



## NEWS RELEASE

Tuesday November 16

### **BEHIND THE SMOKE SCREEN**

Public Health Campaigners have confirmed their intention to achieve completely smoke free public places in the city of Manchester, despite the loopholes left in today's Public Health White Paper. The White Paper, which proposes a smoking ban in all cafes, pubs and restaurants that sell food, fails to protect the employees most at risk from secondhand smoke; those that work in pubs that do not sell food.

The Manchester Stop Smoking Service believes the measures outlined in the Public Health White Paper published today, is an important step forward for tobacco control and public health. However the service views it is an unsatisfactory compromise, as it excludes workplaces such as pubs and clubs, therefore does not protect the single group of employees, which has been identified as at most risk from secondhand smoke.

The scientific evidence on the health damage from secondhand smoke is getting increasingly stronger. It is the employers' duty under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, to provide a safe working environment. Exposure to secondhand smoke is a significant workplace health and safety risk, therefore bar and club employers should be aware that they could be held liable for any consequent health damage to their employees caused by secondhand smoke.

Jane Sunter the manager of the Manchester Stop Smoking Service, said, "We think the measures outlined in the White Paper are a move in the right direction, however we were hoping for an out right smoking ban in all workplaces and enclosed public places. People talk about smoking being a choice, for those employees who will continue to work in the bars where smoking will be permitted, choice will be denied, as they will still remain exposed to second hand smoke."

On a more positive note, Jane added, "We hope that with all of the publicity generated by the White Paper and Manchester's move towards becoming a Smoke Free city by 2006, more smokers might now be inspired to think about quitting. If they are ready to take that bold step, we have a wide range of free services to help."

Manchester has the lowest life expectancy in the whole of England, largely due to smoking related disease. Although the life expectancy gap between Manchester and England has narrowed for two consecutive years, it is clear that Manchester still has some way to go. Tackling tobacco is the next logical step required in order to continue moving in the right direction.



The Manchester stop smoking service has been in operation for over five years, it offers advice and support for a range of specific groups across Manchester, including pregnant women and young people. The service offers one-to-one advice, group work and drop ins, as well as working in conjunction with health professionals, GP's, health visitors midwives and pharmacists.

-ENDS-



## Notes to editor

- Life expectancy 2001-2003

	<b>Manchester</b>	<b>England</b>
Men	71.8 years	76.2 years
Women	77.8 years	80.7 years

- On 13 October 2004, Manchester City Council voted to work towards achieving smoke free public places in the city – including all cafes, restaurants, pubs, clubs and bars. Speaking about that decision, the Leader of the Council, Richard Leese, said "People have a right to work in a smoke-free environment and we aim to give them that. Manchester currently has high rates of smoking, coupled with comparatively low life expectancy. We need to get a message over: reduce smoking and live longer."
- The claim by opponents of smoking restrictions that the pub trade would be gravely damaged by an end to smoking in all workplaces and public places is simply no borne out by the evidence. The most authoritative review, by Scollo and others, found that (from 97 studies worldwide) all independent studies found no negative impact on takings, and negative studies had tobacco industry backing and most used subjective measures (<http://tc.bmjournals.com/cgi/content/full/12/1/13>).
- Anyone who requires support and advice on stopping smoking, can contact the Manchester Stop Smoking Service on **0161 205 5998**.

**For further information, contact Edna Boampong at Manchester Stop Smoking Service on:  
Phone - 0161 203 4101/ Mobile- 07958 540 778 / email [edna.boampong@manchester.nhs.uk](mailto:edna.boampong@manchester.nhs.uk)**