of the importance of public debate, recalling the impact that public debate and discussion had on public behaviour in the lead up to the 2007 legislative change.
* Hazel also reminded us of the importance of keeping the public debate focused on the age of sale measures and not allowing discussions around vaping from taking up all of the oxygen. There is a clear consensus on the need for further regulation to tackle youth vaping whereas some people still need persuading on the age of sale policy. Smoking is still the biggest killer and should remain the focus of our campaigns.

**Questions and Answers**

**Q: To Prof Chris Whitty, who are you most hoping to hear from through the consultation?**

**A:** The widest possible range of people. We are keen to hear from leaders of regional organisations and elected officials with information about the regions they represent so that we can understand the issues facing communities across the four nations.

**Q: To Prof Chris Whitty, do you want consultation responses to suggest other measures?**

**A:** We strongly recommend that responses stick to the questions in the consultation and the policies already suggested. There may be an opportunity soon to think about further changes but for now, the government want the focus to be on the proposals at hand to ensure we get those across the line.

Prof Whitty also noted that it was important that the media did not get distracted by vaping. We want clear support for the measures to tackle smoking and too much debate on vaping may dilute this message.

**Q: To Hazel Cheeseman, what kind of arguments should we expect to come across from big tobacco and how can we prepare for this?**

**A:** We expect they will argue that this will cause a jump in the illicit tobacco market and that it unduly impedes on freedom of choice/ that this will lead to future restrictions on civil liberty. We can respond to that by pointing out that smoking is an addiction largely formed in childhood, not a choice. We are not taking away adult smokers’ ability to smoke but preventing addictions from being formed. We can also point out that smoking is so lethal that it not comparable to other restrictions such as on food: there is no safe level of smoking.

Kate Pike also answered that in terms of worries about the illicit market, the package includes extra enforcement money to deal with this. Big tobacco routinely claim that tobacco control measures will lead to a growth in the illicit market but this has been proven false. In fact, the illicit market has been declining steadily since 2011 despite robust tobacco control measures being introduced.

**Q: To Cllr Jim Dickson, how can we protect local councillors from tobacco industry influence?**

**A:** Get ahead of them with information that is useful and factual so they are armed with knowledge to counter what tobacco representatives might say. It may also be useful to remind them of their [Article 5.3 obligations](https://ash.org.uk/resources/local-toolkit/toolkit-article-5-3-of-the-who-framework-convention-on-tobacco-control) to protect public health policy from the vested interests of the tobacco industry and be aware that the tobacco industry often does not try to lobby directly but through middle organisations so to be vigilant around tobacco industry influence.