

Profit Before People

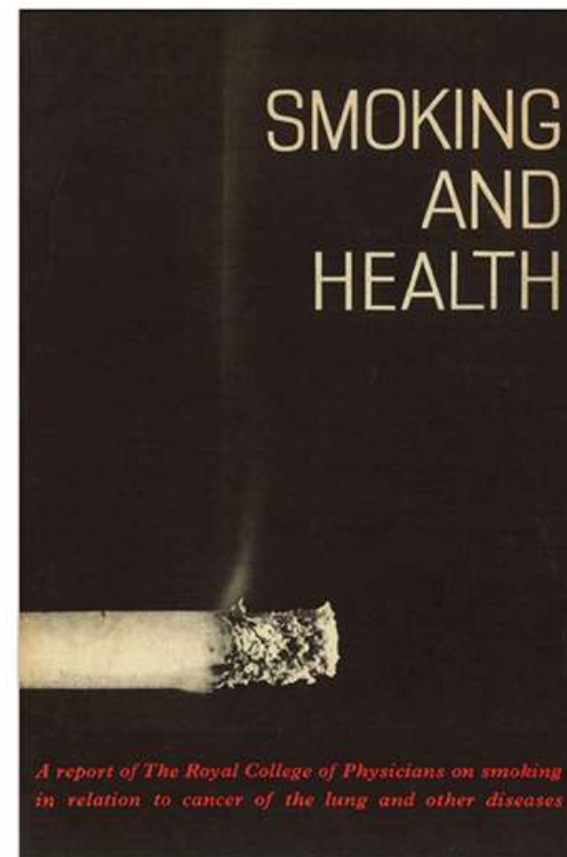
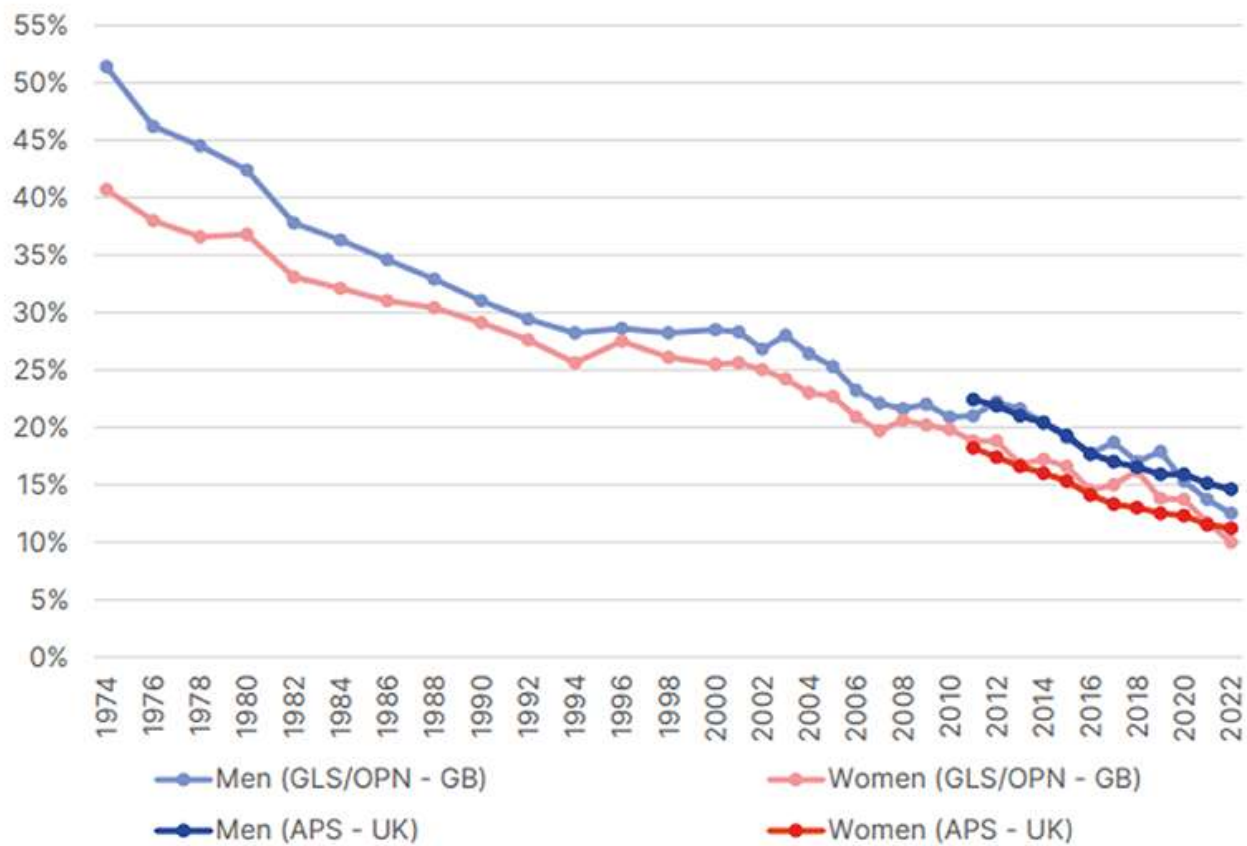
The commercial determinants of health
and lessons from the tobacco epidemic



