

Release:
Monday, June 25, 2007



NEWS RELEASE

SMOKEFREE DAY UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO QUIT, SAY HEALTH CHIEFS

SMOKERS have a unique opportunity to quit the habit on Sunday (July 1), say Cheshire and Merseyside's eight Directors of Public Health.

From July 1 people across England will be able to breathe air free from tobacco smoke in virtually all enclosed public places including offices, factories, pubs and bars thanks to a landmark change in the law agreed by Parliament last summer. The Health Act 2006 also sees the age at which tobacco products can be bought raised from 16 to 18 on October 1.

"This is a unique opportunity for every smoker in Cheshire and Merseyside to quit for good," said Marie Armitage, chair of ChaMPs Public Health Network's Directors of Public Health group which cover the two counties.

"From Sunday smokers won't just have the support of family and friends to stop smoking but the whole of England too as public places across the nation quit the habit."

Research already shows the day England goes smokefree is making smokers think again, with 53% anticipating they will be encouraged or helped to give up.

/more

1

“Giving up is the best thing smokers can do for their own health and those around them,” said Ms Armitage, who is also Joint Director of Public Health for Wirral.

“Second-hand smoke – or passive smoking - puts non-smokers at risk of developing the same diseases as smokers. For example, a non-smoker has a 25% increased risk of developing heart disease and lung cancer if they share a home with a smoker.

“Smoking harms nearly every organ of the body, causing many diseases, and reduces people’s quality of life and life expectancy. In fact, half of all the teenagers who currently smoke will die eventually from diseases caused by tobacco if they continue to smoke.”

Ms Armitage added: “More than 12 million people in the UK are ex-smokers and there is no better time to quit than on Sunday.”

The NHS offers free local support across Cheshire and Merseyside. One-in-two people who use their local NHS Stop Smoking Service are not smoking four weeks later.

To find out more visit www.gosmokefree.co.uk and use the search function to find your local smokefree service or call the free NHS helpline on 0800 169 0 169.

NOTES FOR EDITORS

1. **ChaMPs Public Health Network** is building partnerships in Cheshire and Merseyside between primary care trusts, local authorities, NHS trusts and wider organisations to promote and protect public health and well-being, and develop capacity and capability in the public sector.
2. ChaMPs is led by the **Cheshire and Merseyside Directors of Public Health group** chaired by Marie Armitage (Joint Director of Public Health for Wirral). The other Director members are: Paula Grey (Liverpool); Janet Atherton (Sefton); Diana Forrest (Knowsley); Fiona Johnstone (Halton and St Helens); Rita Robertson (Warrington); Roger Simpson (Central and Eastern Cheshire - acting); Wendy Meredith (Western Cheshire); and Jane Harvey (Wirral – job share with Marie Armitage).
3. For more information about the raising of the minimum age for tobacco sales, go to: <http://www.gnn.gov.uk/environment/fullDetail.asp?ReleaseID=253435&NewsAreaID=2&NavigatedFromDepartment=True>

For more information about ChaMPs visit our website at www.champs-for-health.net or contact ChaMPs communications manager Tony Ellis on 0151 488 7776 or 07771 993454.

ENDS