

National Institute for Health and Care Excellence

Centre for Public Health

Review proposal

Consideration of an update of the public health guideline on 'Mass media and point-of-sale measures to prevent the uptake of smoking by children and young people' (PH14)

1 Background information

Guidance issue date: July 2008

First 3 year review: October 2011

Second 3 year review: July 2014

The guideline can be found at: <http://www.nice.org.uk/ph14>

2 Recommendation

The guidance should be updated.

3 Process for updating guidance

Public health guidance is reviewed every 3 years to determine whether all or part of it should be updated.

The process for updating NICE public health guidance is as follows:

- NICE convenes an expert group to consider whether any new evidence or significant changes in policy and practice would be likely to lead to substantively different recommendations. The expert group consists of members (including co-optees) of the original committee that developed the guidance, the review team that produced the original evidence reviews or other academics in the field, representatives from practice and representatives of relevant government departments.

- NICE consults with stakeholders on its proposal for updating the guidance (this review consultation document).
- NICE may amend its proposal, in light of feedback from stakeholder consultation.
- NICE determines where any guidance update fits within its work programme, alongside other priorities.

The update review decision is due to be published in September 2014.

4 Consideration of the evidence and practice

The guidance was reviewed by an expert group convened on 17th June 2014.

In addition to the members and co-optees from the original committees that developed the guidance, the meeting was also attended by representatives from the CMO's office, the Department of Health, Public Health England and ASH.

The expert group discussed published and ongoing research of relevance to the current recommendations. They also discussed changes to policy, legislation and practice that might affect the recommendations.

Policy Context

The group highlighted the following as relevant to any update of the guidance:

- General election in May 2015 and its implications for any future government's tobacco control plan
- Outcome of the government's consultation on standard packaging
- Tobacco display restrictions extended to all retailers from April 2015
- Proxy purchasing of tobacco for underage becomes an offence from April 2015

- Potential legislation (and related media campaigns) around smoking in cars with children present
- Any regulations related to the supply and marketing of electronic cigarettes

Mass media

Recommendations 1, 2 and 3

The expert group felt that these recommendations were still applicable to traditional mass media campaigns using TV, radio and billboard formats. However, the recommendations were felt to be outdated given the role that new media – and social media in particular – now plays in communicating messages to large numbers of people and especially young people.

Further, in terms of inequalities, the group noted that traditional mass media campaigns tend to have the greatest impact on groups who need it the least.

Where campaigns are undertaken, the group felt that NICE needed to give stronger guidance about the value of undertaking these at local level compared with the efficiencies that can be achieved through regionally coordinated activities.

The group also discussed the impact that smoking cessation campaigns aimed at adults can have on both cessation and prevention among children and young people. In particular, they felt that campaigns aimed at denormalising smoking among adults could help deter children from taking up smoking.

There was a brief discussion about whether the marketing of electronic cigarettes might act as a gateway to – or diversion from – cigarette smoking among children and young people. Related to this is the marketing of electronic cigarettes at the point-of-sale (see recommendations 4 and 5).

Illegal Sales

Recommendations 4 and 5

The expert group felt that the current focus on point-of-sale measures was insufficient and that there was a need for recommendations about interventions to reduce proxy sales and illicit tobacco. They noted the potential for recommendations to impact inequalities given that access to illicit tobacco was greatest in more deprived areas.

The group also noted that magistrates are very strongly influenced by sentencing guidelines and so recommendations needed to address these in order to have any real impact.

As with the previous review, there was a brief discussion about the case for licensing cigarette retailers. A review of the relevant evidence would be required if this is to be considered for inclusion in a future update. In addition, clarification would be required over whether primary legislation is needed to enable local authorities to introduce such a scheme.

The current recommendations also require some factual corrections relating to vending machines (illegal since 2011) and the names of some organisations (the Local Better Regulation Office is now called the Delivering Better Regulation Office).

Other approaches

The expert group briefly discussed other approaches to reducing the uptake of smoking by children and young people which have not yet been considered by NICE, e.g. family- and community-based approaches. The group felt there was a role for interventions that aim to change social norms among adults (eg smoking in cars and homes) having an impact on the uptake of smoking by children and young people. The group also noted that NICE has not published any guidance on smoking cessation for children and young people.

5 Implementation and post publication feedback

There has been nothing identified through post publication enquiries or implementation feedback that would indicate a need to update the guidance.

6 Equality and diversity considerations

There is no evidence to indicate that the guidance does not comply with anti-discrimination and equalities legislation.

7 Conclusion

The expert group concluded that although the current recommendations were still valid (subject to some factual and terminology corrections), there were a number of areas within the original scope that could now be better addressed by examining the latest evidence.

In particular, the guidance needed to be brought up-to-date with recommendations relating to new media and its potential for changing social norms around smoking.

There is also a need for recommendations relating to proxy sales and the supply of illicit tobacco.

8 Next steps

Following consultation on this review proposal, a final recommendation will be made to NICE's Guidance Executive. Following that, the final review decision will be made available on the NICE website in November 2014.

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