

ASH New Year quitting campaign: Communications Toolkit

Introduction

This communications toolkit contains materials for local authorities to use to support smokers to quit around the New Year and to access their local stop smoking services. It is designed to support local councils not receiving tailored support from their regions.

Key messages

The rate of success among smokers who try to quit is higher than ever, but fewer smokers are trying to quit than in 2007, when numbers peaked. Now is a teachable moment and we must not waste this opportunity. There has never been a more important time to support smokers to quit:

- to improve their health and wellbeing and help them stay out of hospital
- to protect others from secondhand smoke exposure in the home
- to reduce their financial outgoings at a time when unemployment is rising and many smokers will be suffering significant cuts to their income

Evidence shows that COVID-19 has increased the likelihood of smokers making a successful quit attempt. As healthcare professionals you have a key role to play in encouraging them to take the first step in making a quit attempt, using the most effective methods to increase their chances of success:

- Smokers who get help from stop smoking services can increase their chances of successfully quitting by up to three times
- Smokers who don't want to engage with, or have access to, stop smoking services should be encouraged to use alternative forms of nicotine, such as patches, gum and e-cigarettes, to help them quit, as these have been shown to increase their likelihood of success
- Dual users (those who are still smoking as well as vaping) should try to switch completely to vaping for their health

The Campaign

The campaign centres around a powerful new film commissioned by Southend Borough Council which tells the stories of some of those who made the quitting journey in this turbulent year and calls on others to "put it down, put it out". The film is the work of spoken word artist Megan Cannon working in collaboration with film maker James Chapman of Paisley Productions.

ASH has paid for a specially adapted version to be made available free for all councils to use online to encourage people to quit this New Year and throughout 2021. Stop smoking services around the country have moved online or over the phone to continue to support people during this socially distanced time. Data from NHS Digital shows that the services have managed to maintain a high level of support during this time with more smokers than ever successfully managing to quit.

This toolkit contains a template press release and social media posts, and is designed to support the roll out of the video and encourage smokers to try to quit this January, and to make 2021 a year to prioritise their own health. The social media images are downloadable

[here](#) and the full video can be embedded from YouTube [here](#). They centre around the real people, who star in the video, who have quit smoking this year.

This campaign will be officially launched by a press release issued on 17th December and is designed to run through January.

Template press release

[Council] calls on smokers in 2021 to join the thousands who quit in 2020

For smokers 2020 was a great year to quit. It has been estimated that a million people nationally had quit during the first lock down and hundreds of thousands have maintained that success, with 2020 having the highest rates of successful quitting on record [1].

[Council] is sharing a powerful new film which tells the stories of those who made a successful quitting journey in this turbulent year and call on others to “put it down, put it out”.

The film was commissioned by Southend Borough Council but made available for [Council] to use locally. It is the work of spoken word artist Megan Cannon. When the council approached her about the project she was not immediately enthusiastic: “*smoking cessation just didn’t sound very interesting*”. But she found the stories of people who had used council’s stop smoking service inspiring:

“We asked people who’d quit using the stop smoking services loads of questions and their responses were so powerful and full of emotion. I couldn’t wait to put the stories together and create this piece, which I hope can inspire others to give up smoking too.”

Regional Figures – DELETE THIS TABLE BEFORE SENDING OUT. Reference as above [1]

Region	Total number of quitters
North West	102k
Yorkshire and The Humber	93k
East Midlands	44k
West Midlands	100k
East of England	69k
South East	136k
London	204k
South West	78k

It’s been estimated by Action on Smoking and Health (ASH) using data from the YouGov Covid-19 Tracker that [XXX] people in [REGION] quit smoking during the first lockdown. Analysis of smokers behaviour across 2020 by researchers at University College London found that among people who tried to quit smoking in 2020 success rate was the highest they’d ever seen, something they put down to the unique circumstances of 2020.

[LOCAL CASE STUDY] was one of those success stories joining the thousands in the region who have quit. [CASE STUDY STORY]

[Council] stop smoking service remains open and ready to support local people to quit in January all be it remotely. [ADD INFO ABOUT LOCAL SERVICE].

