

Annual Report 2024/25

**Working
together for
a smokefree
London**



Chairs' welcome

Smoking is the leading cause of premature, preventable death globally. With almost one million smokers in the capital, it's more important than ever that we encourage Londoners to quit smoking and make London a smokefree city by 2030.

The London Tobacco Alliance (LTA) plays a vital role in this. It brings health professionals, local authorities, and other partner organisations together to share best practice, innovations and insights, and tackle health inequalities. Together with its public-facing service, Stop Smoking London, the LTA ensures that all Londoners have access to the right information and help to quit smoking.

Supporting communities across London that are disproportionately affected by smoking and tobacco harms is a key focus. In 2024/25, for example, the LTA ran a campaign for the Polish community, which has a higher propensity to smoke than the general population, and launched London Smokefree Pregnancy Week to raise awareness of the impact of smoking during pregnancy. It also ran a successful pilot giving Londoners free access to the Smoke Free app.

With the Tobacco and Vapes Bill taking steps to phase out the sale of tobacco for the next generation and curb youth vaping, smoking is at the centre of the public health debate. The message is clear: Quitting smoking is the most impactful way to improve health and quality of life, for Londoners who smoke and for those around them.

Thank you to everyone who has supported the LTA over the last 12 months. You've made a huge difference in every borough and the LTA looks forward to continuing working with you to ensure that London becomes a smokefree city and sets the standard for other cities around the world.

Director's welcome

I welcome the opportunity to reflect on another dynamic year at the London Tobacco Alliance.

The Tobacco and Vapes Bill has put smoking and vaping in the public spotlight and made us even more determined to make London smokefree. But we can't do this alone. I'd like to thank all our partners for providing your expertise and support to the LTA and Stop Smoking London.

We understand that everyone's journey to giving up smoking is different. So, this year, we've created stop smoking campaigns for specific communities across London, promoted the Smoke Free app, published new guidance, shared real-life success stories, and much more.

Tracy Parr
Programme
Director for
the London
Tobacco
Alliance and
Stop Smoking
London.



The London Tobacco Alliance Board

The LTA Board meets quarterly and acts as the main forum and decision-making body for system leaders involved in making London smokefree. Membership reflects the different system partners who combine efforts and work collectively.

Co-chairs

Dr Somen Banerjee
London Lead for Tobacco Control, London Association of Directors of Public Health

Professor Kevin Fenton
Regional Director, Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) London

Dr Chris Streather
Medical Director, NHS England (London)

Board Members (as of 31 March 2025)

Nina Khazaezadeh
Regional Chief Midwife for London, NHS England (London)

Professor Ann McNeill
Professor of Tobacco Addiction, King's College London

John Waldron
Policy and Public Affairs Manager, Action on Smoking and Health (ASH)

Councillor Chris Kennedy
Cabinet Member for Health, Social Care, and Wellbeing, LB Hackney

Councillor Lucia das Neves
Cabinet Member, Cabinet Member for Health, Adult Social Care, Voluntary Sector and Culture, LB Haringey

Jazz Bhogal
Assistant Director for Health Children & Young Londoners at Greater London Authority

Dr Irem Patel
Consultant Respiratory Physician, Integrated Care, King's College Hospital NHS Foundation and Co-Chair, London Respiratory Network

Alison Keating
Head of Alcohol, Drugs and Tobacco (London), Office for Health Improvement and Disparities

Vicky Hobart
GLA Group Director of Public Health & Deputy Statutory Health

Dr Janani Arulrajah
GLA Consultant in Public Health

Clive Grimshaw
Strategic Lead, Health and Social Care, London Councils

Joe Fraser
Head of Healthcare Inequalities Improvement, Prevention and Personalisation, NHS England – London region

Vision, mission and objectives



The London Tobacco Alliance was launched in October 2022, uniting key partners, including Directors of Public Health and NHS London, with a shared focus on health and wellbeing.

Since then, we have been working with a wide range of partners and stakeholders to bring strategic direction and coordination to tobacco control and smoking cessation across the capital.

We host a LTA website that features reports, guidance, and resources on smoking in London, including Stop Smoking London campaign toolkits.



To combine and accelerate efforts to eliminate smoking in London, giving us the greatest opportunity to reduce health inequalities.

VISION



We will ensure that becoming smokefree remains a top public health priority for London, supporting its aim to be the world's healthiest city.

