KEY FACTS

- Smoking is the UK’s single greatest cause of preventable illness and early death. More than 106,000 people in the UK die from smoking each year.

- Around 10 million adults in England smoke.

- There are now around 1.2 million fewer smokers than in 1998.

- 25% of adults smoke (23% of women, 26% of men).

- 9% of 11–15 year olds are smokers.

- Over 70% of smokers say they want to give up.

- Smoking causes a wide range of illnesses, including various cancers (lung cancer is the most significant), respiratory diseases and heart disease.

- Smoking costs the NHS between £1.4 and £1.7 billion a year in England.

- Secondhand smoke causes lung cancer, heart disease among other conditions.
Inequalities exist

- Smoking is the single biggest cause of health inequalities.
- People in lower socio-economic groups are more likely to work in places where they will be exposed to secondhand smoke.
- Some 31% of people in routine and manual groups smoke, compared with 26% of the total population.

WHAT WE HAVE DONE SINCE CHOOSING HEALTH

- A recently published independent assessment of effective tobacco control policies across Europe placed the UK top of all 25 EU countries. And second only to Iceland across a wider group of European countries.
- NHS Stop Smoking Services have expanded to help more people than ever before successfully make a supported quit attempt, with over 800,000 people remaining quit at 4 weeks in the three years to April 2006.
- Legislated to ban internet advertising of tobacco products.
- A public consultation on introducing picture warnings onto tobacco packs has recently finished. Picture warnings will start to appear on tobacco products from later in 2007.
- The Health Act 2006 provides Ministers with the power to increase the age of sale from 16 to 18. A public consultation on increasing the age of sale to 18 has recently finished.
- Brought forward proposed legislation to create new powers to ban retailers from selling tobacco products if they repeatedly flout the law. A public consultation on how best to implement this has recently finished.
- The Tackling Tobacco Smuggling Strategy was launched in March 2000, investing more than £200m in new staff and new technology. By 2003/04 the strategy had succeeded in cutting the illicit cigarette market by a quarter, to 16%.
- A refreshed strategy “New Responses to New Challenges: Reinforcing the Tackling Tobacco Smuggling Strategy” was announced in Budget 2006 aimed at reducing the illicit cigarette market still further, to 13%, and reducing the size of the illicit hand rolling tobacco market by 1200 tonnes by 2008.
- Heavyweight innovative and effective campaigns have continued to be a central plank of tobacco control activity. The tobacco campaign won two gold awards for effectiveness at the Institute of Practitioners in Advertising awards.
- In 2004 the Choosing Health White Paper set out the Government’s commitment to shift the balance significantly in favour of smokefree environments.
- In summer 2005 a detailed consultation on the exact make up of the proposed smokefree legislation was published. Some 57,000 plus responses were received.
- In autumn 2005 the Health Bill containing the smokefree clauses was published and, as a result of the consultation, the implementation date was brought forward to summer 2007.
- In January 2006 a free vote on the smokefree clauses in the Health Bill was announced for Labour MPs.
- In February 2006 MPs voted, by a 200 majority, to extend the smokefree provisions of the Health Bill to include all licensed premises and private membership clubs.
- In July 2006 the Health Act received Royal Assent.
- A consultation on the detailed smokefree Regulations under the Health Act 2006 has recently finished and legislation is on track to be in place for summer 2007.
- The NHS and Government Departments are on track to become smokefree by the end of 2006.
WHERE WE ARE HEADING

- To successfully deliver reductions in smoking levels to those set out in the Government’s PSA target the tobacco programme needs to: first, continue to do those things it is currently doing effectively, that is, in particular, run effective hard hitting mass media campaigns and ensure NHS Stop Smoking Services are performing to a high standard and NRT and new cessation aids appearing on the market are offered appropriately to smokers. Second to introduce new evidence based policies to enhance the current programme alongside continuing to deliver well those policies that are working.

- We will have established a national support team on tobacco control to disseminate best practice across all Spearhead areas, and to provide intensive support for those areas that need it.

- We will continue to target routine and manual groups to contribute to delivering reductions in health inequalities, in addition to specific work in Spearhead areas.

- The key new initiatives moving forward are:
  - Through summer 2007 legislation, have eliminated the health risks from secondhand smoke in virtually all enclosed public places and workplaces.
  - Introduced hard-hitting picture warnings onto tobacco products to better communicate the health risks of their addiction to smokers.
  - Decide whether and when to increase the age of sale from 16 to 18.
  - Introduce new powers to ban retailers from selling tobacco products if they repeatedly sell to underage children.
  - Continue to reduce the availability of cheap smuggled tobacco.
  - Work with our EU partners to introduce a standard for reduced ignition propensity cigarettes to cut home fires caused by cigarettes.
  - Work through the WHO FCTC process to improve the effective regulation of tobacco products, tackle international smuggling and combat cross-border advertising.

WE WILL HAVE DELIVERED IF

- We hit our overall target of reducing adult smoking rates to 21% or less by 2010; and smoking rates among routine and manual groups to 26% or less by 2010.