



Minutes of the Tobacco RAG Meeting 20 October 2008

Present:

Richard Ferry	-	Regional Trading Standards
Cllr Nick Forbes (Chair)	-	Newcastle City Council
Julie Hardwick	-	UK Border Agency North East
Amanda Healy	-	South of Tyne and Wear PCO's
Andy Lloyd	-	Fresh Smoke Free North East
Richard McSorley	-	Department of Health
Dr Eugene Milne	-	NE SHA
Malathi Natarajan	-	North of Tyne PCO's
Peter Price	-	Tees PCO's
Tom Ross	-	TUC
Ailsa Rutter	-	Fresh Smoke Free North East
Nick Springham	-	Co Durham & Darlington PCT
Hannah Stapley	-	VONNE
Pam Tarn (Minutes)	-	Fresh Smoke Free North East
Martyn Willmore	-	Fresh Smoke Free North East
Peter Wright	-	Regional Environmental Health

Apologies:

None were received.

Action

1 **Introductions and Welcome**

Nick Forbes opened the meeting by thanking everyone for attending the first Tobacco RAG and introductions were made.

2 **Introduction to Better Health, Fairer Health – Dr Eugene Milne (presentation attached)**

Eugene presented to the group and outlined the principles of Better Health, Fairer Health. He talked about the key activities, strategy and vision of the document and how the 10 RAGs would feed into it. The model set up by Fresh was now viewed as an exemplar for other public health issues, and the role of Fresh is now consolidated and will continue to be the lead agency for tobacco control in the North East. Eugene invited questions after the presentation and a discussion ensued.

Ailsa commented that it was important to acknowledge that the tobacco section in BHFH does not encompass the entire North East tobacco control programme and the role of the RAG was to oversee the delivery of the

whole programme. She noted that it would be important that the tobacco section in BHFH is kept up to date and that some amendments would be required to ensure that all areas are evidence based.

Nick emphasised that within the document the term 'we' should be understood as 'us'; us being the collective responsibility of the entire group.

3 **Overview of the National Tobacco Delivery Plan – Richard McSorley (presentation attached)**

Richard presented to the group, he talked about the current DH position and gave an overview of the delivery plan. He spoke of DH key objectives, how best to reach differing socio-economic groups and barriers to quitting. Richard stressed the importance of addressing cheap and illicit tobacco as this can be a real threat to reaching targets.

Richard spoke of effective delivery of services to routine and manual workers and said more needs to be done to hit baseline targets. The rationale for the priority focus to this population group in relation to reducing health inequalities over the PSA period was given.

There was a discussion around whether the 4 week quitter rate is an appropriate measure, the consensus being that it is a useful tool but not a good proxy for measurement. The need to locally own wider tobacco control was discussed with the group keen to ensure that work is undertaken to broaden this ownership across the whole region. The role of Local Area Agreements in ensuring that tobacco underpins them was raised and Richard explained that plans were underway to explore the allocation of health inequalities funds to local authorities and linking Beacon Council status with measurement of tobacco control activities.

Richard provided an overview of the DH plans to professionalise and modernise the workforce of the NHS Stop Smoking Services and also to ensure that the most effective treatments are routinely adopted. He noted that group support was declining in use despite it being proven to be the most effective.

4 **Overview of the role of Fresh – Regional programme and local direction (presentation attached)**

Ailsa talked about the establishment and background to Fresh and how Fresh is an umbrella organisation for all partners. Fresh provides leadership, guidance and support to ensure that the strongest and most effective tobacco control activity is undertaken across the whole region and that the North East has an effective role and voice at national levels. It is important that there is effective delivery at the local level as well through both the NHS and local government and the role of local tobacco alliances to draw together all the relevant partners and ensure that work is strategically aligned was emphasised. Ailsa stated that only seven local plans had been submitted for 2008/9 with nine still pending.

During the consultation for smoke free legislation the greatest response was received from the North East, and post-legislation the highest rate of compliance is in the North East.

Ailsa told the group that the work programme has led to the formation of other regional offices in the North West and South West following the Fresh model. Fresh was cited as a national exemplar in 'Beyond Smoking Kills' which had been recently launched in the House of Commons.

Ailsa explained that the current Regional Tobacco Strategy runs until the end of 2008 and that a new ten-year Strategy will be developed in 2009 to dovetail with the forthcoming new National Strategy. As per previous years Fresh will continue to produce an annual business plan and this alongside the National Support Team for Tobacco resources "Ten High Impact Actions for Achieving Local Tobacco Control Excellence" should be used to guide local delivery planning.

5

Discussion

Draft terms of reference

Nick led a discussion on the draft terms of reference; some amendments were suggested by the group primarily relating to strengthening the role of the group to ensure that it fully undertook a monitoring role of the delivery of the whole tobacco control programme across all the regional and local partners. Peter Price asked that the monitoring role should not duplicate mechanisms already in place at local level but should instead support their local work. Both Richard and Peter Wright asked that the enforcement role of local authorities was made more explicit.

Nick and Ailsa are to work together to revise and implement the suggested changes. New draft terms of reference will be circulated with the minutes and comments should be relayed back to Ailsa. The final agreed terms would be signed off at the next RAG meeting.

Nick/Ailsa

Membership

Membership of the Tobacco RAG was debated. Champions are needed and it is essential that messages are relayed back to local level. Peter Price stressed the importance of representation from each PCT cluster. Tom Ross felt strongly that the TUC have a role to play in engaging industry. Malathi queried the input from the local tobacco alliances to the RAG and whether the Smoke Free North East Network should have a place and Ailsa explained that each of the four sub-regional public health representatives should be effectively engaged with their local partners and come fully prepared to report on local progress, areas of concern. Fresh will also continue to support and guide local delivery but it was up to local partners to ensure that this was being effectively utilized.

Children's Services are to be engaged after the first Early Life RAG meeting.

Reporting Mechanisms

Ailsa mentioned that some of the Alliances have not attended recent Smoke Free North East Network meetings and it was discussed how best to re-

engage them. Ailsa explained that Fresh was currently visiting with all of the local NHS Stop Smoking Services and also local tobacco alliances and work was progressing in relation to monitoring the progress of their work. More information would be shared at the next RAG meeting.

Amanda said work was progressing well across South of Tyne and Wear and each of the three areas were re-energising their local tobacco alliances. Ailsa

Peter Wright led a discussion on how best to gain insight on why less advantaged groups continue to smoke. Richard McSorley agreed to give a summary of DH national research at the next meeting if the group thought this would be useful. All agreed. Richard

6 **AOB**

Eugene informed the group of the 2008 Wolfson Research Institute Annual Lecture - The Future of Health Research, meeting on 22 October '08 at the Centre for Transitional Research, Queens Campus, Durham.

8 **Date and time of next meeting**

A schedule of meetings planned for 2009 was circulated, it was agreed to re-schedule the 28 October meeting as this clashes with half term. AR