

Tobacco Alliance FAQ: NHS Organisations

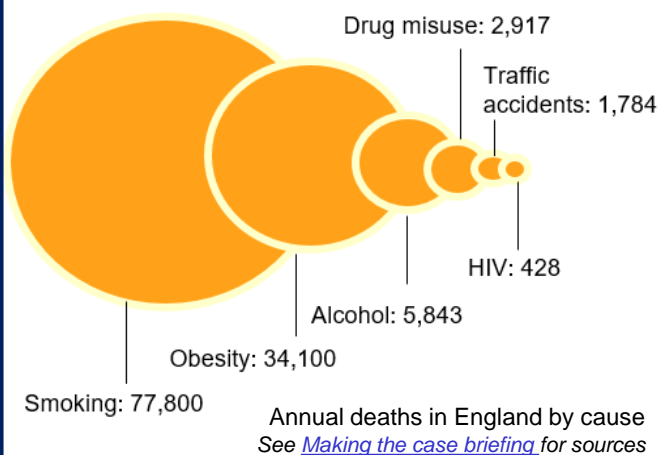
What is Tobacco Control?

Tobacco control is a co-ordinated, comprehensive approach to reduce smoking prevalence. Alliances are local partnerships within local authority boundaries working together to effectively 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, children's services, as well as elected members and local NGOs and businesses.

The impact of smoking on the NHS

- Smoking is a chronic relapsing long-term condition
- 77,800 people died prematurely in 2017 from smoking. For every person that dies from smoking, [another 30 are living with smoking-related disease](#)
- This costs the NHS [around £2.4 billion a year](#).
- Health interventions are also less successful for people who smoke:
 - People who smoke have longer hospital stays, higher drug doses and more complications ([NICE, PH48](#))
 - People who smoke are more likely to die after surgery and to experience wound infection (See [ASH, Smoking & Surgery](#))

Why is tobacco control important?



What is the role of the NHS in tackling tobacco?

The NHS comes into contact with millions of smokers and has a key role to play in engaging organisations and professionals at all levels of the NHS with tobacco control and smoking cessation. Significant emphasis is placed on Prevention in [the NHS Long Term Plan \(LTP\)](#), with treating tobacco dependency a central feature of this. The LTP commits to treating all smokers admitted to hospital for tobacco dependency, in addition to tailored treatment pathways for pregnant women and their partners and in specialist mental health and disability services.

Additionally, whilst smoking rates have declined significantly in recent years, they remain much higher in disadvantaged communities and tobacco is responsible for half the difference in life expectancy between the rich and the poor. The [NHS Constitution for England](#) states that the NHS has a duty to pay "particular attention to groups where improvements in health and life expectancy are not keeping pace with the rest of the population".

The role of the NHS in an alliance

- Implementing commitments made in the LTP to treating tobacco dependency in secondary care
- Implementing NICE guidance on smoking ([PH48](#)) see [Breath 2025's PH48 Toolkit](#)
- Work with local authorities to ensure all secondary care, acute, maternity and mental health services have an effective Stop Smoking Service
- Using internal communication channels to share public health messages

What can NHS organisations gain?

By working in partnership with different organisations the NHS can contribute to an increased rate of smoking decline. This will not only fulfill obligations to reduce health inequalities but will contribute to immediate and long-term savings, reduced demand on NHS services and a healthier work force.

