

6th December 2023

Birmingham and Solihull Integrated Care Partnership: Joint Position Statement on Smokefree 2030

Birmingham and Solihull's Integrated Care Partnership is a statutory committee jointly formed between the NHS Integrated Care Board and local authorities. We bring together a broad alliance of partners concerned with improving the care, health and wellbeing of the 1.3 million people living in Birmingham and Solihull.

As a partnership, we are committed to delivering improvement in health outcomes for the residents of Birmingham and Solihull. Our 10 Year Strategy, supported by an outcomes framework, sets out ambitious plans to improve health and reduce health inequalities. Tackling smoking and preventing children and young people from ever becoming addicted to smoking is key to delivering this change and reducing the burden of preventable disease.

Tobacco is a uniquely lethal product which kills up to 2 in 3 long term users when used as intended. It places a significant burden on health, social care and the wider economy damaging productivity through early disease and death. Smoking is a key driver of health inequalities and causes 16 types of cancer, heart disease, COPD, strokes and a myriad of other health harms. Smoking is an addiction most start as teenagers rather than an adult choice with 4 in 5 starting before the age of 20. Among those who try smoking 70% will go on to be daily smokers.

In Birmingham, 140,652 people smoke with 18,610 smokers in Solihull. This equates to 16% of the population in Birmingham and 10.9% in Solihull. Smoking is estimated to cost £754 million in lost productivity, £45 million in healthcare costs and £13.5 million as a result of smoking related fires across Birmingham and Solihull.

As a system, we welcome new plans to achieve a smoke-free England and Wales by 2030. In 2022, we set up Birmingham and Solihull's Tobacco Control Alliance to bring together local partners to renew our efforts to work together to reduce harmful tobacco use.

There is much we can and are doing to play our part. But we are clear that we need the proposed new legislation to increase the age of sale of cigarettes to have maximum impact on local smoking prevalence. We note that raising the age of sale from 16 to 18 in 2007 in England and raising the age of sale from 18 to 21 in the US more recently both reduced rates of smoking in the relevant age group by around a third.

As a partnership we pledge to:

- Advocate for and support new legislation to increase the age of sale of cigarettes.
- Take steps to reduce smoking in our workforces and work-places
- Increase the number of patients in our hospitals who are supported to quit as in patients
- Increase the number of women supported to quit smoking in pregnancy
- Expand the reach of our community stop smoking services to reduce smoking related inequalities
- Train staff to make every contact count so they can offer patients and the public simple advice to quit
- Deploy available enforcement capacity to take illegal sales of vapes and cigarettes.
- Work with school, education and community groups to tackle youth vaping
- Monitor the impact of what we do across our partnership to reduce smoking prevalence