The toll of tobacco

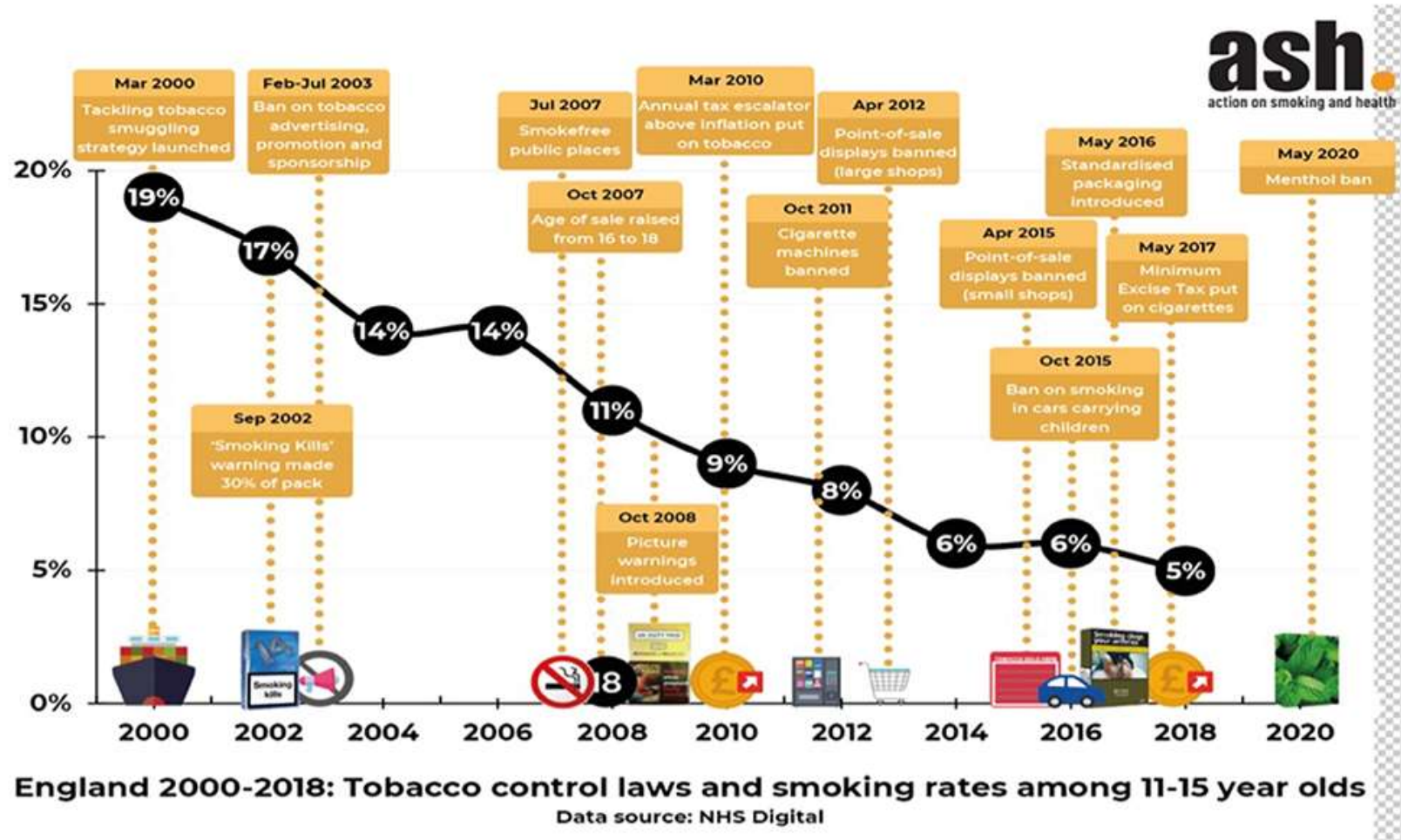
Smoking deaths 1970–2019 (UK)







