

Tips for a successful Smokefree policy

Cancer Society Auckland have helped various organisations develop and implement Smokefree policies in a range of settings.

Here is a summary of the key elements for the successful implementation of a Smokefree policy.



Policy

- tips to make it work

- **Write down a formal policy** and ensure it is accessible to all staff and accessible for visitors if they request to see it.
- **Ensure the policy is signed off** by the appropriate management team/board of your organisation to give it the mandate to be implemented.
- **Go for a completely Smokefree policy** as opposed to designated Smokefree areas. Organisations that we have worked with have found a completely Smokefree policy is easier to enforce than designated areas. Usually this is because the message is much clearer with a completely Smokefree policy. Also, as policies are often established to ensure children do not see adults smoking, designated areas do not resolve this issue.
- **Make one or two key staff members responsible** for the Smokefree policy. By including Smokefree in the job description of staff members, time spent on this policy will be recognised as part of their performance review. This would ensure that there is a key contact person within the organisation and someone responsible if issues do arise such as updating signage.
- **Clearly define the role of all staff** in upholding the policy. This includes their role in role modelling and enforcing the policy.
- **Include clear procedures** for the course of action staff/public should take to let others know about the policy and what happens if people do not comply.

Ownership

- whose job is it?

Staff* buy-in

If staff are supportive of the policy they are more likely to proactively enforce it. It is worth persisting to get staff buy-in for the long-term effectiveness of the policy. Organisations that have good buy-in have staff that proactively support the policy and see it as their role to ensure they let visitors know about the policy. Other organisations that have not had the same level of staff buy-in have faced the challenge of staff not feeling that it is their responsibility to enforce the Smokefree policy.

*Staff includes paid and volunteer staff and any contractors

Some suggestions for getting staff buy-in are:

- Ensure staff know why you have/are introducing the policy
- Develop a Q and A sheet about the new policy
- Involve staff in launching the policy
- Ensure staff clearly know what their role is in enforcing/supporting the policy
- Ensure staff know what to say if they see someone smoking in the grounds

- Have a procedure in place for non-compliance
- Provide support for staff who want to quit smoking
- Profile and acknowledge staff who are getting in behind the policy
- Encourage staff to feed back about how the policy is working at team meetings
- Encourage positive spin-offs of the policy within your organisation such as quit attempts/teams challenging each other to quit

Visitor buy-in

Start with people who most regularly visit your organisation particularly those you already have regular mechanisms of communication with. It is important to get those who regularly visit your organisation to understand why your organisation has a Smokefree policy, abide by it, and feel empowered to be able to ask someone not to smoke in the grounds.

Communication

- letting people know about the policy

Most organisations have focused on key messages about children and making sure they do not start smoking. This is based on evidence that if children see adults smoking they are more likely to start themselves.

Again, clear policies such as completely Smokefree grounds are both easier to communicate and easier for patrons to understand.

There are a number of ways to inform visitors about the Smokefree policy:

- Include information about the policy on your website
- Utilise internal and external communications e.g. staff newsletters, external newsletters
- Target communication to special supporters/already established newsletter/group emails
- Put Smokefree signage around the Smokefree area
- Ask staff to inform people who they see smoking about the policy
- Include information about the policy in your annual publication
- Host a forum and/or launch where people can come and learn about the policy
- Let people know when they purchase their entrance tickets etc. about the Smokefree policy
- Include a Smokefree statement printed on entrance tickets
- Develop a media release to announce that the organisation is going Smokefree
- Include information about the Smokefree policy in PA announcements



- Puketapapa Local Board launch of Smokefree playgrounds on World Smokefree Day 2012.

Launching the policy

Many organisations choose to celebrate and gain support and awareness for their new Smokefree policy by organising some sort of launch. Overall we have found that launching the policy has been a worthwhile aspect of gaining support and letting people know about the new policy.

Some organisations have built events around the launch of the policy specifically, while other organisations have used events that they are already holding to launch their Smokefree policy. These launches can be internal (aimed at staff members), external (aimed at visitors), or both.

Generally there is good media pick-up of launch events when a media release is developed. Media pick-up has been particularly high for organisations who have tied the launch of their policy to a key date such as World Smokefree Day (31st May). Often Cancer Society Auckland has been involved in developing joint media releases to show that the organisation supports and endorses the new policy.

Signage

There are 4 types of signage you could choose to put around your grounds:

1. Green Smokefree signage

This is based on the New Zealand Smokefree branding and is most commonly used throughout the country. It is available in English and Te Reo.



2. Design your own signage

There are many organisations throughout New Zealand and overseas who have developed their own signage. Designing your own signage allows you to make the Smokefree message fit with design schemes or as part of existing signage you already have.

3. Use the internationally known 'no smoking' signage

From feedback we know that some people, particularly those for whom English is a second language, have misinterpreted the green Smokefree signage to mean they are free to smoke in that area.



4. Add the green Smokefree logo to existing signage

Some organisations choose to do this as a sticker until they update their old signage. This is a good interim option if signage cost is limiting the progression of the Smokefree policy.

Enforcement

- what happens if you see someone smoking in a Smokefree area?

Ensure that there is a clear message and process for staff to follow if they see someone smoking in the Smokefree area. It is also important to explain to staff that this policy is in place regardless of their personal views and that they are expected to act within organisational guidelines.

Organisations have found that generally most smokers are considerate and when informed about Smokefree areas, most comply with the policy without question.

If people continue to smoke despite this message, staff should be aware of what they should do next. It is important to have a process in place to give staff confidence to address such situations. They need to know they are backed up by the organisation and having a set process helps to legitimise the policy. You may choose to make this process similar to how staff would deal with people in other circumstances e.g. drinking in an alcohol free zone, disturbing other visitors or staff. For staff this may mean their only further action is to advise security or the person in charge of the policy.

Other organisations have developed information sheets outlining their policy and why it is in place. These information sheets are carried by staff/security and are able to be given out as part of this process.

There may need to be consideration given to certain events such as special concerts or events, or other one-off occasions, to ensure the Smokefree policy is consistently upheld. A key part of this will be ensuring that extra event staff are brought up to speed with the policy.



Evaluation

- assessing what's working well and what needs to be improved

It is best to set aside an annual date to review how the Smokefree policy is working and whether signage needs to be replaced.

Staff feedback is an easy way to get information about how well the policy is going. If possible this could be included within already functioning team meetings and reporting procedures.

If you already have annual surveys of staff/visitors you may choose to include a question about the Smokefree policy within this survey.

It can be useful to work out where people commonly smoke on your site by doing a count of cigarette butts and waste to establish areas that will require signage. This can then continue at regular intervals in the future to determine the effectiveness of the policy, ensure that people are complying with the Smokefree policy and determine any areas that may require additional signage or enforcement.

If you already monitor customer complaints, this system will also provide good feedback about the policy.



For more information about tips for implementing a successful Smokefree policy or Smokefree venues in Auckland, please email the Cancer Society Auckland Health Promotion team at smokefree@akcansoc.org.nz or find us online at www.cancersocietyauckland.org.nz/smokefreeauckland