

Medway Council Smokefree Supplementary Guidance

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1. Introduction

This Guidance Document is designed to accompany Medway Council's Smokefree Policy and will provide Council staff with detailed information on the impact of smoking and passive smoking, help available for those that want to quit and information on other local tobacco control issues.

In October 2018, Medway Council signed 'The Local Government Declaration on Tobacco Control' to evidence its commitment to ensuring tobacco control is part of mainstream public health work and taking comprehensive action to address the harm from smoking ⁽¹⁾.

The government ambition is for a Smokefree generation (adult smoking rates <5%) by 2030. According to Action on Smoking (ASH) if 30% of smokers continue to make one quit attempt every year, we will reach 5% by 2043 ⁽³⁾. However, if 50% of smokers made an annual quit attempt, we could get to 5% smoking prevalence by 2029 ⁽³⁾.

2. Effects of Smoking

Smoking impacts on many areas of Council concern including:

- Health of children and adults
- School attendance rates
- Debt and child poverty
- Premature death, pregnancy complications and infant mortality
- Mobility and ability to live independently
- Workplace productivity
- Litter, street-scene and fire risk

- Ability to enjoy and access leisure and sport

The NHS Long Term Plan states that smoking rates have fallen significantly but they still account for more years of life lost than any other modifiable risk factor ⁽⁴⁾.

Smoking is the single biggest preventable cause of death and ill health in England, leading to over 35,000 deaths in the South East ⁽⁵⁾ and approximately one in four acute hospital beds in England are occupied by smokers ⁽⁶⁾.

Smoking also causes around 7 out of every 10 cases of lung cancer (70%) ⁽⁷⁾. It also causes cancer in many other parts of the body (mouth, throat, oesophagus, bladder, bowel and many others), damages your health and blood circulation and causes various lung conditions (such as Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease, bronchitis and emphysema).

All inhaled tobacco products are harmful to health, regardless of whether the individual smokes cigarettes, cigars, roll-ups, a pipe, beedi or any other smoking device.

3. Passive Smoking (also known as secondhand smoke)

Secondhand smoke (SHS) is formed from the burning of cigarettes and other tobacco products and from smoke exhaled by the smoker ⁽⁸⁾. The smoke that passes into the environment from the smouldering cigarette between puffs (sidestream smoke) is the principal contributor to SHS ⁽⁸⁾.

As a result, the passive smoker also inhales all of the toxins and carcinogens present in the SHS. The short-term effects of exposure to SHS include eye irritation, headaches, coughs, sore throat, dizziness and nausea ⁽⁹⁾. In the long-term, passive smokers suffer an increased risk of a range of smoking-related diseases. Exposure to other people's smoke increases the risk of lung cancer in non-smokers by 20-30% and coronary heart disease by 25-35% ⁽⁹⁾.

4. Smoking Cessation - 'Helping you quit your way' –

If a staff member wants to quit smoking, they can access free support from the Medway Stop Smoking Service (MSSS). This team is part of the Public Health Directorate at Medway Council and offers a wide range of quit options for individuals to choose from to set them on their smokefree journey.

To find out the most up-to-date service provision, please visit <https://quit.abettermedway.co.uk/> or contact the Advice Centre 0800 234 6805 or medwaystopsmokingservice@nhs.net.

The service also provides digital options for accessing support:

1. Text to Quit

Prefer texting? Get support, tips and even vouchers for prescriptions, all sent straight to your phone.

2. 'My Quit Route' App

We now have our own stop smoking app, providing steps, goals and lots of useful techniques to help you quit. Free to download from the App Store (Apple devices) or the Play Store (Android devices).

What you can expect from us when you access the service?

Week 1: your specialist advisor will explain the treatment options available, discuss your smoking habits and routines and agree a treatment plan.

Week 2: your specialist advisor will help you choose the right medication for you and agree a Quit Date realistic for you. You will be issued with your nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) products or given a prescription for Champix (prescription charges may apply).

Week 3-7: these sessions are for you to discuss managing urges to smoke, risky triggers, relapse prevention techniques, weight management, stress management and dealing with difficult situations.

What do we need from you?

- ✓ Determination to quit for good
- ✓ Commitment to attend all 7 weeks with your specialist advisor
- ✓ A belief that you can quit for good

Whichever option you choose, you will receive a friendly, flexible support service with an excellent success rate; you are **THREE TIMES** more likely to quit smoking successfully with support compared to quitting alone.

