

Quick reference guide

Preventing the uptake of smoking by children and young people

This quick reference guide presents the recommendations made in 'Mass-media and point-of-sales measures to prevent the uptake of smoking by children and young people'. It is for all those with a remit to improve the health and wellbeing of children and young people under 18. This includes those working in the NHS, local authorities, the criminal justice system and the wider public, voluntary and community sectors. It is also aimed at the private sector, in particular the retail industry and mass-media services. In addition, it may be of interest to children, young people and their carers, as well as other members of the public.

Mass-media and point-of-sales measures should be combined with other prevention activities as part of a comprehensive tobacco control strategy. Such a strategy is defined by the US Surgeon General, World Health Organization and others as encompassing price and regulation policies, education programmes, cessation support services and community programmes. It should be sufficiently extensive and sustained to have a reasonable chance of success.

When implementing the recommendations, careful consideration should be given to the potential impact on health inequalities.

The guidance complements and supports a range of NICE publications on how to help people to stop smoking. Topics covered include: services in primary care, pharmacies, local authorities and workplaces, particularly for manual working groups, pregnant women and hard to reach communities; and the use of varenicline. NICE is also working on guidance specifically for local authorities and NHS primary care services on school-based interventions to prevent the uptake of smoking among children (see related NICE guidance on page 6 for a list of publications).

NICE public health guidance 14

This guidance was developed using the NICE public health intervention process.

NICE public health guidance makes recommendations on the promotion of good health and the prevention of ill health. This guidance represents the views of the Institute and was arrived at after careful consideration of the evidence available. Implementation of this guidance is the responsibility of local commissioners and/or providers. Commissioners and providers are reminded that it is their responsibility to implement the guidance, in their local context, in light of their duties to avoid unlawful discrimination and to have regard to promoting equality of opportunity. Nothing in this guidance should be interpreted in a way which would be inconsistent with compliance with those duties.

- Mass-media interventions use a range of methods to communicate a message. This can include local, regional or national television, radio and newspapers, and leaflets and booklets. It can also include new media. In this document, 'new media' refers to communication via the Internet or mobile phone. On the Internet, it can involve anything from real-time streaming of information and podcasts, to discussions with experts and the use of social networking sites. (An example of real-time streaming of information is the 'breaking news' text that appears along the bottom of the screen during some TV news programmes.) The aim of mass-media interventions is to reach large numbers of people without being reliant on face-to-face contact.
- Point-of-sales interventions take place at the point where tobacco could be sold. Primarily, they aim to deter shopkeepers from making illegal sales.

Recommendations

Mass media

Recommendation 1: campaign development

Who is the target population?

- Children and young people under 18.

Who should take action?

- Organisers and planners of national, regional and local mass-media campaigns.
- Local and regional commissioners and planners (including regional tobacco programme managers) with a remit to improve the health and wellbeing of children and young people under 18. This includes those working in the NHS, local authorities and tobacco control alliances.

What action should they take?

- Develop national, regional or local mass-media campaigns to prevent the uptake of smoking among young people under 18. The campaigns should:
 - be informed by research that identifies and understands the target audiences
 - consider groups which epidemiological data indicate have higher than average or rising rates of smoking
 - be developed in partnership with: national, regional and local government and non-governmental organisations, the NHS, children and young people, media professionals (using their best practice), healthcare professionals, public relations agencies and local anti-tobacco activists.
- The campaign(s) should not be developed in conjunction with the tobacco industry.

Recommendation 2: campaign messages

Who is the target population?

- Children and young people under 18.

Who should take action?

- Organisers and planners of national, regional and local mass-media campaigns.
- Local and regional commissioners and planners (including regional tobacco programme managers) with a remit to improve the health and wellbeing of children and young people under 18. This includes those working in the NHS, local authorities and tobacco control alliances.

What action should they take?

- Convey messages based on strategic research and qualitative pre- and post-testing with the target audiences. These could include messages that:
 - elicit a strong, negative emotional reaction (for example, loss, disgust, fear) while providing sources of further information and support
 - portray tobacco as a deadly product, not just as a drug that is inappropriate for children and young people to use
 - use personal testimonials that children and young people can relate to
 - are presented by celebrities to whom children and young people can relate (taking care to avoid credibility and other problems)
 - empower children and young people to refuse offers of cigarettes
 - include graphic images portraying smoking's detrimental effect on health as well as appearance (for example, its effect on the appearance of skin and teeth).
- Repeat the messages in a number of ways and regularly update them to keep the audience's attention.

Recommendation 3: campaign strategies

Who is the target population?

- Children and young people under 18.

Who should take action?

- Organisers and planners of national, regional and local mass-media campaigns.
- Local and regional commissioners and planners (including regional tobacco programme managers) with a remit to improve the health and wellbeing of children and young people under 18. This includes those working in the NHS, local authorities and tobacco control alliances.

What action should they take?

- Use a range of strategies as part of any campaign to reduce the attractiveness of tobacco and contribute to changing society's attitude towards tobacco use, so that smoking is not considered the norm by any group. Strategies could include:
 - generating news by writing articles, commissioning newsworthy research and issuing press releases
 - using posters, brochures and other materials to promote the campaign
 - using opportunities arising from new media.
- The campaign(s) should not be delivered in conjunction with (or supported by) the tobacco industry.
- National campaigns should exploit the full range of media used by children and young people, including television advertising.

