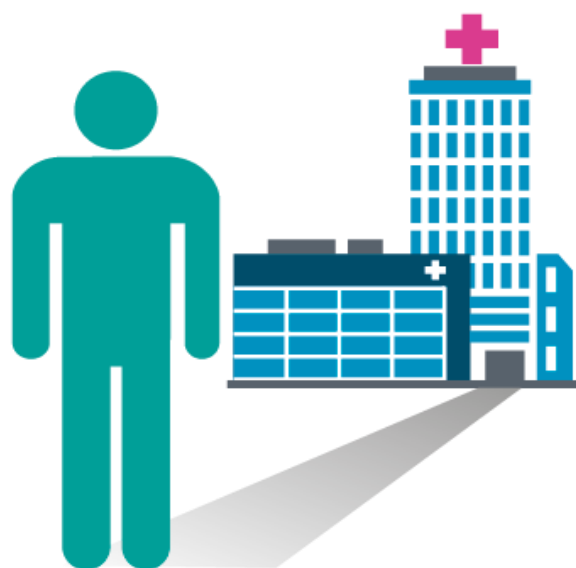


## Smoke-free NHS County Durham and Darlington Foundation Trust

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Capturing the views of patients, visitors and staff about the  
smoke-free policy - “change is in the air”

October 2019





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## Healthwatch

Healthwatch is the consumer champion for health and social care, representing the voices of current and future users to decision makers.



### **We listen**

We listen to patients of health services and users of social care services, along with their family members or carers, to find out what they think of the services they receive.



### **We advise**

We advise people how to get the best health and social care for themselves and their family. We provide help and information about all aspects of health and social care provided in County Durham and Darlington.



### **We speak up**

We make sure that consumers views are heard by those who provide health and social care. Wherever possible we try to work in partnership with providers to influence how they make improvements.

## Executive Summary

County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust (CDDFT) asked Healthwatch County Durham (HWCD) and Healthwatch Darlington (HWD) to lead a programme of patient, staff and visitor engagement to support the organisation's ambition to become a smoke-free organisation from 1st October 2019. The Trust wanted the engagement activity to take place in October 2019 and to be repeated in 6 to 12 months to measure any change in perceptions or behaviours.

The Trust has launched its 'change is in the air' policy and wanted to carry out engagement on the rationale for the change and what this will mean for staff, patients and visitors. The Trust wanted to gain insight into current views and perceptions, so that it can be used to inform and further develop the communications and engagement plans. The aim was for HWCD and HWD to provide independent assurance on the engagement process undertaken and provide patient /staff/visitor feedback and views in the form of a report which would help inform the ongoing communications plan and ultimately the success of implementation

CDDFT communications team and smoke-free lead worked with Healthwatch to support the development of a survey and provide access and guidance to patients and public for the engagement work (see Appendix 1). The survey was for use online and at designated hospital sites for completion by patients, staff and visitors. CDDFT supported with access to locations within the hospital and to ward areas so that Healthwatch could co-ordinate and collate the responses to the survey and include them in the overall final report.

A series of visits were arranged for specific wards in CDDFT hospitals, Healthwatch County Durham visited wards 6 & 14, A&E and outpatients at University Hospital North Durham (UHND). Healthwatch Darlington visited wards 43 & 44, A&E and outpatients at Darlington Memorial Hospital (DMH). The visits took place throughout October 2019. In total 218 surveys were completed, 91 from UHND and 127 from DMH. 81% of the people completing the survey were non-smokers with the remaining 19% advising us that they currently smoked. We captured the views of patients, staff and visitors and below is the breakdown of the responses.

100  
patients

58  
visitors

60  
staff

From the information captured in the survey and what Healthwatch saw and heard while we were at the hospital sites, we have the following observations and recommendations for the Trust to consider in their on-going communications and implementation plans.