The support provided by MSSS is available to anyone wanting help to quit in Medway. If Medway Council clients, service users or staff require help to quit smoking, please refer directly to MSSS using the contact options above.

5. Electronic Cigarettes (e-cigarettes)

What are they?

E-cigarettes (EC), also known as vapes, are battery-powered devices that simulate the sensation of smoking. These devices heat a liquid to generate an aerosol, or a 'vapour', which the user then inhales. The liquids typically contain flavourings, additives and nicotine. E-cigarettes typically consist of a mouthpiece, battery and cartridge or tank containing e-liquid solution.

E-cigarettes vary in design and shape. There are four main generations:

1. Cig-a-likes: one-time disposable products (often referred to as cigalikes)

2. 'Tank' or vape pens: an e-cigarette with a rechargeable atomiser and a tank which needs to be filled with an e-liquid.
3. Pods: rechargeable devices, often shaped like a USB stick or a pebble and operating with e-liquid capsules.
4. Mods: a more complex tank model where users can manually customise the device, such as adjusting the power.

Whilst first generation e-cigarettes physically resemble cigarettes, newer and more popular models look very different and do not resemble conventional cigarettes.

What are the risks?

According to evidence reviews by Public Health England and recent studies EC are around 95% safer for users than smoking ⁽¹⁰⁾.

There is also little to no evidence of harm to bystanders from exposure to EC vapour ⁽¹⁰⁾. However, people with respiratory conditions can be sensitive to a range of environmental irritants, which could include e-cigarette vapour.

To minimise the impact on others who may be sensitive to the EC vapour, users should; avoid vaping near open windows and entrances/exits and be considerate to bystanders or those walking by when exhaling e-cigarette vapour. Vapers should also reduce the production of visible vapour if their device allows them to do so.

EC are the most popular stop smoking aid in England, with almost all users either ex-smokers or current smokers ⁽¹¹⁾. There is a concern that e-cigarettes appeal to young people who have never smoked, but research shows those who have never smoked who use EC at least weekly remains very low (0.2% of 11-18 year olds in 2018) ⁽¹²⁾.

In 2019 there was an outbreak of serious lung disease in the US, however evidence suggests this was caused by people vaping the cannabis derivative tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) oil and vitamin E acetate ⁽¹⁶⁾. E-cigarettes containing nicotine are more tightly regulated in the UK than the US, and the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) is responsible for overseeing the tobacco regulations. The main chemicals under suspicion in the US, THC and Vitamin E acetate oil, are not permitted in the UK.

If a vaper experiences any suspected side effects or safety concerns with e-cigarettes or e-liquids, they should report them to the [MHRA Yellow Card Scheme](#)

Are e-cigarettes regulated?

All e-cigarettes must adhere to regulations within the Revised EU TPD Tobacco Products Directive (EU TPD) ⁽¹³⁾, translated into UK law through the Tobacco and Related Products Regulations 2016 (TRPR).

E-cigarettes sold in the UK must meet these requirements:

- restrict e-cigarette tanks to a capacity of no more than 2ml
- restrict the maximum volume of nicotine-containing e-liquid for sale in one refill container to 10ml
- restrict e-liquids to a nicotine strength of no more than 20mg/ml
- require nicotine-containing products or their packaging to be child-resistant and tamper evident
- ban certain ingredients including colourings, caffeine and taurine
- include new labelling requirements and warnings
- require all e-cigarettes and e-liquids be notified to MHRA before they can be sold

A list of products which have been notified to the MHRA can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/e-cigarettes-regulations-for-consumer-products>.

There is a developing body of evidence that shows e-cigarettes are an effective quitting aid, but to date there are no products currently on the market in Britain licensed as medicines.

Smokers who wish to quit using an e-cigarette can receive behavioural support from [Medway Stop Smoking Service](#).

6. Illicit Tobacco

This is mainly found in the form of cigarettes and hand-rolling tobacco sold cheaper than normal market prices. Since May 2016 all tobacco products sold in the UK must follow adhere to 'Standardised Packaging' regulations.

Standardised packaging means that tobacco packets must:

- be a standard colour (pantone 448C)
- not include flavoured tobacco (menthol banned from May 2020)
- not contain lite or low tar cigarettes
- be a minimum pack size of 20
- be the standard cuboid box with standard opening mechanism
- have health warnings across 65% of the front and back of packs
- include a UK Duty Paid fiscal stamp.

