

# TACKLING ILLEGAL TOBACCO

Paul Lambert  
Public Health Specialist  
Leeds City Council



# To cover

1. The rationale and framework for the tackling illicit tobacco programme
2. The strategy that is employed to deliver the programme
3. Marketing: communication and campaign resources
4. Outcomes to date & recommendations



# Smoking causes the greatest number of preventable deaths in England



Comprehensive local tobacco control: why invest? (2014)



# Why tackle Illegal Tobacco?

- Illegal tobacco market has halved nationally since 2000 - but still an issue in more deprived communities
- Enables children to bypass age of sale laws and smoke – teenagers twice as likely to be buyers
- Adults - undermines price as the most effective barrier to smoking (around 1 in 6 will buy often or occasionally)
- Increases health inequalities – people buying illegal tobacco most likely to be struggling financial and younger
- The illicit trade is linked to organised crime



## Background to the programme

- Recognition of need to tackle illicit tobacco as part of broader strategies to denormalise tobacco use
- Build on the learnings from the NoE programme
- Need to reduce supply and demand
- 2014 major multi-agency summit led by Tobacco Free Futures, Fresh and Smokefree Yorkshire and the Humber
- 2014: Launch of Tackling Illicit Tobacco for Better Health Programme



# Strategic framework for tackling illicit tobacco at sub-national level

Illicit Tobacco  
Partnership

## ILLICIT TOBACCO PROGRAMME STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

AIM: TO REDUCE THE SUPPLY OF AND DEMAND FOR ILLICIT TOBACCO AS PART OF  
BROADER STRATEGIES TO REDUCE SMOKING PREVALENCE





# Key outcomes

- Reductions in the size of the illicit tobacco market
- Shifts in attitudes and behaviour
- Positive independent evaluation results
- Increased levels of intelligence
- Establishment as national leaders on illicit tobacco



# Initial public attitudes

In depth research commissioned at the start of the programme identified public attitudes:

- Wide spectrum of involvement – from “hardcore buyers” who can’t remember the last time they bought legal tobacco, to illicit “last resorters”
- For some, illicit tobacco was part of their community and they struggled to understand damaging effects
- Local awareness about sales – but lack of clarity which agency to tell and uncertainty whether it would be dealt with
- Penalties seen as a “slap on the wrist”





## Further attitudinal findings

- More hardened buyers saw sellers as modern day Robin Hoods – “everyone does it”
- For some, getting one over on the Tax Man applauded – bending rather than breaking the law
- Suspicion about the authorities chasing VAT – especially with “exchequer” messages
- Messages about funding terrorism and organised criminals are far removed from own experiences of buying it locally
- Little belief in the “more harmful” claim – audience is well practiced in dismissing health arguments - and risk legal buyers think they’re making a healthier choice



## The market

- Illegal tobacco market reduced since 2000 – cigarette sticks now 15% of national market but more common in more deprived communities
- People buying illegal tobacco most likely to be struggling financially and younger
- Counterfeit now only make up 8% of national IT
- Bought by nearly 1 in 5 (18%) of NE smokers
- 55% of 14/15 year olds who smoke in the NE buy illicit
- 42% illicit sales are from homes and 24% from shops - increasingly a major source
- Most smokers *don't* buy IT - caution we do not suggest legal tobacco is a safer option



## Keep It Out – in a nutshell

- Keep It Out is a social marketing campaign that aims to reduce both supply and demand for illegal tobacco in West Yorkshire
- The campaign is the public facing part of the West Yorkshire Trading Standards Tackling Illicit Tobacco for Better Health programme
- Reducing illegal tobacco means fewer children smoking, and more adults quitting
- This is the 4th year – last year, along with WYJS enforcement work the campaign contributed to the seizure of over 800,000 illegal cigarettes
- Campaign will include radio, PR, online and video
- There are plenty of ways local authorities and NHS orgs. can interact and help drive down illegal tobacco and smoking rates locally
- Last campaign ran in March 2018.