- There were many positive responses to the new policy. Overall people were in agreement with the policy and felt it was the right thing for the Trust to do. In the survey, 30 people specifically mentioned that they thought it was a good idea. A small number of people wanted the Trust to go further by banning e-cigarettes on site too, so this may be an area where the Trust can provide more information about why they are a vape friendly site.
- We heard from a number of people that they were still witnessing smoking on both hospital sites, although we cannot be sure if it was on the current visit to the hospital or previous visits before the policy came into operation. A small number of people told us they had either been approached themselves whilst smoking or had seen others approached, but more people had heard the “tannoy” sound system advising people that smoking was not permitted. Because our visits were just a snapshot in time, we are unable to say how effective deterrents to smoking on site are and we are concerned that if there are not effective and consistent approaches made to people smoking, then others will be encouraged to follow suit and the policy will be less successful.
- The majority of patients and staff had been advised about the new policy and understood what it meant for them. There was less certainty about whether it would help smokers in their ambition to stop smoking
- There was a lot of uncertainty about e-cigarettes and how safe they were. This could have been influenced by the fact that just before we carried out our engagement there had been newspaper and TV articles about some deaths that were being linked to e-cigarettes.
- During our visits we could see plenty of signs and posters both in the hospital grounds and inside the hospital at UHND and DMH giving information about the new policy (see Appendix 2 for examples), however we don’t know whether this could be extended further.
- At DMH it was noted that there were a lot of cigarette ends lying on the ground at one of the entrances.

Our key considerations for the Trust are,

How the Trust will "police" the smoking on site moving forward, including identifying what are the most effective deterrents

How the positive message about e-cigarretes can be shared, given the element of uncertainty that has arisen with adverse publicity

Whether waste bins should be provided at entrances to hospital grounds for cigarettes

Whether signage on site needs to be extended to other areas in the hospital grounds

To ensure staff are clear about their role in enforcing the policy

To consider the safety of staff when approaching smokers as there were comments from staff that they might feel unsafe approaching people smoking?

## Highlights from our listening events

We spoke to  
people in A&E,  
outpatients  
and some  
wards



The trust had an  
ambition to be  
smoke-free from  
1 October 2019



218 patients,  
visitors and staff  
completed our  
survey across the  
two hospital sites

**smokefree**

People said “It’s  
a really good  
idea to have this  
no smoking  
policy”

We were told that some  
people were still  
smoking on-site



## Background information

County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust (CDDFT) asked Healthwatch County Durham (HWCD) and Healthwatch Darlington (HWD) to lead a programme of patient, staff and visitor engagement to support the organisation's ambition to become a smoke-free organisation from 1st October 2019. The Trust wanted the engagement activity to take place in October 2019 and then to be repeated in 6 to 12 months to measure any change in perceptions or behaviours.

CDDFT communications team and smoke-free lead worked with Healthwatch to support the development of a survey and provide access and guidance to patients and public for the engagement work. The survey was for use on-line and at designated hospital sites for completion by patients, staff and visitors. CDDFT supported with locations within the hospital and access to ward areas so that Healthwatch could co-ordinate and collate the responses to the survey and include them in the overall final report

The Trust has launched a 'change is in the air' policy to begin engagement on the rationale for the change and what this will mean for staff, patients and visitors. Part of this, is gaining insight into current views and perceptions on the proposal so that this can be used to inform and further develop the communications and engagement planning. The aim was for HWCD & HWD to provide independent assurance on the engagement process undertaken, and provide patient /staff/visitor feedback and views in the form of a report which would help inform the communications plan and ultimately the success of implementation.

The vision of the Trust is,

"We are a health promoting organisation and are committed to protecting and improving the health and wellbeing of all employees, patients, visitors and contractors.

Smoking remains the leading cause of premature death in the UK and is responsible for half of the health gap between the poorest and most affluent communities. All clinicians encounter smokers in their daily work, and most will have first-hand experience of caring for people whose lives have been destroyed by addiction to smoking tobacco.