MISSION



Prevent people from starting smoking
Support people to stop smoking
Promote smokefree environments

OBJECTIVES

London Tobacco Control Network

We organise and lead the monthly London Tobacco Control Network, which brings together tobacco control colleagues from across London to hear about new guidance, data, and information to help support and develop services, as well as providing an opportunity for boroughs to share best practice and highlight work from their areas.

The network, which regularly has over 70 attendees, helps London boroughs to work collectively and support each other on key areas around smoking cessation and the wider smokefree agenda. The meetings enable local authority colleagues to share information on local initiatives and contribute to discussions about emerging trends and campaigns, as well as reflect on new insights and data.

Smokefree Councillor Network

The Smokefree Councillor Network is made up of health and wellbeing leads from across London's local authorities.

The network met three times during the year. With the previous network chair, Jim Dickson, being elected an MP in the July 2024 general election, the chairing of the network passed on to Cllr Chris Kennedy (LB Hackney) and Cllr Lucia das Neves (LB Haringey). The network attracts councillors from across London and spanning all elected political parties.

The network was updated and offered insight into the major initiatives of the LTA and championed the smokefree agenda among their councillor networks. Meetings focused on a range of issues, including: ongoing updates and discussions on the Tobacco and Vapes Bill with ASH policy leads; health inequalities, discussions on LTA's campaigns aimed at pregnant women who smoke and encouraging those from the Polish community to quit smoking; smoking and mental health and a presentation on data highlighting smoking prevalence in London.

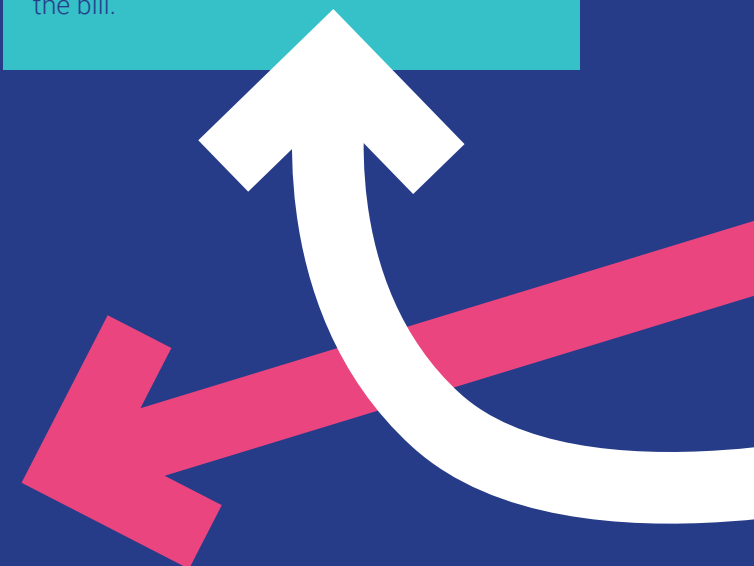
To support the Tobacco and Vapes Bill, we worked with the network to develop a template council motion that councils could adopt to show their backing for the bill.

Tobacco and Vapes Bill

We had supported and shared information on the previous government's Tobacco and Vapes Bill, introduced in March 2024. With the change of government in July, a new, similar bill was introduced to Parliament.

We recognise the bill's huge contribution to bringing about a smokefree generation and have looked to galvanise support for the bill and the wider smokefree agenda.

As well as developing a template council motion, we have shared information on the bill across our partner networks, ensured that there was wide understanding of, and discussion on, the bill's aims, and encouraged stakeholders to engage with the bill.



"The app is just brilliant. After trying to quit so many times in the last 41 years, I have now succeeded. The service they provide is unique in so many ways. I was blown away by the 24/7 access to a real human advisor. They are fabulous at answering any questions and supporting you. I highly recommend the app to anybody wanting to quit smoking"

