

PRESS RELEASE – 18/07/2017

UKCTAS comment on the latest tobacco control plan for England: *“Towards a smoke-free generation”*

The new tobacco control plan, ‘Towards a smoke free generation’ is a welcome restatement of the government’s commitment to reduce the prevalence, and hence the burden of death and disability caused, by smoking. The recognition that harm reduction strategies can play a key role in achieving these ambitions is applauded, and puts the UK at the forefront of global tobacco policy. However, the ambition to reduce adult smoking in England from 15.5% to 12% by 2022, representing as it does a reduction of 0.5 of a percentage point per year, is modest given that smoking prevalence has fallen by 2.9 percentage points in the last three years.

Recognising reducing smoking in pregnancy as a priority, and aiming to reduce prevalence in pregnancy to 6% or less, is welcome but will not be achieved without adequate resources, improved care pathways and addressing significant gaps in training for midwives and obstetricians. The commitment to make NHS inpatient mental health settings smoke-free by 2018 is long overdue, but it is disappointing that the same strong commitment is not extended to other NHS settings.

The ambition to make stop-smoking services more available is also welcome, but like the commitments to NHS settings and for pregnancy requires funding: when public health budgets are being slashed, how will local authorities afford to increase their smoking service provision?

What matters now is delivery: Action to achieve and exceed these ambitions is the next and crucial step.

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Notes for editors:

- **Towards a smoke-free generation: tobacco control plan for England**
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/towards-a-smoke-free-generation-tobacco-control-plan-for-england>

Information about UKCTAS:

The UK Centre for Tobacco and Alcohol Studies (UKCTAS) is a network of 13 universities (12 in the UK, one in New Zealand) funded by the UK Clinical Research Collaboration. The Centre conducts research, teaching and policy work into tobacco and alcohol, both important public health concerns. UKCTAS aims to deliver an international research and policy development portfolio, and build capacity in tobacco and alcohol research. Our work includes developing strategies for behaviour change in tobacco and alcohol use, assessing risks, identifying measures to reduce harm, monitoring the tobacco and alcohol industries, and developing effective public policies to improve public health and wellbeing. UKCTAS has no links with and receives no funding from either tobacco or e-cigarette companies. Further information can be found at www.ukctas.net