# Previous West Yorkshire and York 'Keep it Out' Campaigns

Campaigns in 2014, 2016 and 2018:

- Radio adverts (est: 500k people heard)
- Local press releases
- Facebook advertising
- Printed materials for local authorities
- 70 pieces intelligence





# Previous West Yorkshire and York 'Keep it Out' campaigns

## Bid to stop illegal tobacco

BRADFORD Council has joined forces with other Yorkshire councils and West Yorkshire Trading Standards to tackle the trade in illegal tobacco and stop dealers who sell to children.

The 'Keep It Out' campaign was started yesterday.

Smokers are being asked to think about the impact illegal sales have on children being

able to smoke.

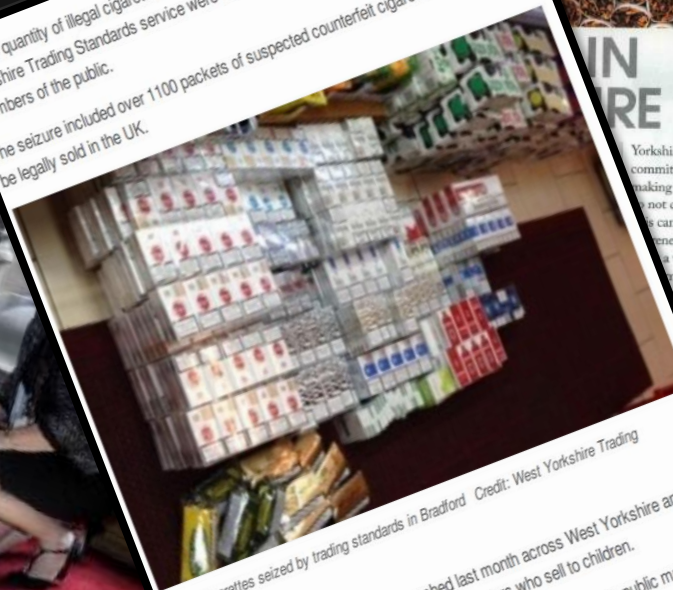
Anyone who knows where illegal tobacco is being sold should call Crimestoppers confidentially on 0800 555111.

A major independent survey of more than 1,200 smokers and non-smokers has shown that:

- about 17 per cent of smokers buy illegal tobacco
- 85 per cent of adults are concerned about young people getting their hands on illegal tobacco

A large quantity of illegal cigarettes were discovered following visits in Bradford. West Yorkshire Trading Standards service were following up on information provided by members of the public.

The seizure included over 1100 packets of suspected counterfeit cigarettes which cannot be legally sold in the UK.



Illegal cigarettes seized by trading standards in Bradford. Credit: West Yorkshire Trading Standards

The KEEP IT OUT campaign was launched last month across West Yorkshire and York to tackle the trade in illegal tobacco and stop dealers who sell to children.

David Lodge, Head of West Yorkshire Trading Standards, said "The public must take a more active role to ensure that young people in our communities are protected and can

## Stopping the sale of illegal tobacco sales



age smoking are seen as connected issues because the sale of smuggled or counterfeit products gives young people a route to access tobacco.

In addition to the impact on health, the authorities also have concerns about the use of money from illegal tobacco sales being used to support criminal activity.

Efforts to tackle illegal tobacco sales have had some success with one in ten cigarettes now thought to come from illegal sources compared to one in five in 2009.

Dr Andrew Furber, Wakefield Council's director of public health, said: "We're pleased to be part of the regional Keep It Out campaign as smoking is the biggest cause of preventable death in the Wakefield district. It accounts for nearly 600 deaths a year, that's one in

five of all deaths.

"Illegal tobacco makes it easier for young people to smoke, given that two thirds of smokers take up the habit before the age of 18 it's crucial that we try to prevent them from taking up the habit in the first place."