Review of an app user in London

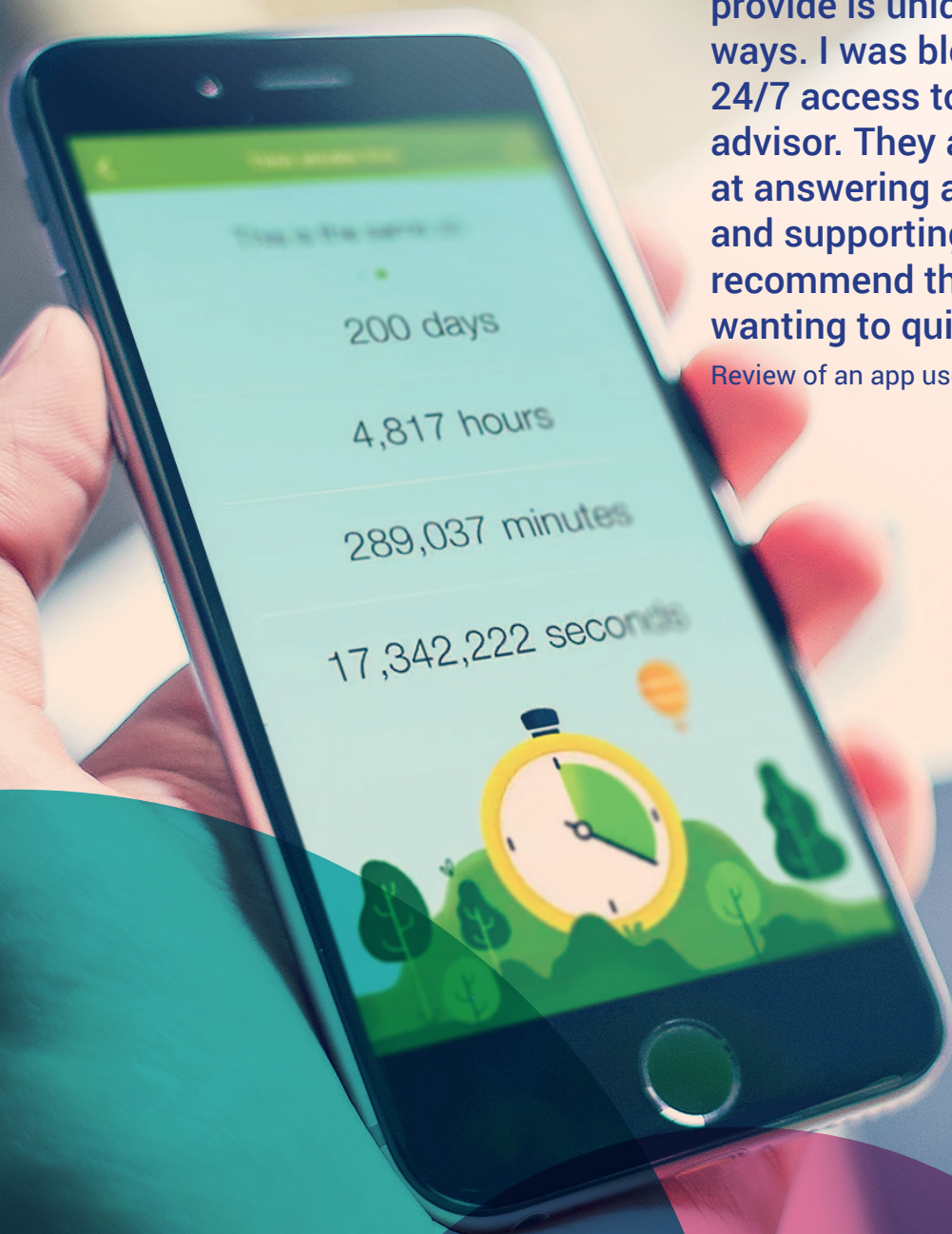


Image: Smoke Free app

Highlights of 2024/25

Offering 24/7 digital support to londoners

Smoke Free app

Traditional stop smoking support does not appeal to everyone or work for everyone's lifestyle. With evidence showing that a digital tool could offer a complementary method of quit support, we partnered with local authorities across London to run a pilot of the Smoke Free app.

Having gained agreement and funding from all 33 London Directors of Public Health, we procured 2,500 licences for the app and soft launched the pilot in November 2024 before launching fully in January 2025. These licences gave Londoners six months free premium access, which includes tips, missions and badges, 24/7 real-time support from an adviser, and 12 weeks of nicotine replacement therapy or vapes.

40% of the smokers who set a quit date through the app were smokefree at their 4-week follow-up. Building on the successful pilot, we are working with local authorities to understand their appetite to continue this programme.

"I have been smoking almost 50 years. I have tried stopping many, many times, never lasted a week. You are the only ones who were able to help."