Many of these long term illnesses and deaths are entirely avoidable. The NHS is in a unique position around prevention - one in four patients in hospital beds are smokers. As well as leading by example, gains in health can be made by the taking every opportunity to engage those patients that smoke. Reducing smoking among patients can reduce hospital admissions, reduce the risk of premature death, and



also lead to many benefits you might not realise - such as the effectiveness of some medications and increasing healing after operations.

Exposure to secondhand smoke also causes disease and premature death among non-smokers and even brief exposure can cause immediate harm.

As an NHS organisation, we have a duty to protect and care for both the mental and physical health of our patients. This includes supporting smokers to stop smoking. Going smokefree reflects our commitment and responsibility for improving health and wellbeing.”

The decision to go smokefree is also in line with The Health Act (2006) and The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) 2013 guidelines which state that all hospital sites should be 100% Smokefree. <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ph48>

The Chair, Chief Executive Officer and Medical Director of County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust signed the Action on Smoking and Health (ASH) NHS Smokefree Pledge on behalf of the Trust Board on 25 July 2018.

The Trust has committed to achieving Smokefree status by 1 October 2019.

The Pledge commits the Trust to:

- treating tobacco dependency in patients and staff
- ensuring that smokers within the NHS have access to the medication and support they need to quit
- creating environments that support quitting through implementing a smoke-free policy
- delivering consistent messages to smokers about harms from smoking tobacco and the opportunities to quit, and
- actively working with local authorities and other stakeholders to reduce smoking tobacco prevalence and health inequalities.

What does going smokefree mean? - In line with the Trust’s Smokefree NHS/ Treating Tobacco Dependency Policy from 1st October 2019 patients, carers, staff and all other visitors are not allowed to smoke tobacco on any of our sites including all wards, buildings, grounds and vehicles. There be no designated smoking areas and if you smoke, we will support you to make a quit attempt or to temporarily abstain whilst onsite.

The regional vision is for smoking rates to be reduced to 5% by 2025 ‘FRESH NE’

Healthwatch was keen to support any initiatives which might contribute to a reduction in the prevalence of smoking in the county. Smoking is recognised to be the primary cause of preventable illness, morbidity and premature death. Death rates from tobacco are two to three times higher among disadvantaged social groups

