

## **Smokefree homes: Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What is secondhand smoke?**

- Secondhand smoke is a mix of the smoke from a burning cigarette, cigar or pipe and smoke exhaled by the smoker.
- This mixture contains over 4,000 chemicals, including over 50 known to cause cancer and many poisons and strong irritants.

### **Why can't I just open the window?**

The room would smell and feel more pleasant, but many of the invisible poisons will remain in the room for hours.

### **Would it be ok to install an extractor fan instead?**

The cancer-causing particles are too small to be caught by ventilation systems so even though the room will look and smell cleaner, the risk is still there. The only safe option is to go smokefree.

### **Surely it's ok if I only smoke when everyone else is out?**

Many cigarette toxins stay around for up to 24 hours after the cigarette has been smoked and so they will still be in the air when your family return. Walls, curtains, furniture and bedding become coated in toxins that can rub off on people and end up in being taken in.

### **My kids only visit me on weekends so it's not worth bothering.**

Only 30 minutes of exposure to secondhand smoke is enough to slow down the flow of blood by making it sticky. There is no safe level of tobacco smoke exposure.

### **I'm afraid I'll upset close friends and relatives, if I ask them not to smoke in my house?**

Explain to them that tobacco smoke is harmful, especially to your children. Friends and relatives will understand and appreciate your effort. If you feel awkward bringing up the issue or asking smokers to go outside, try putting no-smoking posters up before they arrive.

### **What can I do if people want to carry on smoking in the house?**

Discuss how important it is to protect your family from secondhand smoke. Try to make smoking outside as easy as possible; ensure that an ashtray, an umbrella and some warm clothes are kept by the back door.

### **How can I get help to stop smoking?**

Use your local NHS 'Support to Stop Smoking' services.

Bristol's can be contacted by phone 0870 240 3319 or visit <http://www.bristolpct.nhs.uk/publichealth/Smoking/default.asp>

Ring the FREE national NHS smoking helpline 0800 1690169 or visit [www.givingupsmoking.co.uk](http://www.givingupsmoking.co.uk)