

# **Tackling Smoking: Policy on smoking in the workplace.**

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## 1 Purpose

This policy is intended to:

- Ensure that all staff and visitors to Bristol South & West Primary Care Trust premises benefit from a smoke-free environment;
- Provide opportunities and support to staff who wish to give up smoking;
- Provide a model of good practice for other NHS services and other partner organisations in implementing policies on smoking;
- Reduce the burden of premature death and illness in the wider community by promoting a comprehensive approach to tackling smoking.

## 2 Background

Smoking is the biggest preventable cause of ill health and early death in our communities. Every year, smoking results in more than 120,000 deaths in those aged over 35 in the UK. Most people who die because they smoke will develop one of the three diseases most widely associated with the habit – lung cancer, chronic obstructive lung disease or coronary heart disease. In Bristol, it is estimated that 760 deaths a year can be attributed to smoking. Tobacco smoke contains over 4,000 chemicals in the form of particles and gases, and about 60 are known or suspected to cause cancer.

Passive or involuntary smoking has been shown to be a hazard to health. Those exposed to passive smoke are at increased risk of lung cancer, nasal cancer and heart disease. In addition, passive smoking can trigger or aggravate respiratory conditions such as asthma or bronchitis. It can also irritate eyes, cause coughs and headaches and generally make non-smokers feel ill.

For more than 20 years tobacco control has been on the NHS agenda, and from 31 May 1993 the NHS was meant to be virtually smoke-free. Although much has been accomplished since that time, the NHS still faces many challenges in implementing and maintaining sustainable tobacco control policies. From 1 April 2001 all NHS bodies have been expected to have explicit policies on smoking.

Following the White Paper *Smoking Kills*<sup>1</sup> and the *National Service Framework for Coronary Heart Disease*<sup>2</sup> it is important that the primary care trust makes its policy on smoking more explicit. At the same time, with the development of the smoking cessation services it is timely to highlight the support the primary care trust can offer to staff that wish to give up smoking. Other NHS bodies and local authorities have also been asked to develop similar smoking policies. Over time, it is hoped that joint smoking policies will be agreed between the primary care trust, the local authority and other local partner agencies.

## 3 Policy Statement

This policy is based on three core principles:

Bristol South & West Primary Care Trust is committed to:

- Tackling smoking and reducing the burden of smoking-related death and illness within the NHS and across our wider communities;
- Protecting the health of all its staff and visitors by ensuring a smoke-free working environment;

- Promoting the health of its entire staff, including the health of smokers by providing opportunities and support for any staff that wish to give up smoking.

#### **4 This policy has been developed with regard to:**

- The PCT's Health & Safety Policy
- The PCT's Withholding Care Policy
- The Health & Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Steps being taken by other countries and within Parliament to ban smoking in public places
- Government initiatives and papers on tackling smoking related illnesses (see section 9).

#### **5 Ensuring smoke-free environments**

Bristol South & West Primary Care Trust has a duty under health and safety legislation to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all employees, including the working environment. Bristol South & West Primary Care Trust is committed to fulfilling this duty by providing a smoke-free environment for all staff. Moreover, over four fifths of people interviewed in a national survey on smoking-related behaviour and attitudes thought smoking should be restricted at work.<sup>3</sup>

Staff and visitors are therefore not allowed to smoke in any part of the Trust premises or grounds, including offices, corridors, toilets, car parks and immediately outside any Trust premises. Patients/ clients should not smoke inside any Trust building and should be discouraged, where appropriate, from smoking in the vicinity of Trust Premises.

Staffs based in premises not owned by the Trust are expected not to smoke in any part of the premises or grounds, including offices, corridors, toilets and car parks. Smokers are requested not to smoke immediately outside any work base.

To help smokers comply with the policy, a programme of support will be offered for those who would like help to stop smoking, as outlined in Section 6. For staff smokers who do not want to quit, support will also be available to help them manage their smoking during working hours.

#### **6 Meetings, events etc at non-PCT premises**

When attending meetings or other events at venues where smoking is permitted, staff are expected not to smoke, both because they are representing the Trust and therefore its strategy on tackling smoking, and because it is important not to expose others to passive smoke. For similar reasons staff should not be seen smoking in public while wearing uniform or trust badges.

When attending day-long or overnight events like courses or conferences, staff will be covered by this policy during their working hours. During their own time they are expected to follow the policy of the premises in which they are, and to be mindful of the effect of exposing others to passive smoke.

#### **7 Community Visits**

Staff who visit clients in their own homes are entitled to work in a smoke free environment where this is reasonably practicable. Steps to take if a client is smoking during a visit by staff:

- Request to the client that they do not smoke in the home during the visit
- Undertake a risk assessment, which should include any other relevant risks for example, if the client is smoking whilst on oxygen therapy
- Line managers provide a letter to the client requesting the client and their family not to smoke during the visit.
- If the client and/or other occupants turn down this request, the line manager can ask for and arrange an alternative venue for the appointment where reasonably practical.
- The Withholding Care policy should be consulted if the client/other occupants turn down this request.

Please note that this section may not apply when a patient/ patient's family member has for example, learning difficulties or a mental health problem that means they could not reasonably understand a request for them not to smoke. Staff should also bear in mind (e.g. before they request a letter be written by their line manager) any extenuating circumstances e.g. if the patient has just suffered a bereavement/ is under considerable stress.

## **8 Breaks**

Management will allow employees who smoke, reasonable smoking breaks, provided these do not prevent them from satisfactorily carrying out their duties and responsibilities or have a significant effect on service delivery. Time taken on smoking breaks is to be made up by the employee.

## **9 Support To Stop**

The Trust is committed to providing opportunities and support for staff that wish to give up smoking. Staff interested in stopping smoking can get help by contacting Support to Stop Bristol on:

Tel: 0117 959 5465, email [Supporttostop.Bristol@nhs.net](mailto:Supporttostop.Bristol@nhs.net)

Requests for flexible working and/or time off to enable staff to attend smoking cessation services will be received sympathetically.

Help to manage smoking during working hours is available through the same channels.

## **10 Policy Implementation**

This policy is intended to benefit all staff and visitors, and so all staff are responsible for its continued implementation. Overall responsibility for ensuring the policy is implemented, monitored and reviewed rests with the PCT Tobacco Control Co-ordinator (address below). Information on the policy will be

- circulated to all staff
- provided to all new employees
- included in the Health & Safety Policy folders
- included in Primary Care Trust handbooks, information packs and the website.

In the unlikely event of a member of staff not respecting the policy, their line manager will attempt to resolve the situation informally in the first instance. Ultimately, repeated breaches of the policy may result in disciplinary procedures.

Support to trust staff, Bristol City Council and other agencies in developing smoking policies and implementing action to tackle smoking is available from Bristol Smoking Advice Service. Contact:

*Tobacco Control Coordinator  
Health Promotion  
Somerset House  
Southmead Hospital  
Bristol, BS10 5NB  
0117 959 5462*

## **11 Monitoring the Policy**

The policy will be monitored and reviewed yearly by the Trust's Tobacco Control Coordinator.

Individual members of staff are encouraged to take any questions, complaints or concerns about the policy to the Head of Corporate Services and Governance who is based at King Square House.

## **12 References**

- 1 Secretary of State for Health (1998) *Smoking Kills: a White Paper on Tobacco* London: Stationery Office.
- 2 Department of Health *National Service Framework for Coronary Heart Disease* London: Department of Health, 2000 (<http://www.doh.gov.uk/nsf/coronary.htm>).
- 3 Health Education Authority *Been There, Done That: Revisiting Tobacco Control Policies in the NHS*, 1999.