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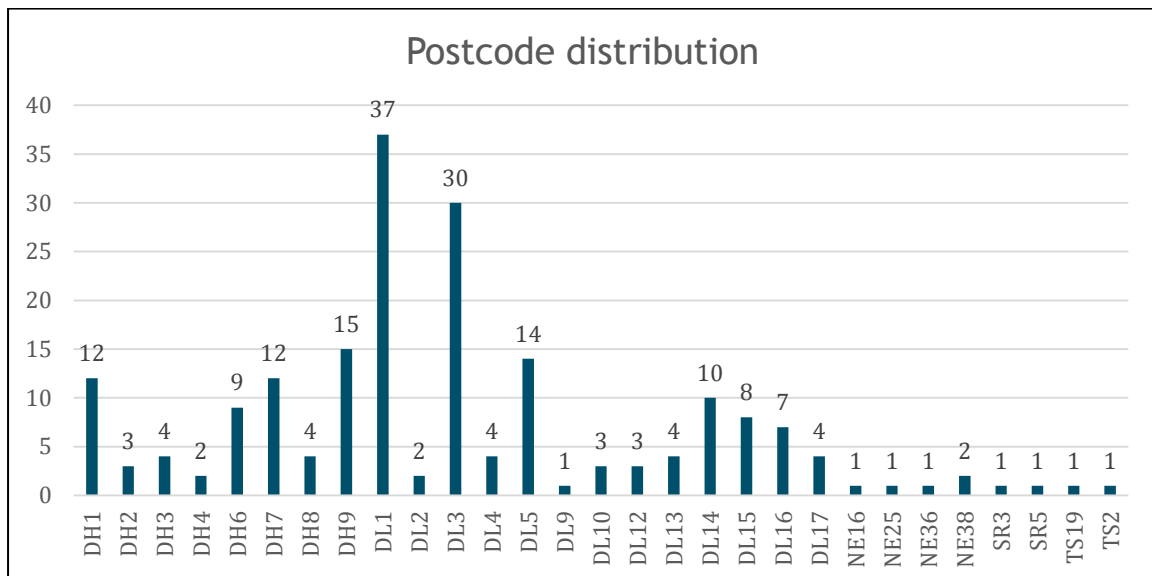
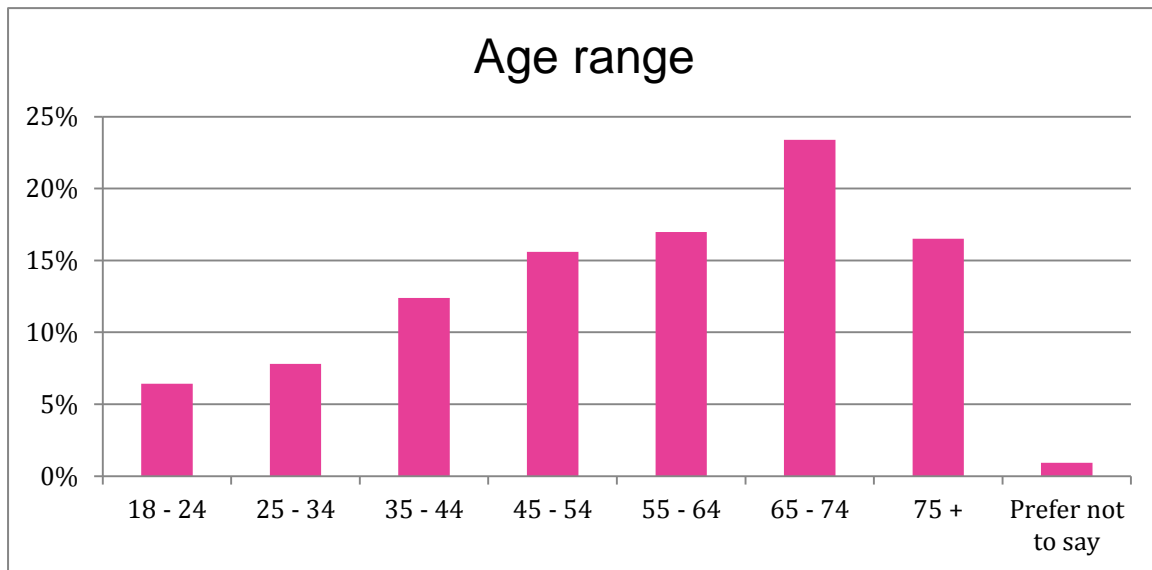
than among the better off. Local Tobacco Control profiles provided by Public Health England show,

- Smoking prevalence in County Durham in adults (18+) remains above the national average at 15%, compared to an average of 14.4% for England.
- In 2017/18, 18.2% of mothers in County Durham were smoking at time of delivery compared to 16.3% regionally and 10.8% in England.
- Smoking-related death rates per 100,000 (2015/17) were significantly higher in County Durham (343) than England (262) but are falling over time.
- Smoking prevalence in Darlington in adults (18+) remains below the national average at 13.8%, compared to an average of 14.4% for England.
- In 2018/19, 15.6% of mothers in Darlington were smoking at time of delivery compared to 15.7% regionally and 10.6% in England.

The work also supports Durham County Councils “A vision for County Durham 2019-2035” which states, “We will promote positive healthy behaviours and help people to stop smoking” and also Darlington Borough Councils “One Darlington Perfectly Placed”, Darlington’s sustainable community Strategy 2008-2026 revised version May 2014.

