



THE BIG SMOKE IS GOING SMOKEFREE

London leads the way in the countdown to 1st July

This week, London will be gearing up for the 100-day countdown to the introduction of the smokefree legislation on 1st July 2007. London Health Commission will lead the way by launching the start of a three-month campaign that will see a specially branded bus running through the city and canvassing Londoners' opinions on the city's preparedness for 1st July and what it means to them.

The bus will be 'wrapped' in specially designed imagery, from the 21st March to the 1st July and when it is not in full, regular service, it will also act as a resource point for information for Londoners, and a market research post for securing comments, opinions and views from the capital's residents¹. The opinion poll results will be announced in June 2007.



Commenting on his support for the initiative, Mayor Ken Livingstone said, *"I am very pleased to give my support to the London Health Commission's new SmokeFree London campaign. With 100 days to go until the ban comes into force it is a good time to remind us all why this legislation is so important. The driving force behind this move is the pressing need to protect people from secondhand smoke,*

¹ Details of the days on which the bus will be used for polling will follow.

especially workers, no matter where they are employed. The ban will also give encouragement to smokers who want to kick the habit, as so many do. Given the marked inequalities in smoking-related deaths across the capital, and between different groups of Londoners, I am convinced that this legislation will be seen as one of the most important contributions to public health for generations to come."

Jennette Arnold AM, Chair of London Health Commission comments, *"Fifty years after the Clean Air Act of 1956, we are approaching another huge milestone for public health in this great world city. Our Big Smoke Debate in 2003 found an overwhelming proportion of Londoners in favour of smokefree policies and since then, the call for completely smokefree enclosed workplaces and public places has got louder and louder. The new law will give everybody the right to a smokefree working environment and make smokefree the norm in our enclosed public places."*

The legislation being introduced on 1st July will mean virtually all work and public places will become smokefree. Many employers and workers in and around London are already aware of the legislation and have begun implementing measures to gear up for it. SmokeFree London aims to support and provide advice for those who need to make the necessary changes in order to comply with the new legislation to ensure that the transition to smokefree runs as smoothly as possible.

Secondhand smoke is the single most significant health hazard to workers spending time in smoky environments. SmokeFree London is committed to ensuring that all enclosed venues across London become smokefree by 1st July to help improve the health of workers across the capital.

- Ends -

Additional quotes from health experts, London businesses and others are available below.

For further information visit www.smokefreeengland.co.uk or www.smokefreelondon.org or contact:

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Note to Editors

1. SmokeFree London is working in line with Smokefree England and further information can be found on www.smokefreeengland.co.uk
2. SmokeFree London is an alliance of agencies working together to improve the health of all Londoners by eliminating or reducing their exposure to tobacco. Partners include the Royal College of Nursing, Smokefree England, Transport for London, Unison, GMB and London Councils.
3. The London Health Commission organised the Big Smoke Debate, inviting Londoners to voice their opinions on smoking in enclosed public places in 2003. 78% of respondents stated that they would prefer public places in London to be completely smokefree. Full findings of the Big Smoke Debate are available at www.thebigsmokedebate.com.
4. Supportive quotes on smokefree legislation:

Dr Sheila Adam

Regional Director of Public Health

"Smokefree work and public places are going to be excellent for the health of all Londoners. We know the danger to health from secondhand smoke and the more we can do to protect people from breathing in others' smoke the better. This will also provide encouragement and support for the 70% of smokers in London who want to quit. Smokefree environments are going to be positive for the health of everyone".

Steve Miller

Chair Association London Environmental Health Managers

"Environmental Health Officers, after a patient wait, are going to get what we've been lobbying for over the past few decades; smokefree work environments and public places. As the people who will be in the main enforcing the legislation, we are hoping that the publicity around implementation will mean minimal enforcement action. We will work with our partners in the Health Sector to ensure that we not only achieve a healthy environment but also assist smokers to quit."

Councillor Merrick Cockell

Chairman of London Councils

"There is no doubt that smoking kills. The controls on smoking in public places from 1st July will help save the lives of thousands of Londoners as well as helping make the capital a cleaner and more pleasant place to live, work and visit.

"London's boroughs play a key role in making London healthier. Already they have been working hard to provide information and assistance to owners of public premises covered by the smoking ban ahead of it coming into force on 1st July. London Councils welcome today's announcement as a first step in ensuring that the Government's new controls on smoking in public places will deliver a healthier London for all."

Jennette Arnold AM

Chair, London Health Commission

"Fifty years after the Clean Air Act of 1956, we are approaching another huge milestone for public health in this great world city. The smokefree legislation will give everybody the right to a smokefree working environment and make smokefree the norm in our enclosed public places.

"The London Health Commission's Big Smoke Debate in 2003 found an overwhelming proportion of Londoners in favour of smokefree policies and we have focussed on working towards a smokefree London as one of the Commission's four key health challenges.

“So as we count down to 1st July, let’s continue working together for a successful implementation of this legislation that will have a greater impact on the health of Londoners than any other measure imaginable.”

Bernell Bussue
Director, Royal College of Nursing - London Region

“The Royal College of Nursing has long campaigned for a total ban on smoking in enclosed public places. 1st July marks a momentous step in protecting both hospitality workers and the general public from the dangers of secondhand smoke and is a great achievement in public health policy.”

Stephen Burke
Chair, SmokeFree London Forum

“Smokefree workplace policies improve public health in two different ways: they protect us all from the risks of environmental tobacco smoke and they encourage smokers to quit. The real benefit of this was highlighted in a recent YouGov survey, which showed that 22% of smokers in London plan to make a quit attempt as England goes smokefree. If they all succeed, that has the potential to save 200,000 lives over the coming years.

In the meanwhile, smokers and non-smokers alike can breathe easy! No wonder the new legislation is seen as the most significant public health advance for a generation.”

Simon Townsend
Chief Operating Officer (CEO), Enterprise Inns

“We recognise the objectives of the new smokefree legislation, effective from 1st July and have developed an extensive website detailing the legislation itself, FAQ’s and hints and tips to help our publicans make as smooth a transgression as possible through what will undoubtedly be a major change for many businesses.

“It is very apparent following the bans implemented in Ireland and Scotland that those businesses that prepared well in advance, and offered appropriate solutions to all their customers, have thrived in the new environment.

“The pub retailing industry has a well established track record of positively responding to changes in the market, whether legislative or consumer-led, and throughout England and Wales, there are already many examples of proactive planning by licensees who are tackling the issue head-on, and implementing solutions for both smokers and non-smokers alike, ahead of the implementation of the new legislation from 1st July.”

