

## **HEALTH SECRETARY ANNOUNCES DATE ENGLAND WILL GO SMOKEFREE**

All enclosed public places and workplaces will become smokefree from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2007, Health Secretary Patricia Hewitt announced today.

Health Secretary Patricia Hewitt said:

"This is a triumph for public health and a huge step forward for health protection. Thousands of people's lives will be saved and the health of thousands more protected. Smokefree legislation will protect everyone from the harm of secondhand smoke when working, socialising and relaxing and will provide a more supportive environment for smokers who wish to give up.

"The scientific and medical evidence is clear - secondhand smoke kills, causing a range of serious medical conditions including lung cancer, heart disease, and sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). This legislation will help to prevent the unnecessary deaths caused every year from secondhand smoke, and recognises that there is absolutely no safe level of exposure.

"Never has a health issue created such debate in Parliament, across government, through the business and the voluntary sectors, and amongst the general public. And the more it has been debated, the more people have responded and pushed the limits to ensure that enclosed public places and workplaces in England will become wholly smokefree.

"Where countries have gone smokefree the impact on the health of staff has been immediate and positive. And the experience of going smokefree in Ireland, Scotland, New York and elsewhere has been good for business.

"I would like to thank business groups, the leisure and hospitality industries and the many health organisations that have been involved for their support, which has helped to make this legislation a reality.

"It has been an incredible journey, but we still have a lot of work to do to support businesses to be ready for the implementation of the new laws."

The Health Secretary also launched a new Smokefree England campaign which will help the country's 3.7 million businesses including nearly 200,000 pubs, bars, restaurants and other leisure outlets prepare for the implementation of the legislation.

Notes to Editors:

1. With the implementation of the smokefree elements of the Health Act 2006, from 6am on the 1st July 2007, virtually all enclosed public places and workplaces will become smokefree environments. This will include offices, factories, shops, pubs, bars, restaurants, membership clubs, public transport and work vehicles that are used by more than one person. The law will also mean that indoor smoking rooms, still common in workplaces, will no longer be allowed. So anyone wishing to smoke will have to go outside instead.
2. The regulations providing the detail of how the smokefree legislation will operate are being finalised and will be laid before Parliament shortly. A copy of the Government's proposals for regulations are available on the Department of Health's website at:  
[www.dh.gov.uk/Consultations/ClosedConsultations/ClosedConsultationsArticle/fs/en?CONTENT\\_ID=4139521&chk=nsx](http://www.dh.gov.uk/Consultations/ClosedConsultations/ClosedConsultationsArticle/fs/en?CONTENT_ID=4139521&chk=nsx)
3. Information and resources to support the introduction of smokefree legislation is available on the Smokefree England website at: [www.smokefreeengland.co.uk](http://www.smokefreeengland.co.uk), including information on how businesses and employees can access free NHS smoking cessation advice.
4. All smokefree premises and vehicles will be required to display no-smoking signs.

For further information, media enquiries only, please contact Brenda Irons-Roberts, Department of Health media centre, on 020 7210 5649.