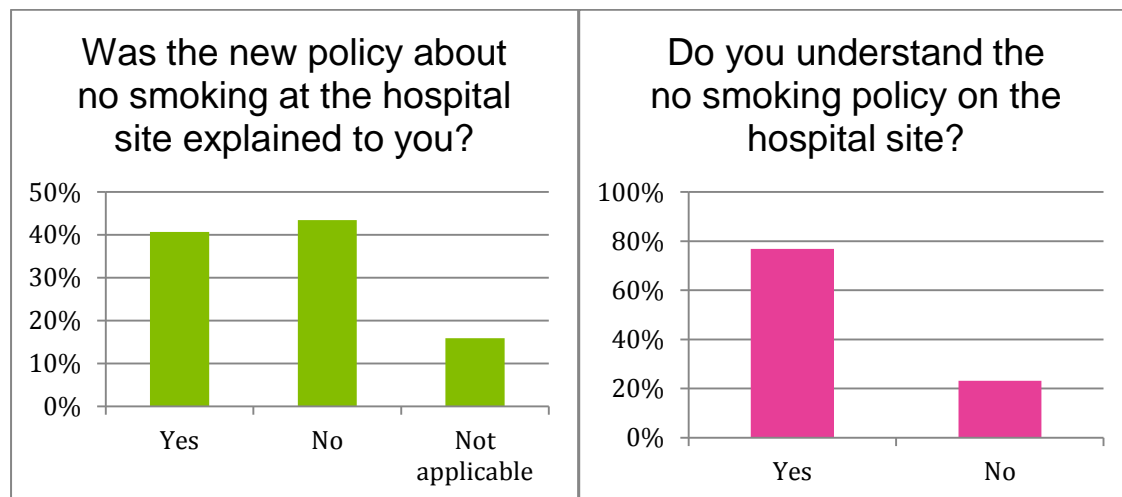
## Observations and findings

Below is information about the people who completed our survey, 100 people were patients, 58 were visitors and 60 were staff or volunteers. Of this, 140 were female, 72 male and 6 preferring not to say or not answering the question. The age range is given below, although one person told us they were 16, which was not on the survey age range.



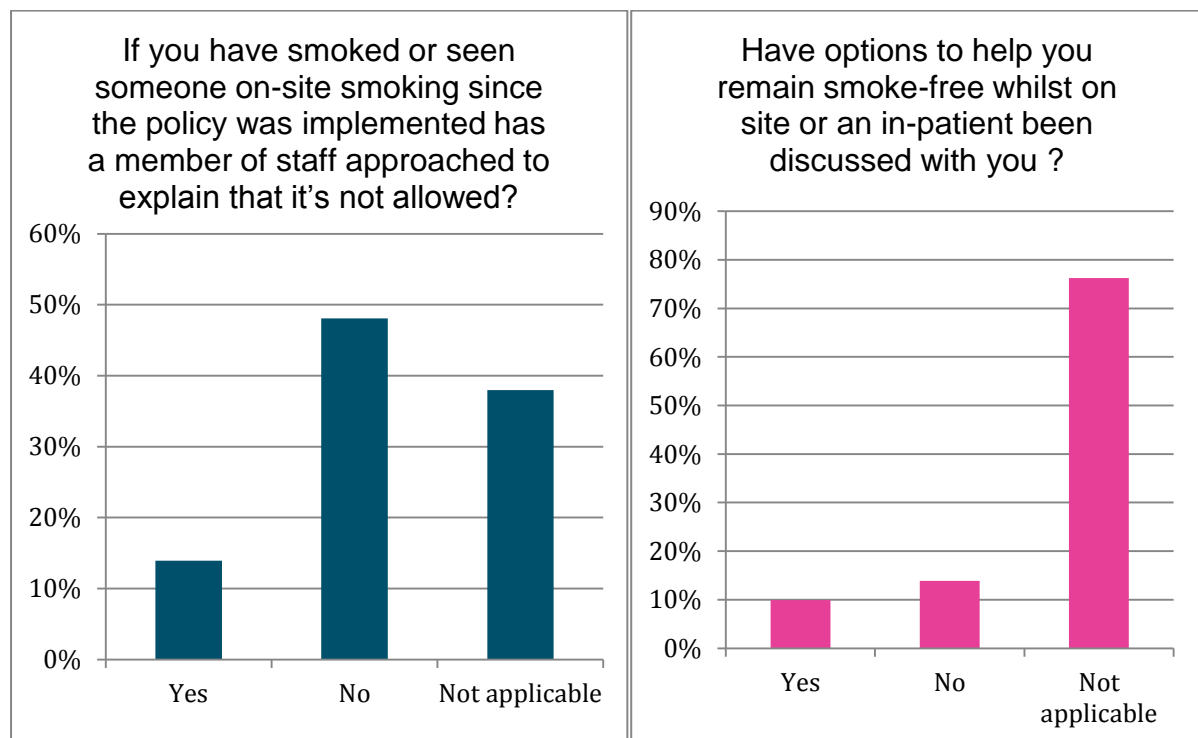
*“I did not see smokers approached but heard the speaker”*