Coun Pat Garbutt, Wakefield Council's cabinet member for adults and health, said: "Illegal tobacco isn't a victimless crime, it has a negative impact in our communities, affecting health, crime and what is socially acceptable behaviour."

**WHAT DO YOU THINK?**

Share your views by calling us on 01924 433013, e-mail editor@wp.wakefieldexpress.co.uk tweet to @WakefieldExpress or comment via our facebook page.

© www.wakefieldexpress.co.uk



# Campaigns strategy

- The Get Some Answers and Keep It Out campaigns have ran in NE since 2010 and was England's first demand led campaign
- Strong correlation between reduction in public comfort levels towards illicit and size of the market – it's also about making people think twice about buying and selling
- But in 2015-16 we wanted to take another look at public attitudes – check the approach was still resonating





## Insight and Public Perceptions – Nov 2016

### Focus groups & depth interviews held across North of England – white, Asian British, Polish & shopkeepers:

- Still seen by some as a victimless crime/ a service
- A belief the market is divided into two types
  - “duty free” (what they’re buying)
  - “the bad stuff” – fakes and cigarettes from abroad which most try to avoid (though always a risk)
- Perception the market is made up of lots of small duty free sellers – people like them
- Sales to children are the main unprompted concern and reason to report - though some challenged whether their dealer would do so





## Insight and Public Perceptions – Nov 2016 (2)

- Perception there is less of it about than 10 years ago
- A feeling the authorities *will* take it seriously – especially in West Yorks. A marked change to 2010 insight
- Non-smokers are probably more comfortable to report sales
- Links to crime are concerning and can make people twice – though global organised crime/ trafficking can feels too remote
- Shopkeepers are concerned and want harsher penalties
- Loss of alcohol licence and lottery terminal could be powerful deterrents for shops



## Campaign 2017 priorities

- Reduce comfort levels – strong correlation with size of market
- Give more substantiation of our advertising claims about children and crime
- Target whole communities and last resort buyers – not just smokers and “cheap tobacco champions” - intel
- Raise awareness of the problems around illegal tobacco, the trade being supported if you buy - make people think twice about buying and selling
- Resources for partners to spread message
- Generate information about local sales for enforcement colleagues via Keep It Out reporting form and phone line.
- Provide a platform to engage with retailers about the law and deterrents.



# A new look and feel

- Reportage style – more news-led look and feel using stats to substantiate claims
- A move away from toxic yellow
- Materials for public and partners including retailers



**ILLEGAL TOBACCO IS EASY TO GET HOLD OF, SO MORE KIDS ARE TEMPTED TO SMOKE**

YOUNG SMOKERS WHO SEE ILLEGAL TOBACCO AS THEIR MAIN SOURCE OF CIGARETTES ARE ABLE TO SMOKE EASILY AND GET HOOKED YOUNGER.

CALL 0800 555 111 ANONYMOUSLY TO SHARE INFORMATION

**CRIME STOPPERS**  
0800 555 111

**ILLEGAL TOBACCO**  
KEEP IT OUT

WWW.KEEP-IT-OUT.CO.UK

**ILLEGAL TOBACCO. IN YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD. AND GETTING KIDS HOOKED ON SMOKING.**

Illegal cigarettes help 55% of underage smokers to get hooked.



**QUICK, EASY, COMPLETELY ANONYMOUS.**

If you have any information about illegal tobacco sales in your area, share it with us anonymously.

CALL: 0300 999 0000  
VISIT: [keep-it-out.co.uk](http://keep-it-out.co.uk)

**ILLEGAL TOBACCO**  
KEEP IT OUT

© Focus 2017

**ILLEGAL TOBACCO. IN YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD. AND LINING THE POCKETS OF CRIMINAL GANGS.**

The sale of illegal tobacco has proven links to crime, drug dealing and loan sharks.



**QUICK, EASY, COMPLETELY ANONYMOUS.**

If you have any information about illegal tobacco sales in your area, share it with us anonymously.

