

Costing statement: Prevention of uptake of smoking by children and young people

Background

The guidance recommends the use of mass media campaign and point of sale interventions to prevent the uptake of smoking by children and young people under 18. These interventions should be combined with other prevention activities as part of a comprehensive tobacco control strategy.

Guidance recommendations

The NICE guidance on the prevention of uptake of smoking by children and young people (NICE public health intervention guidance 14) includes 5 recommendations.

- Mass media (recommendation 1 – 3) covering the campaign development, campaign messages and the campaign strategies to be used for mass media interventions.
- Illegal sales (recommendation 4) recommending support by the national government for enforcement of legislation.
- Illegal sales (recommendation 5) outlining actions that local authorities and trading standards should take to ensure retailers are aware of legislation prohibiting under-age tobacco sales.

Resource impact

The following describes some of the resource implications; in particular, it identifies areas where there may be a financial impact and gives some examples of the costs involved.

Mass media

Mass media campaigns are usually run at a national level by the Department of Health and as such, the resources for implementing such campaigns already exist. However, it is likely that additional resources will be needed to deliver campaigns aimed at children and young people. The exact costs involved will depend on the aims and objectives of the activities delivered at national, regional and local level.

Financial resources will be required to cover the costs of developing, producing and placing advertisements. The mix of media used (e.g. TV, radio, press, posters) and the percentage of the population capable of accessing the advertisements will have a big impact on overall costs.

For example, in some local newspapers a full page colour display advertisement measuring 34cms by 26.8cms costs £28,000 and in other local papers a similar size advertisement costs about £4000. Advertising via the internet depends on the specification of the advertisement. For example a box advert on the top corner of a page could cost £250 per month and one at the middle could cost £200 per month.

Additional costs will be incurred for strategic communication's research and pre- and post-testing of advertisements and how the campaign is managed and co-ordinated may also have an impact.

Illegal sales (Point of sales)

The Health Act 2006 included the power to change the age at which one can buy tobacco from 16 to 18 years. The children and young persons (Protection from Tobacco) Act 1991 provided enforcement actions by local authorities to prevent the sale of tobacco to under-age persons.

Many local authorities and trading standards bodies already have policies and procedures in place to enforce illegal sales regulations. However, in organisations where they do not exist, additional resources maybe needed.

Raising awareness of the legislation may require resources to be deployed at a national, regional and local level. Additional resources may also be required at a local level for enforcement action. The resources would be required for recruiting Standards Officers, retraining existing Standards Officers, awareness campaigns, training retailers and for prosecuting those who act outside the law.

There are also potential costs associated with setting up enforcement protocols, for example “test purchasing surveys” and to support an ongoing compliance testing system that includes inspections and test purchases.

Other potential costs could include the provision and distribution of guidance leaflets to retailers and to owners of vending machines highlighting their responsibilities in preventing under age sales of tobacco.

Savings and benefits

Implementing this guidance may bring the following benefits associated with healthcare costs:

- A reduction in smoking related respiratory tract infection and wheezing in children and young people and associated healthcare costs treating these conditions is likely to be a more immediate benefit. Savings could include avoidance of inpatient hospital admissions – the Payment by Results tariff for emergency admissions for children is £625 for asthma or wheezing and £554 for upper respiratory tract disorders
- Likely lifetime savings in healthcare resulting from a reduction in the prevalence of smoking in England over time. Savings are likely to arise from the reduced need to provide healthcare to a diminishing number of smokers over time. For example, the annual cost of treating a patient with lung cancer is estimated to be £5,500. In 2000 the annual cost of treating all smoking related diseases in the NHS in England was estimated to be £1.5 billion.
- Savings arising from the reduction in the need for smoking cessation services in future.

- Long term indirect savings as a result of increased productivity of non-smokers because of their reduced period of sick days and longer working life (Workplace interventions to promote smoking cessation, NICE public health guidance 5). The total annual indirect costs to industry were estimated to be £5 billion per annum – this includes the cost of fire-damage in 2000.

Conclusion

The introduction of a mass media campaign to tackle the uptake of smoking in children and young people will require additional funding at national, regional and local level if existing resources for tobacco control are not to be diverted from current strategies to tackle tobacco use.

The financial impact will depend on the aims and objectives of the activities delivered at national, regional and local level and the particular mix of mass media formats. The appendix below gives some indication of the activities that might be undertaken at the local level and how you might consider estimating the local cost impact. It is likely that additional resources will also be required for implementing some aspects of the guidance directed at activities to curtail illegal sales of cigarettes to children and young people.

Appendix

Mass media and point of sale interventions

Use this template to calculate the cost of implementing a local mass media campaign and point of sale measures to prevent uptake of smoking by children and young people. You will need to structure how you wish to carry out the whole campaign, but the following headings may help you.

Description	Number required	Cost per unit £	Total cost £
Radio campaign			
Local newspapers			
Leaflets			
Brochures			
Internet advertisement			
Mobile phone (Text messaging)			
Inspections			
Test purchases			
Training			