A key role for advocacy and legislation- last two decades

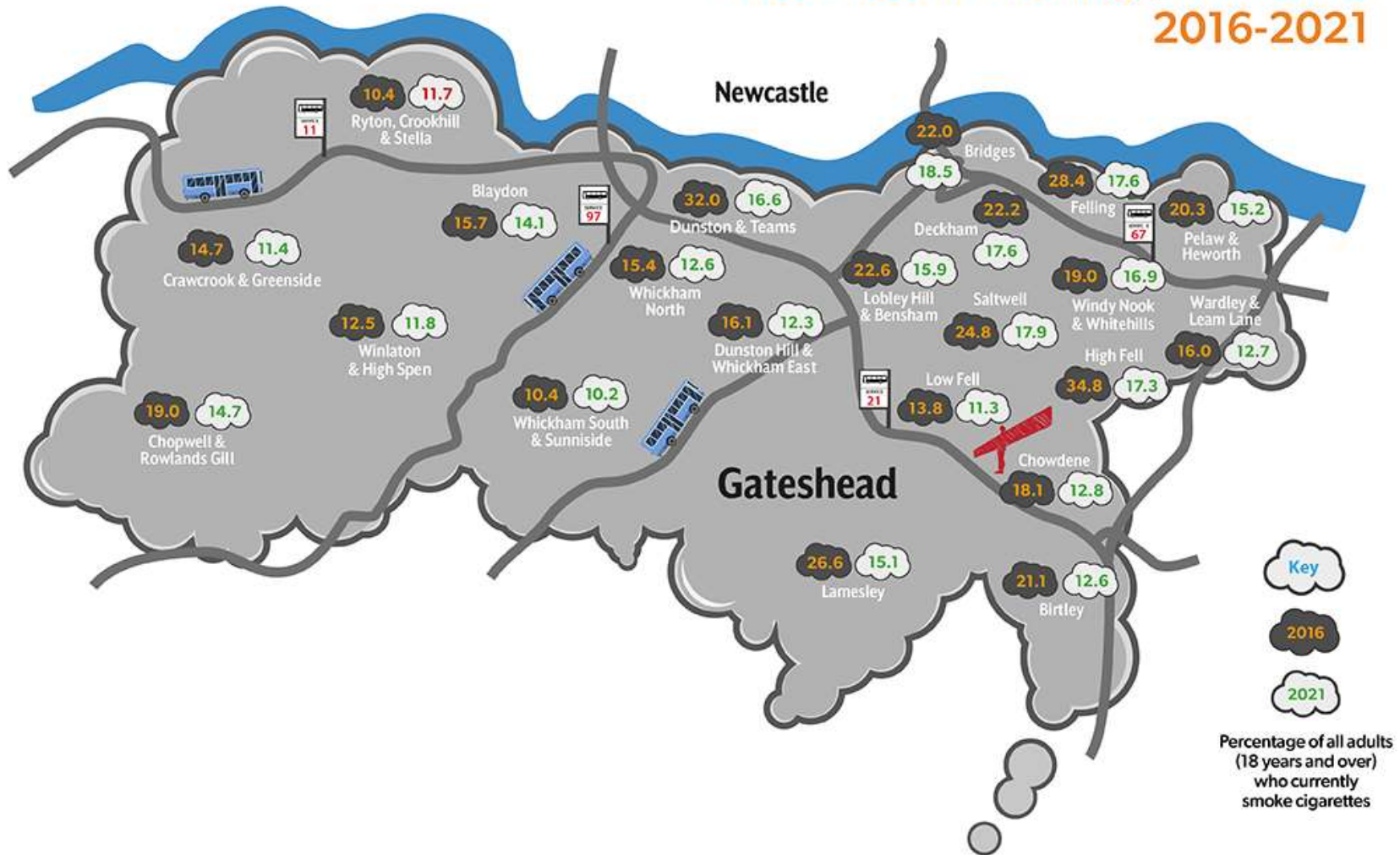


Common Industry Tactics

- Lobbying and political party donations
- Manufacturing doubt and shifting blame
- Aggressive marketing and advertising
- Self-regulation
- Corporate social responsibility
- Personal responsibility
- Industry sponsored education and awareness



Difference in smoking prevalence 2016-2021



What lessons can we learn from the tobacco control approach?