Smoke Free app user, London

Why we did it

- Traditional stop smoking services do not appeal to everyone (e.g. younger smokers) or fit with their working and home patterns
- A 24/7 digital service had the potential to reach new people across the city
- London took the opportunity to pool some of the new smoking cessation funding for a regional digital pilot

How we did it

- We worked with local authorities across London to procure the already-established Smoke Free app
- We purchased 2,500 licences for the premium version of the app – this represents an additional 10% capacity in the London smoking cessation system
- We ran a Smoke Free app pilot across the 33 London boroughs
- We promoted the pilot through our delivery partner Stop Smoking London and local authority partners
- We carried insights with London smokers to find out what they wanted
- We developed a specification with a steering group of experts
- We ensured that any app adhered to NICE guidance and the 'Digital Technology Assessment Criteria

What we achieved

- All 2,500 licences for the Smoke Free app were used between November 2024 and March 2025
- More than half of users accessed the app outside of normal clinic hours (between 5pm and 9am)
- The app has appealed across all ages and reached people in socio-economically deprived areas and in a range of ethnic communities
- 40% of the app users had quit smoking within four weeks

Highlights of 2024/25

London smokefree pregnancy week

ENCOURAGING PREGNANT WOMEN TO GIVE UP SMOKING

More than 4,000 babies are born to a woman who smokes in London each year. With smoking in pregnancy increasing the risk of serious health problems for babies before they are born – and into infancy and childhood – we ran London's first Smokefree Pregnancy Week to raise awareness of the impact of smoking during pregnancy among pregnant women who smoke and to engage the wider health sector.

We worked with partners, leading clinicians, and pregnant women to create films, a webinar, and other content that focused on the benefits of quitting smoking.

Between 18 and 22 November 2024, we launched new bespoke content on the Stop Smoking London website, promoted the films widely, posted social media posts across a range of platforms, and developed a communications toolkit that we shared with our partners so that they could promote and engage with the week.

The awareness week, which came soon after Stoptober when quitting smoking was already top of people's minds, was the first campaign of its type to highlight this issue across London.

Why we did it

- To raise awareness of the impact of smoking during pregnancy and the benefits of quitting
- To encourage pregnant women and women planning to be pregnant to quit smoking
- To engage healthcare professionals, local authorities, and other partner organisations on this topic

How we did it

- Short films featuring clinicians, a tobacco dependence advisor and a woman who quit smoking when pregnant, on the Stop Smoking London website and YouTube channel
- Advice on the Stop Smoking London website, including a new guide to quitting smoking during pregnancy
- A webinar for clinicians with experts sharing their insight
- A social media campaign
- A communications toolkit for local authorities

What we achieved

- There were 8,000+ views of the films – the one featuring a consultant midwife and a tobacco dependence advisor was particularly popular, with 6,000+ views
- The social media posts for this campaign received more than 9,000 impressions
- Over 80 people attended our webinar, which remains available to view on the LTA website
- Stop Smoking London content was shared publicly by various local authorities and NHS Trusts

“Merlin is the main reason I gave up smoking and I want to stay smoke free.”

Annika, who received support to quit smoking before the birth of her son



Dr Martina Leczycka

Highlights of 2024/25

Helping the Polish community to quit smoking

People living in England who were born in Poland are almost twice as likely to smoke than the general population. So, as part of our focus on developing culturally-relevant content, we worked with a specialist partner to create a stop smoking campaign for the Polish community in London.

Our own research for the campaign found that smoking is more embedded in the Polish culture and can be linked with socialising and stress. With local stop smoking services little known within the Polish community, we created a range of bespoke resources to promote the health benefits of quitting, particularly targeted to Polish men and women aged 40+ from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

The resources in Polish and English were made available on the Stop Smoking London website and Dr Martina Leczycka, a well-known doctor within the Polish diaspora in the UK, was the face of the campaign.

“It’s clearly visible that a lot of energy, time and effort went into the preparation of this campaign.