CALL: 0300 999 0000  
VISIT: [keep-it-out.co.uk](http://keep-it-out.co.uk)

**ILLEGAL TOBACCO**  
KEEP IT OUT

© Focus 2017



# The campaign in Yorkshire & Humber authorities

Licence until November 2019:

- Provision of artwork for:
  - Posters (2 types)
  - Leaflets (2 types)
  - Stakeholder guide
  - Retailer guide
  - Digital resources (screen savers, email banner, Facebook advertising)
- Use of the [www.keep-it-out.co.uk](http://www.keep-it-out.co.uk) website
- Use of two reporting channels
  - 0300 999 0000
  - Online form at [www.keep-it-out.co.uk](http://www.keep-it-out.co.uk)
- 5 days support with campaign



# The campaign in Yorkshire & Humber authorities

Campaign launched March 2018

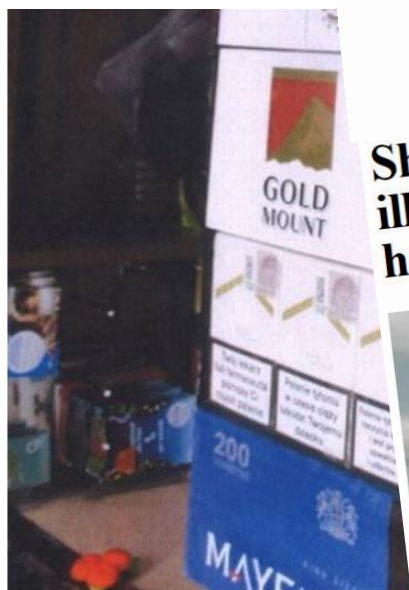
Already good coverage from North Yorkshire & West Yorkshire





# A shopkeeper could lose his licence after caught with thousands of smuggled cigarettes

Leeds City Council licensing sub committee has agreed that the shopkeeper's cigarettes were seized



The cigarettes found at Krakow Mini Market (Image: Leeds City Council)

## Wakefield Express

Shop found with half-a-million illegal cigarettes worth £150,000 to have its licence reviewed

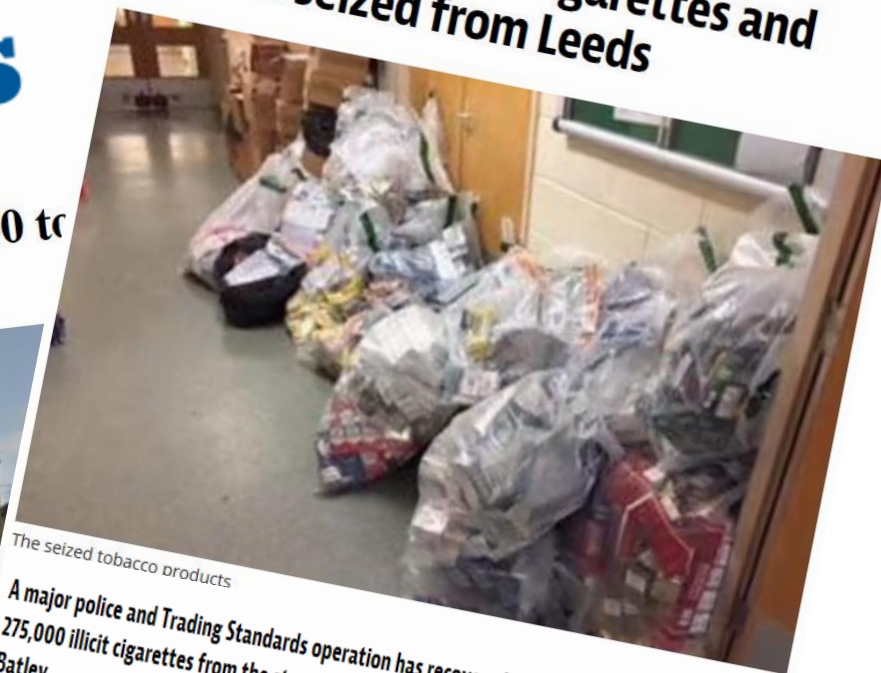


Published: 09:05  
Friday 09 March 2018

A shop that was found to have the largest stash of illegal cigarettes in the region worth £150,000 could be stripped of its licence next week.

