

Please find below the latest release issued today, Friday 24 February 2006, by Bristol City Council on behalf of smoke-free Bristol, an initiative of the Bristol Partnership.

Photocall Opportunity: You are invited to send a film crew/photographer/journalist to attend the conference at Arnos Manor Hotel, Bath Road, Arnos Vale, Bristol (by the ITV Studios) on Thursday 9 March 2006. The conference starts at 9.30am, registration from 9am. Further, at 10.45am that day the results of a Carbon Monoxide test showing the effect of cigarette smoke on bar customers will be unveiled. Some speakers may be available for pre-recorded interviews. Please telephone Bristol City Council's Corporate Communications team on 0117 922 2650 to discuss your requirements and to book a place at the conference.

SMOKE-FREE BRISTOL CONFERENCE TO HELP BRISTOL BREATHE EASIER

An open conference to discuss how Bristol is progressing with becoming a smoke-free city will be held on Thursday 9 March 2006, at Arnos Manor Hotel.

Bringing together the public sector, business and voluntary community, the conference aims to facilitate the sharing of progress on, and future strategies for, creating smoke-free places in Bristol and provide:

- Up-to-date information on smoke-free Bristol's first year achievements, includes the research and publication of a report into the impact of secondhand smoke in Bristol, supporting UBHT and Bristol City Council in going smoke-free, and launching www.smokefreebristol.org
- Insight into lessons learned from Ireland (smoke-free since March 2004)
- Knowledge about the legislation and enforcement issues, including litter and noise
- Understanding of the concerns, and solutions, for businesses in light of the vote in parliament on 14 February, 2006, for a comprehensive ban on smoking in public places from summer 2007
- Ideas for how to encourage smoke-free homes
- Consolidation of knowledge on the case for smoke-free policies.

The results of a carbon monoxide test on bar customers will also be announced at the conference. A poisonous gas, carbon monoxide is a result of a burning cigarette. It can attach itself to red blood cells prohibiting oxygen from doing the same and making the blood sticky and stiffening arteries. This can lead to blood clots and heart attacks. Using sensitive measuring equipment similar to a breathalyser, the test is designed to show how much exposure to carbon monoxide is in the blood of bar customers on a night out in Bristol.

Speakers include Dr Gabriel Scally, South West Director for Public Health, Nan Savage, a Republic of Ireland environmental health officer, and consultant vascular surgeon Mr Roger Baird.

The conference marks the beginning of the next stage of smoke-free Bristol's work which will include advising on how buildings can be made to meet requirements stipulated in any new legislation; encouraging workplaces to 'beat the ban' and go smoke-free before the legislation comes in; and working with community groups to encourage people to go smoke free in the home.

Cllr Barbara Janke, Chair of the Bristol Partnership, said: "This conference is to bring together everything we've achieved so far under the banner of smoke-free Bristol. Bristol's foresight of working with employers and businesses to prepare for a smoke-free city, has put us in a very strong position to move forward in time for the coming comprehensive ban on smoking in public places. "

Alison Frater, Chair of smoke-free Bristol, said: "We are delighted to have so many prominent speakers at the conference. "

Members of the public are welcome to come along, but people are advised to book their place early, as space is limited. Call Heather Sharp on 0117 900 2688 or email heather.sharp@bristolnorth-pct.nhs.uk for more information and to book your place.

ENDS

For more information contact Corporate Communications on 0117 922 2650.

Notes to editors

Background to smoke-free Bristol & The Bristol Partnership

The smoke-free Bristol initiative is a 5-year local action plan to protect people living and working in the city from the harmful effects of second hand smoke.

Smoke-free Bristol is an initiative of the Bristol Partnership.

The Bristol Partnership is collaboration between many different local agencies and includes Bristol City Council, the Bristol North and Bristol South and West Primary Care Trusts, Avon and Somerset Police Constabulary and local employers who have joined together as the Bristol Partnership.

In January 2005 the Bristol Partnership signed a smoke-free charter committing them to working towards a smoke free city. This states: "We recognise that smoking is the number-one cause of preventable death in Bristol and across the United Kingdom.

"We cannot tolerate the terrible toll of death, illness and misery that smoking causes to the people of Bristol. We promise to do all we can to bring it to an end."

The partnership is determined to:

- Educate and inform local people about the dangers of smoking and secondhand smoke
- To encourage more businesses to go smoke-free
- Reduce smoking prevalence in our area
- Support the enforcement of the law on advertising tobacco products
- Reduce under age sales of tobacco products to children
- Encourage and support smokers who want to give up and to promote local support to stop services

For more information about smoke-free Bristol and the Bristol Partnership visit www.smokefreebristol.org

Groups that are vulnerable to secondhand smoke:

- Children exposed to secondhand smoke are at a higher risk of pneumonia, bronchitis, asthma and middle ear disease (WHO International Consultation on Second Hand Smoke and Child Health)
- Non-smokers who are exposed to cigarette smoke at work have double the risk of developing adult asthma when compared to those who work in smoke free environments (Jaakkola et al American Journal of Public Health 2003)
- Asthma UK estimated in 2004 that there were 5.2 million people suffering from asthma in the UK, 1.1 million were children (Asthma UK)
- 80 per cent of people who suffer from asthma say that cigarette smoke triggers or worsens their attacks (Asthma UK survey)
- The British Heart Foundation combined data from different studies to show that there are 1.84 million people (just under 2 million) people suffering from angina in the UK (Source BHF)
- The British Heart Foundation estimates that 1.273 million people living in Britain have had a heart attack (source- BHF)
- An estimated 360 000 people living in the UK have had a stroke previously (extrapolated from ONS stats)
- There were an estimated 750 000 pregnant women in England and Wales in 2000 and the number is unlikely to have changed greatly (ONS)

See the ASH site for details of the effects on health of secondhand smoke: www.ash.org.uk

Key Facts about Bristol

- Surveys in Bristol show that over 80% of respondents are bothered by secondhand smoke and would prefer it if indoor public places were smoke free
- In 2005 in Bristol there were over 10,000 workers exposed to secondhand smoke in their workplace
- The percentage of Bristol households that are smoky is well over 30%, which significantly damages the health of children living in smoky rooms
- The percentage of Bristol adults who smoke is higher than the average for England. Lung cancer death rates in the south and west of Bristol are 35% higher than the average for the former Avon county

Profiles

Profiles from a variety of supporters of smoke-free Bristol will be available to media on the day in their press packs. These include interviews with Councillor Barbara Janke, Chair of the Bristol Partnership and John Hirst, manager of Broadmead.