Magdalena Grzymkowska,
journalist at Tydzien Polski

Why we did it

- To develop a better understanding of smoking behaviours within London’s Polish community
- To give London’s Polish community support to quit smoking
- To build awareness of Stop Smoking London and drive traffic to the website

How we did it

- Research with Polish community organisations and trusted voices
- Bilingual resources, including 12 advice videos, 10 animated quote cards, and a ‘How to quit smoking’ guide
- A web page containing all the resources
- A social media campaign
- A communications toolkit for local authorities

What we achieved

- 8,000+ views and 140+ engagements with Dr Leczycka’s social posts
- Six media articles that reached 1.92 million people
- 15 social media posts by Polish media outlets that reached 291,000 people
- Two Polish Express newsletter features that reached 100,000 people
- 549,000 people reached via Facebook groups

Collaborating with partners to address key issues

Helping with cost of living pressures

Some of the communities most affected by the increased cost of living in London have higher smoking rates and suffer both the financial and health consequences of smoking.

With this in mind, we are members of the Economic Wellbeing Forum, which is led by Thrive LDN. We encouraged partners at the forum to factor in the cost of smoking as well as harms to health that could impact Londoners' employability and earnings.

Using the calculator on the Stop Smoking London website, we demonstrated how, for some people, smoking can cost thousands of pounds a year. We explained that there is lots of free support available to help Londoners quit smoking and we shared various Stop Smoking London resources.

Since the Economic Wellbeing Forum, we have advised several third sector organisations in different parts of the city so they can support smokers in their local communities.

Supporting mental health initiatives

Quitting smoking has immediate benefits for mental health, including reducing depression, anxiety and stress.

So, in January 2025, we again supported Great Mental Health Day in London, which is organised by Thrive LDN. To mark the day, we posted on social media and shared Thrive LDN's posts, directing people to Stop Smoking London resources and the Good Thinking website.

In addition, we worked with partners in mental health to plan for a major smoking and mental health campaign to run in June 2025.



Connecting with social prescribers

As part of their focus on improving Londoners' health and wellbeing, social prescribing link workers can provide guidance on how to quit smoking.

We have been speaking to the London-wide social prescribing team about how we can work together to increase understanding of smoking-related issues and awareness of the free support that is available to help Londoners quit.

Engaging faith communities

Having already collaborated with the Faiths Forum for London, we were one of the founding partners of the Forum's new Public Health Group.

We worked with other members of the group to determine how we could join up smoking-related issues with other public health issues. This included providing smoking data for different faiths, sharing information on the harms of smoking, advising where smokers can go for support, and dispelling misconceptions around smoking and vaping.

We also spoke directly to representatives of faith groups across London about how we could help them to support smokers in their communities.



Delivering stop smoking support at London Ambulance Service NHS Trust

Providing smoking cessation support to London employers

In 2024/25, we ran training sessions for several major London employers.

We had two goals – to help employees who want to give up smoking and to educate staff on how to support colleagues on their quit journey. During the sessions, we took participants through the National Centre for Smoking Cessation and Training developed guidance, Very Brief Advice on Smoking, and signposted them to resources on the Stop Smoking London website.

Transport for London

TfL had identified a high prevalence of smoking at its Acton depot so we presented to a group of employees at the depot, with a follow-up session online for wellbeing champions.

London Ambulance Service NHS Trust

With a need to advise patients of the risks of smoking and a high rate of smoking among ambulance staff, we had a Stop Smoking London stand at the LAS Waterloo site and provided in-person and online training.

Metropolitan Police

We ran online training for a group of employees, which was available for other colleagues to watch on demand.

Office for Health Improvement and Disparities

We took part in an OHID webinar to support people with long-term health conditions in the workplace, which was attended by representatives of the NHS, local authorities and Department of Work and Pensions (DWP).

We will continue working with large employers across the city in 2025/26, including public sector organisations and construction companies, to help them become smokefree workplaces.

Sharing success stories

One of the best ways to get our message across and inspire people to quit is by telling stories about Londoners who have successfully stopped smoking. This year, we worked with a videographer to create a series of films for the Stop Smoking London YouTube channel.

Everyone's quit journey is different so the films have featured Londoners like Olivette who gave up due to health conditions, Chris who didn't want to be a smoker on his wedding day, and Annika who quit while pregnant.

We have also filmed leading clinicians and other healthcare professionals talking about the harms of smoking. One of the films that contained stop smoking guidance for pregnant women achieved more than 6,000 views.

“I really feel, since I've stopped smoking, that I have a better life.

Erene



Olivette



Chris



Annika



Erene

Images: Dan Moreton

#Fivefor2025 Supporting New Year's resolutions



As well as promoting national campaigns like No Smoking Day and Stoptober, we run London-wide campaigns.