- Regional and local campaigns should build on, and be integrated with, a national communications strategy to tackle tobacco use. Regional campaigns should use regional press and radio (local campaigns should use local press and radio) to reach specific audiences and to get unpaid coverage in the press. They should also use regional and local networks (as appropriate) to generate as much publicity as possible.
- Effective practice, including effective local and regional media messages, should be shared locally, regionally and nationally.
- Campaigns should run for 3–5 years.
- Use process and outcome measures to ensure campaigns are being delivered correctly and effectively. For recommendations on the principles of evaluation, see 'Behaviour change at population, community and individual levels' (NICE public health guidance 6).
- encouraging and providing all local authorities with support to:
 - ◆ enforce legislation to prevent under-age tobacco sales, in accordance with their statutory role and best practice
 - ◆ undertake regular audits of test purchasing to ensure consistent practice and enforcement
- encouraging national organisations and local authorities to provide education and training programmes for trading standards officers
- working with government agencies and national organisations to ensure retailers and others, such as publicans, are aware of legislation on under-age tobacco sales (including the fact that it covers vending machines)
- ensuring magistrates are aware of the:
 - ◆ potential damage that smoking can do to children and young people and hence, the need to deter non-compliance among retailers
 - ◆ range of measures available to deter retailers from making under-age tobacco sales, including the use of fines up to level four on the standard scale and the granting of either a 'restricted premises' or 'restricted sales order' (Criminal Justice and Immigration Act, due to come into force March 2009).

- Ensure enforcement efforts are sustained over a number of years.

Illegal sales

Recommendation 4

Who is the target population?

- Children and young people under 18.

Who should take action?

- National government.

What action should they take?

- Support better enforcement of existing legislation by:
 - working with the Local Better Regulation Office to make illegal tobacco sales a higher priority for local authorities, thereby increasing inspection and enforcement activities

Recommendation 5

Who is the target population?

- Retailers.

Who should take action?

- Local authorities and trading standards bodies.

What action should they take?

- Ensure retailers are aware of legislation prohibiting under-age tobacco sales by:
 - providing training and guidance on how to avoid illegal sales
 - encouraging them to:
 - ◆ request proof of age from anyone who appears younger than 18 who attempts to buy cigarettes and get it verified. (Examples of proof-of-age include a passport or driving licence or cards bearing the nationally-accredited 'PASS' hologram)
 - ◆ complete the 'Age restricted products refusal register' for each tobacco sale refused on the grounds of age
 - running campaigns to publicise the legislation. These could include details of possible fines that retailers can face, where tobacco is being sold illegally and successful local prosecutions, as well as health information.
- Make it as difficult as possible for young people under 18 to get cigarettes and other tobacco products. In particular, exercise a statutory duty under the Children and Young Persons (protection from tobacco) Act 1991 to prevent under-age sales by:
 - prosecuting retailers who persistently break the law
- taking enforcement action if tobacco vending machines are being used by children and young people under 18
- undertaking test purchases each year, using local data to detect breaches in the law and auditing them regularly to ensure consistent practice across all local authorities.
- Ensure owners of vending machines and those who have them on their premises take all reasonable precautions to prevent under-age tobacco sales, in accordance with the law.
- Give practical advice on how to avoid illegal sales via vending machines (for example, they should be located in places where they can easily be controlled or supervised). The National Association of Cigarette Machine Operators (NACMO) has issued guidance on the positioning of vending machines.
- Work with other agencies to identify areas where under-age tobacco sales are a particular problem.
- Work with the Local Better Regulation Office to improve inspection and enforcement activities related to illegal tobacco sales.
- Assess whether an advocacy campaign is needed to support enforcement. Any such campaign should be run in accordance with best practice and provide a clear, published statement on how to deal with under-age tobacco sales.
- Actively discourage use of enforcement and related campaigns developed by the tobacco industry.
- Ensure efforts to reduce illegal tobacco sales by retailers are sustained.

Implementation tools

NICE has developed tools to help organisations implement this guidance. For details see our website at www.nice.org.uk/PH014

Further information

You can download the following documents from www.nice.org.uk/PH014

- A quick reference guide (this document) for professionals and the public.
- The guidance, which includes all the recommendations, details of how they were developed and evidence statements.
- Supporting documents, including an evidence review and an economic analysis.

For printed copies of the quick reference guide, phone NICE publications on 0845 003 7783 or email publications@nice.org.uk and quote N1627

Related NICE guidance

Published

- Smoking cessation services in primary care, pharmacies, local authorities and workplaces, particularly for manual working groups, pregnant women and hard to reach communities. NICE public health guidance 10 (2008). Available from: www.nice.org.uk/PH010
- Behaviour change at population, community and individual levels. NICE public health guidance 6 (2007). Available from: www.nice.org.uk/PH006
- Varenicline for smoking cessation. NICE technology appraisal 123 (2007). Available from: www.nice.org.uk/TA123

- Workplace health promotion: how to help employees to stop smoking. NICE public health guidance 5 (2007). Available from: www.nice.org.uk/PHI005
- Brief interventions and referral for smoking cessation in primary care and other settings. NICE public health guidance 1 (2006). Available from: www.nice.org.uk/PHI001
- The clinical effectiveness and cost effectiveness of bupropion (Zyban) and nicotine replacement therapy for smoking cessation. NICE technology appraisal 39 (2002). Available from: www.nice.org.uk/TA39

Under development

- School-based interventions to prevent the uptake of smoking. NICE public health guidance (due December 2009).

Updating the recommendations

This guidance will be updated as needed. Information on the progress of any update will be posted on the NICE website at www.nice.org.uk/PH014

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