

## ***Smoke Free Play Parks: Better Places to Play***

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### **1. Purpose**

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- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to introduce the 'Better Places to Play' evidence based Smoke Free Play Parks initiative developed by Smokefree South West and the rationale behind the initiative. This scheme is currently being implemented by District Councils across Devon.

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### **2. Background**

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- 2.1 Smoking kills half of all long-term users and is the biggest single cause of inequalities in death rates between rich and poor in England
- 2.2 Early health disadvantages become entrenched in childhood as illness caused by second-hand smoke is more common in poorer families.
- 2.3 Priority 4 of the Joint Exeter Health and Wellbeing Strategy is around improving the health of the most disadvantaged in the city.
- 2.4 The Exeter Health and Wellbeing Board signed the Local Government Declaration on Tobacco control in April 2014
- 2.5 Exeter City Councillors have recently received some complaints about smoking in particular Children's play areas from members of the public

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### **3. Context**

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- 3.1 Smokefree South West has developed a toolkit to assist local areas to implement a voluntary ban in play parks. This toolkit is evidence based and has been robustly evaluated within the southwest.
- 3.2 The campaign or initiative seeks to prevent copycat behaviour and protect children from the effects of smoking by reducing their exposure to secondhand smoke. By reducing children's exposure to smoking we can decrease the uptake of smoking in young people long-term.
- 3.3 A successful voluntary ban would also reduce litter in play parks as well as antisocial behaviour making parks 'Better Places to Play'

- 3.4 Signage has been developed and tested as part of the toolkit and evaluation of its implementation in other areas of the southwest completed. This evaluation was in five play parks, all situated in areas of low income.
- 3.5 Evaluation of the scheme indicated 57% of parents think smoking is a problem in their local play park; 73% of parents agree that smoking leaves litter in their local play park; 98% of people from the local community would support a ban

An Example of Smoke Free Play Park Signage from the Smokefree South West Toolkit:



- 3.6 Public Health Devon has some funding 'banked' with a company allocated for Smokefree Play Park signage for Exeter City Council to access. This can be used flexibly by the council to purchase the type of signage best suited to the park; e.g. Park Signs, Bin Vinyls, Bench Signs, Equipment Signs, size A3, A2, A4 etc.

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## **4. Recommendations**

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- 4.1 That the Board:
- i) Endorse the use of smoke free play parks signage in those parks where the public or council staff have currently identified smoking as an issue
  
  - ii) Agree to the identification of possible additional parks based on health and wellbeing statistics and insights from the city council parks team
  
  - iii) Endorse the use of Smokefree South West 'Better Places to Play' signage accessed through money currently allocated to Exeter City Council by Public Health Devon

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