Products sold in the UK not following 'standardised packaging' regulations are illegal.

Illicit tobacco comes in three distinct forms:

- Counterfeit (fake) - cheap products made to look like genuine brands
- Smuggled - brought in illegally from abroad in large quantities without paying UK duty.
- Cheap whites - new brands of cigarettes and hand rolling tobacco which cannot be bought legitimately in the UK.

Although it may be the cheap option, illicit tobacco is against the law and has many adverse and far-reaching consequences.

- It makes it easier for children to begin smoking as sellers will target children to make an easy profit.
- Criminals selling illegal tobacco are often linked to serious organised crime groups (OCG's) and their profits strengthen gangs and their grip on vulnerable people in Medway.
- Illegal tobacco is completely unregulated, meaning various ingredients could have been added, volumes of ingredients vary and yields of chemicals such as lead, arsenic and formaldehyde tend to be much higher
- Counterfeit cigarettes do not contain an inbuilt reduced ignition propensity (RIP) mechanism and therefore do not self-extinguish, presenting a significant fire risk.

To confidentially share information about illicit tobacco sales in Medway, report [online](#), call Medway Trading Standards Hotline on 01634 334455 or email consumer.protection@medway.gov.uk.

7. Underage Sales

Children in Medway should be able to grow up without an addiction to smoking. The younger a person tries/starts smoking they increase the likelihood of harm as early uptake is associated with subsequent heavier smoking, higher levels of dependency, a lower chance of quitting, and higher mortality ⁽¹⁴⁾.

We rely on people selling tobacco to act responsibly and protect children by not selling to under 18s. If you know a shop, private address or person in Medway that is selling tobacco products to under 18s, you should call the Trading Standards Hotline on 01634 334455 or email underage.sales@medway.gov.uk

8. Other Tobacco Products

'Heat-not-burn' devices

In heated tobacco products, processed tobacco is heated instead of being combusted. They must not be confused with e-cigarettes which do not heat tobacco.

The latest PHE evidence states that 'heat-not-burn' products may be considerably less harmful than tobacco cigarettes but more harmful than e-cigarettes ⁽¹⁰⁾.

Shisha (also known as Sheesha or Hookah)

This is typically a loose-leaf tobacco mixed with molasses and flavourings that is smoked using a water pipe. As the product is smoked and generally contains tobacco, it is as harmful as using any other inhaled tobacco product.

Even tobacco-free shisha is not safe because smokers still inhale carbon monoxide and toxins from the coal or charcoal used in the water pipe. Breathing in secondhand

shisha smoke also poses serious health risks. The fact that the product is smoked through water does not filter out dangerous toxins or nicotine.

Smokeless Tobacco

These products are often sucked or chewed (eg. Paan masala or gutkha), dry snuff (a fine tobacco powder that is sniffed) or creamy snuff (a tobacco toothpaste). They are often illegally imported, avoid paying duty and have inadequate health warnings so users may not be aware of the risks.

Smokeless tobacco products contain nicotine and are therefore highly addictive. They also contain a multitude of toxins and because they are often chewed or sucked, these toxins can cause several health problems including cancer of the mouth and throat. Rates of mouth and throat cancer are highest in South Asian communities and are directly linked to oral tobacco use.

9. Tobacco Litter

Tobacco litter should always be disposed of safely. Carelessly discarded cigarettes can remain smouldering at over 700°C and are responsible for approximately 7% of accidental fires in England ⁽¹⁵⁾.

As well as being unsightly discarded tobacco litter (butts, packets etc...) on the floor normalises smoking and in turn is a risk factor in contributing to youth uptake of smoking.

Approximately 6 tonnes of cigarette butts are discarded as street litter in in Medway each year. This is equivalent to 241 standard wheelie bins each year ⁽¹⁵⁾.

Dropping smoking litter is an offence and if caught you can be charged a fine of £150. Please dispose of litter responsibly. You can request a mini-bin (portable ashtray) from the Tobacco Control Team in Public Health by calling 01634 334800.

For more information on any of the subjects discussed in this guidance document, please visit www.medway.gov.uk/abettermedway or contact the Tobacco Control Team on 01634 334800 or tobacco.control@medway.gov.uk.

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