Deborah Arnott, Chief Executive of ASH, which is supporting the roll out of the film, said:

“This has been a tough year, but local councils have shown they are more than up to the challenge, showing tremendous commitment to their local during the pandemic. Stop Smoking Services have continued to operate, despite councils having to pretty much rebuild them from scratch to provide socially distanced support delivered remotely. If you are planning to quit in 2021 get help from your local service, it might make all the difference.”

[1] Action on Smoking and Health. [A million People have stopped smoking since COVID pandemic hit Britain](#). July 2020.

Suggested social media posts

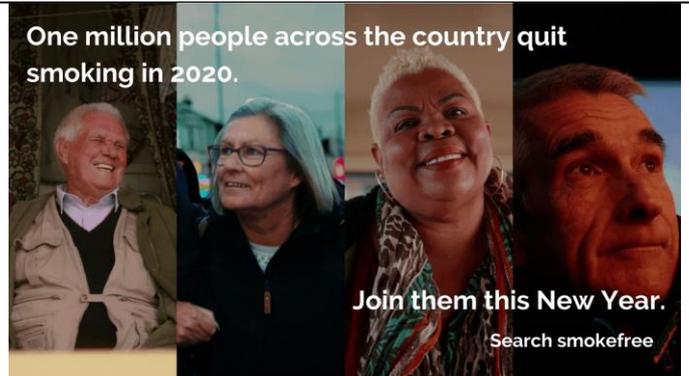
Text	Media to accompany tweet (Twitter, Facebook and Instagram sized images available in social media pack here: https://bit.ly/2WbzneS)
<p>One million smokers in the UK improved their health by quitting in 2020.</p> <p>Will you join them in 2021?</p> <p>For help visit www.nhs.uk/smokefree</p> <p>#TodayIsTheDay #MakeTheChange</p> <p>youtu.be/HICGAaj9D1M</p>	<p>FULL VIDEO (available at https://youtu.be/HICGAaj9D1M)</p>
<p>[NAME] is supporting the campaign for smokers to quit this January.</p> <p>Make today the day to take the first step on your quit journey, visit www.nhs.uk/smokefree</p> <p>youtu.be/HICGAaj9D1M</p>	<p>FULL VIDEO (available at https://youtu.be/HICGAaj9D1M)</p>

2020 saw the highest number of quitters since the indoor smoking ban in 2007.

Will you join them in 2021?

For help visit www.nhs.uk/smokefree

#TodayIsTheDay #MakeTheChange



If you stop smoking, 2021 will be the year you improve your health and put money in back in your pocket.

To find out how much you can save visit <http://bit.ly/2MDwySF>

There's never been a more important time to quit – to get started visit www.nhs.uk/smokefree



However long you've smoked, it's never too late to quit.

Quitting improves your health and increases your wealth at any age – for tips, tools and support to stop visit www.nhs.uk/smokefree

#TodayIsTheDay



If you stop smoking, 2021 will be the year you improve your health.

Smoking causes 16 types of cancer, heart disease and stroke.

There's never been a more important time to quit – to get started visit <http://www.nhs.uk/smokefree>

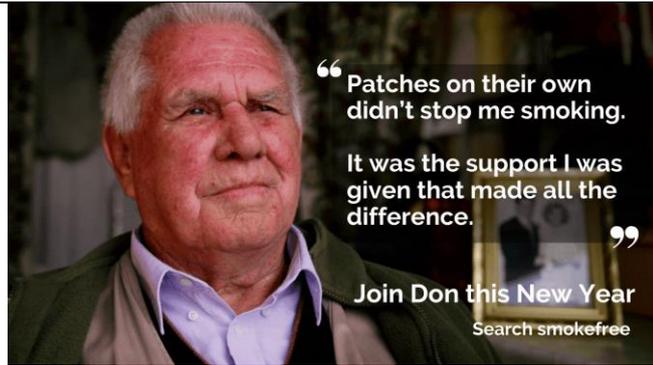


Even if you've tried before, don't give up on giving up.

There's plenty of online support and advice which can improve your chances of success.

Visit www.nhs.uk/smokefree and start your quitting journey.

#TodayIsTheDay



Quitting improves your health and increases your wealth at any age.

Find out how much you can save at <http://bit.ly/2MDwySF>

For tips, tools and support to stop visit www.nhs.uk/smokefree

#TodayIsTheDay