1

Recognise the problem to be addressed and agree on the need to work together to tackle it, including the resource required to do so

2

Develop and commit to a comprehensive, multi-strand and long-term collaborative approach

3

Agree evidence-based and jointly owned objectives which are monitored and flexible enough to adapt to real time learning

4

Work at scale and aim for consistency – some things only need doing once, but leave room for local flexibility

5

One key message communicated by many voices

6

Demonstrate visible and enthusiastic leadership at every opportunity

7

Develop a communication strategy in support of efforts and ensure ongoing media presence

8

Identify local champions, including political leaders and those impacted by the commercial determinants

9

Develop awareness and support for change among the public and advocate on their behalf

10

Focus primarily on adults - changing the adult world will change the environment kids grow up in

11

Things don't happen quickly because culture change is complex – keep going, be tenacious and trust the approach

Recommendations

Tobacco

Recommendation 1 – Support and advocate for proposed age of sale legislation

In October 2023, the Government announced proposed legislation which will stop children turning 14 or younger this year from ever legally being sold tobacco products – raising the smoking age by a year each year until it applies to the whole population.

As most smokers start in childhood and regret it, we need to ensure this recommendation is passed along with proposals to reduce youth vaping and additional funding committed to improve smoking cessation support.

Recommendation 2 – Advocate for a ‘polluter pays’ levy

Hundreds of Gateshead residents die each year because of smoking, with thousands more living with smoking related diseases while the TI makes billions.

The government alone cannot provide the level of funding required to achieve a smokefree future. Gateshead supports the ‘polluter pays’ levy in which tobacco companies fund support to help people quit smoking.

Recommendation 3 – Support and enforce vape regulation

We need to ensure adult access to all available options for stop smoking support, including vapes. It is important to reduce their appeal to children while also ensuring they remain available to adults who want to quit.

We support better regulation of disposable vapes to reduce appeal and accessibility to children, to reduce environmental impact, and ensure the costs of collecting and recycling vapes is met by industry.

Recommendations

Recommendation 4 – Creating a system approach to quitting

Our ambition is to normalise quitting and create an environment where smokers make quit attempts regularly until successful. This will require a change to the current model of stop smoking support.

We want to develop an approach that targets our limited resources to those smokers who need most support, whilst working with Fresh and NHS partners to create a system that puts smokers' needs at the centre and encourages all smokers to make at least one quit attempt annually.

Recommendation 5 – Prevention is key

Prevention must become a key part of our strategy to end smoking, as well as to inform our approach on many other Public Health issues. Smokers should be offered advice and support to quit at every opportunity whether that is through GPs, hospitals, midwives, pharmacists, dentists, or other partners. Systems must change to recognise that prevention is better than cure and the required investment should be made to ensure savings further down the road.

Recommendation 6 – Commit to the long-term, multi-strand approach to tobacco control

Smoking prevalence continues to decline, but evidence both here and internationally has shown that smoking rates could plateau and even start to rise again if we do not continue to fight against the TI.

Gateshead, in partnership with Fresh, must continue to develop and deliver on our multi-strand tobacco control action plan. Effective partnership working through our Smokefree Alliance will continue to address inequalities and drive down levels of smoking to achieve our goal of 5% smoking prevalence by 2030.

Recommendations

Alcohol

Recommendation 1

The alcohol industry and the organisations it funds should not influence health policy, health services or education/awareness raising initiatives aimed at young people.

Recommendation 2

We need to strengthen the current system for governing alcohol marketing to ensure alcohol is not normalised, and to protect children and vulnerable adults from exposure to these products.

Recommendation 3

We need to challenge the narrative of the alcohol industry, which focuses on personal responsibility and blames “poor choices” for alcohol harms. Establishing alcohol as a harmful product is a legitimate intervention.

Recommendations

Ultra processed food and drink

Recommendation 1

Learning from the 'food advertising policies' in other local authority areas, advertising of HFSS products should be restricted on council owned sites. Businesses can continue to advertise as long as they promote a healthier product.

Recommendation 2

Social movements have long campaigned against commercial products and practices that cause health and other social harms. Harnessing a social movement in Gateshead can build upon previous work in reducing health-harming commercial determinants of health and create healthier communities.

Recommendation 3

We need to use practice-based evidence to inform local strategies. This will involve reviewing experiences to identify what works and what does not, to create a body of practice-based evidence and ultimately reduce the harmful influences of HFSS products within our communities.

Recommendations

Gambling

Recommendation 1

Recognise the importance of the harm caused by gambling and the way that the gambling industry operates as a pressing public health and wellbeing issue, and an important driver of inequity.

Recommendation 2

Advocate for a comprehensive public health approach to gambling harm prevention, building on the learning from Tobacco Control, and recognising the industry as the key vector of harm.

Recommendation 3

This would include independent (i.e., free from gambling industry influence) policies and strategies based on precautionary principles that prioritise health and wellbeing, and protect individuals, their communities, and families from being harmed by the gambling industry, its products, and practices.