## YORKSHIRE Evening Post

Huge haul of illegal cigarettes and tobacco seized from Leeds



The seized tobacco products

A major police and Trading Standards operation has recovered over 275,000 illicit cigarettes from the streets of Harehills, Dewsbury and Batley.

Around 57kg of illegal hand-rolling [tobacco](#) was also discovered as part of the haul, which has a total street value of around £160,000.

The operation targeted shops supplying cheap tobacco at 'pocket money [prices](#)' identified by intelligence and complaints from members of the public.

2  
comments



HAVE  
YOUR SAY



# In West Yorkshire

- Material distribution to WY local authorities
- Radio adverts on regional and local stations
- PR activity
- Digital campaign on Facebook, Instagram and display





# Campaign results

- 27% recall adverts (radio dominated)
- 85% agreed it was easy to understand
- 77% said it carried an important message
- 76% said it was believable
- 59% said it made them more concerned about illegal tobacco in their community
- 75% said it made them more concerned about sales to children
- 47% said it made think someone would take information seriously, and 41% it would make them less comfortable buying
- 38% - more likely to report illegal tobacco in their area
- 36% thought it would make people *buying* think twice, and 31% said they thought it would make people *selling* think twice
- 29,000 website visits
- Facebook

And around 300 pieces of intelligence



## “More toxic” claim (?) and other factors

- 2004 – Prof Ed Stephens (St Andrew’s University) research - illegal cigs contain 5 x levels of poisons
- Subsequent research has suggested other batches may contains less
- Tobacco companies have a history in fuelling smuggling but use fears of IT to fight effective interventions
- **Focus groups:**
- Around 8/10 smokers don’t buy illegal tobacco – caution needed we do not suggest legal is more wholesome
- Most illicit tobacco buyers already go out of their way to avoid fakes/ “the bad stuff” because do not like taste



# ASH calls for action

- *“ASH today calls on the Government to introduce a licensing system for tobacco manufacturers and retailers to provide funding for improved enforcement and other measures to reduce smoking prevalence. There is strong public support for the licensing of tobacco retailers (net support 76%)”*
- *“HMRC’s illicit tobacco strategy has been in place since 2000 and has been well funded and effective. However the success of the strategy in recent years has been undermined by cuts in funding to local authorities, limiting their ability to carry out enforcement activity.”*

ASH press release – [“Tobacco Tax Gaps: Illicit cigarettes a growing proportion of a declining market – enforcement funding cuts must be addressed”](#)



# Outcomes so far.

- 3.4m illegal cigarettes & 970kg illegal HRT across WY
- In Leeds just under 800,000 illegal cigarettes & 224kg of HRT
- 59 multi agency operations
- 32 successful prosecutions
- 14 premises licence reviews have been instigated
- 2017/18 has seen an increase in the amounts of illegal tobacco seized across all 5 districts



# Is the programme working?

- Y&H have had a reduction of 1% in IT market share from 11% (2014) to 10% (2016).
- Nationally UK IT market has increased by 5% from 8% (2014) to 13% (2016)
- Some evidence that campaign activity in the area has had a positive impact on attitudes towards illicit tobacco, with an increase in discomfort.
- Currently in the process of procuring the next survey



# Recommendations

- Demand reduction and supply reduction need to work hand in hand, eg raids and resulting news coverage
- Always place within 'all tobacco kills' context
- Place work within illicit tobacco strategic framework – eight objectives working synergistically (partnerships, intelligence, communications, assessing progress)
- Co-ordinated media approach = good coverage and strong messages delivered across a wide footprint
- Achieve economies of scale e.g. for media buys, printing costs
- Evaluate
- Be mindful of obligations under FCTC Article 5.3