Recognising that the New Year is a popular time to quit smoking but that many people fail to give up permanently, we launched our #FiveFor2025 campaign in January. The aim was to help Londoners prepare to quit so they would have greater success in the long term.

We shared five steps to being smokefree in 2025 on the Stop Smoking London website and published social media posts throughout the month. The #FiveFor2025 resources included videos of GPs and pharmacists giving their advice, guides to help Londoners support their loved ones, and a smoking calculator so that people could work out how much they spend on cigarettes.

The #FiveFor2025 landing page was the most visited page on the Stop Smoking London website in January and the social posts received extensive engagement throughout the month.

Tobacco and Vapes Bill Engaging young Londoners

What do young people and key senior stakeholders in tobacco control and the healthcare sector think of the Tobacco and Vapes Bill?

Between August 2024 and February 2025, we teamed up with the Stop Smoking and Vaping Board at Partnership for Young London (PYL) to get some answers to this question.

We worked with young Londoners at PYL to design the research, which included a survey and focus groups, so they could share their lived experiences of smoking and their thoughts on the bill. We also provided skills-based training and introduced them to senior tobacco control and healthcare professionals who they could interview on the same topic.



Two-thirds (66%) of the young people who responded to the survey said they support the Tobacco and Vapes Bill although many foresee potential challenges with its implementation.

By bringing together these different perspectives, the aim was to shape strong policy recommendations that reduce tobacco use amongst young Londoners and build a healthier future for the next generation. The report has been published and shared with stakeholders.

Looking ahead

Our work to achieve a smokefree London by 2030 will gain even more momentum in 2025/26 – building on our past successes and putting new ideas and innovations into practice.

Strong partnerships

We will continue to enhance our partnerships with the GLA, NHS London, OHID, London Councils, and other organisations so that even more people across the capital can get the right support to quit smoking.

To ensure that health and wellbeing leads have access to expertise and evidence around smoking, we will further develop the Smokefree Councillor Network.

We will continue our work with the Partnership for Young London, focusing on promoting the report highlighting young people's views on the Tobacco and Vapes Bill (see page 15).

Hard-hitting campaigns

Reaching communities that have a higher prevalence of smoking and tackling health inequalities remain key priorities.

We will deliver London-wide awareness campaigns, including London Smoking and Mental Health Week (June 2025) and London Smokefree Pregnancy Week (November 2025), as well as amplifying national campaigns. As part of Stoptober, for example, we will be working with a non-profit partner to develop a campaign targeted at people in the LGBTQ+ community that smoke.

Having already reached out to several major London employers, we are planning to target sectors that have a high rate of smoking, such as construction, retail and hospitality.

24/7 digital support

Our Smoke Free app pilot was a huge success, with all 2,500 licences being used and 40% of the smokers who set a quit date through the app being smokefree at their 4-week follow-up. Building on this, we will work with London boroughs to roll the app out to even more Londoners next year.

We will also expand the content on the London Tobacco Alliance website and the Stop Smoking London website so that it remains relevant and engaging to Londoners who smoke and to our network of partners. We know how inspiring it can be to read about people who have given up smoking, so we will focus on providing more real-life case studies, as well as useful tips and guides.

Smokefree ambition

Recognising that the Tobacco and Vapes Bill will play a major role in London becoming smokefree, we will continue to support its progression through parliament.

To mark the third anniversary of the London Tobacco Alliance and the progression of the Tobacco and Vapes Bill, we are planning to host a key stakeholder event in November 2025.

Health inequalities

We will continue to focus on health inequalities and how smoking exacerbates pre-existing health inequalities. We will work alongside public health colleagues and those in healthcare to share insight and stimulate discussion to bring about greater understanding of the challenges, and look at how partners can work together to reduce smoking rates and contribute to a reduction in health inequalities.

Youth Vaping

Recognising concerns at the level of youth vaping in London, we will work with the Association of Directors of Public Health London (ADPHL) lead for Children and Young People in developing a roundtable to discuss, and agree, a position statement that aims to outline the approach of ADPHL/London Tobacco Alliance partners regarding the use of vapes by young people under the age of 18.

If you want find more about what we do or how your organisation could work with us please contact us at londontobaccoalliance@towerhamlets.gov.uk
www.londontobaccoalliance.co.uk | www.stopsmokinglondon.com