

Campaigning Guidance

Why local advocacy is important

People working at a local and a regional level are in a strong position to influence the political process. MPs, Lords and the media pay more attention to what local people say than national campaigning organisations such as ASH so local advocacy will be crucial in the forthcoming campaign.

What you can do

There are many ways in which you can influence public and political opinion.

- **In a professional capacity** - you can give advice and information to councillors and MPs, and encourage others in your area (health professionals, Directors of Public Health etc) to speak out.
- **Through your tobacco control alliance** - this gives you the scope to speak as a coalition of informed professionals to politicians and the media.
- **As an individual** - everyone can write a letter to their MP as a constituent or visit their surgery and explain why these issues are important to you as their constituent.

- **Write to your MP** or better still turn up at their surgery and get them to commit to
 - Protecting the ban on point of sale displays included in the Health Act 2009
 - Condemning tobacco industry attempts to over turn the law in the courts
 - Supporting calls to review Smokefree Legislation in 2010
 - Your local MP can be contacted via www.writetothem.com
- **Brief all DPHs, PCT chief executives and all relevant councillors, officers, on the legislation and seek their support in contacting MPs and Lords**
- **Write a letter** to your local newspaper opposing tobacco industry attempts to block the new law and explaining why the law is important
- **Get Local people involved.** Encourage quitters and members of the public to write to their MP and tell their story.
- **Let the Smokefree Action Coalition know** what you're doing and what response you're getting: info@smokefreeaction.org.uk

What was in the Health Act?

1) Removing tobacco from display at the point of sale

- The Act prohibits tobacco displays in large shops from 2011 and in small shops from 2013. Special rules apply to duty free and cash and carry.
- This will remove one of the remaining loop holes allowing the tobacco industry to advertise their products.
- Advertising has been banned in the UK since 2002, but since then point of sale displays have become larger and used much more aggressively to market the product.
- The effect of the legislation would take time to show, as did the ban on advertising, it is only when children have grown up without exposure to tobacco marketing that it will fully impact on smoking prevalence among young people.
- There is no evidence that it will increase smuggling or injuries as the tobacco industry claim
- More information can be found in the ASH briefing sheet.
www.ash.org.uk/files/documents/ASH_701.pdf

2) Ending sales of tobacco from vending machines

- 17% of child smokers say vending machines are a means of regularly purchasing tobacco compared with less than 5% of adult smokers who said they had purchased any tobacco from a vending machine over the last 6 months.
- 22 countries in Europe already ban the sale of tobacco from vending machines
- It is a proportionate response to the risks posed by children accessing tobacco underage.
- More information can be found in the ASH briefing sheet
www.ash.org.uk/files/documents/ASH_700.pdf and the British Heart Foundation report.
www.bhf.org.uk/publications/view_publication.aspx?ps=1000651

You can read our detailed response to industry arguments in relation to these proposals in the member's area of the Smokefree Action Coalition website www.smokefreeaction.org.uk. It's easy to become a member: simply click on "join" at the top of the page and fill in the form.