Not everyone had the new policy explained to them, however it’s important to note that if you were an outpatient or a visitor to the hospital then there may have been no opportunity to have a discussion. Even where the policy had not been explained, most people told us they had seen the signage in the hospital or grounds.



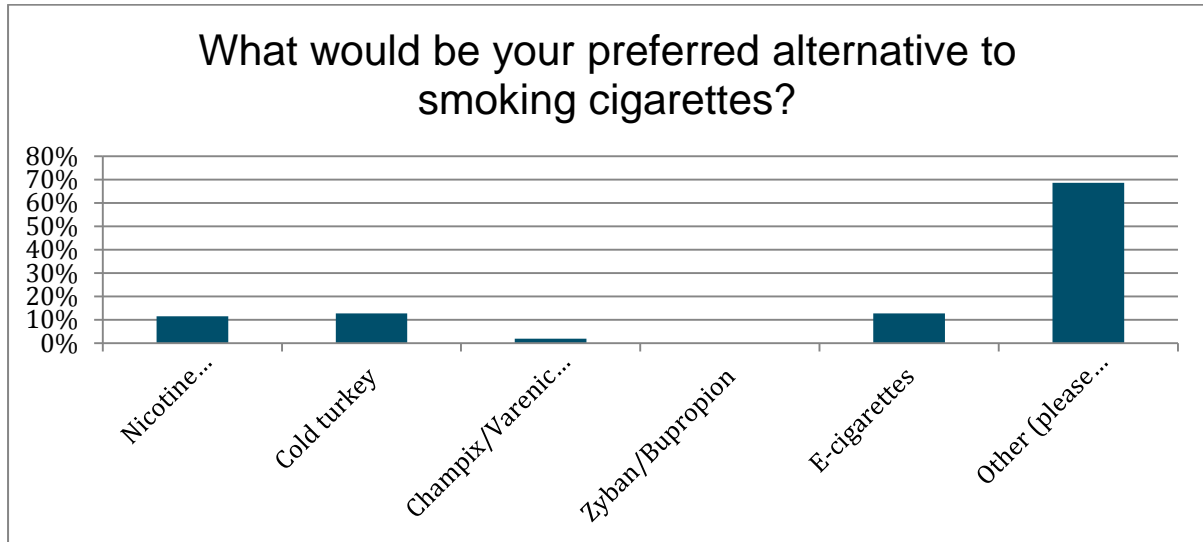
*“It’s much nicer walking into hospital without going through plumes of smoke”*

As this engagement activity was a snapshot in time, it's difficult to accurately determine how many people were smoking on site without being challenged and whether this had happened before the new policy came into operation. A few people had seen smokers being approached, but more talked about the sound system advising smoking was not permitted. One staff member did mention feeling intimidated by public smoking on site and therefore felt reluctant to approach or challenge. The policy is for all staff on site to positively challenge breaches of the policy in a supportive non-confrontational way (unless they feel unsafe). Some people we spoke to were unsure whether the Trust would be successful in stopping everyone from smoking on site.

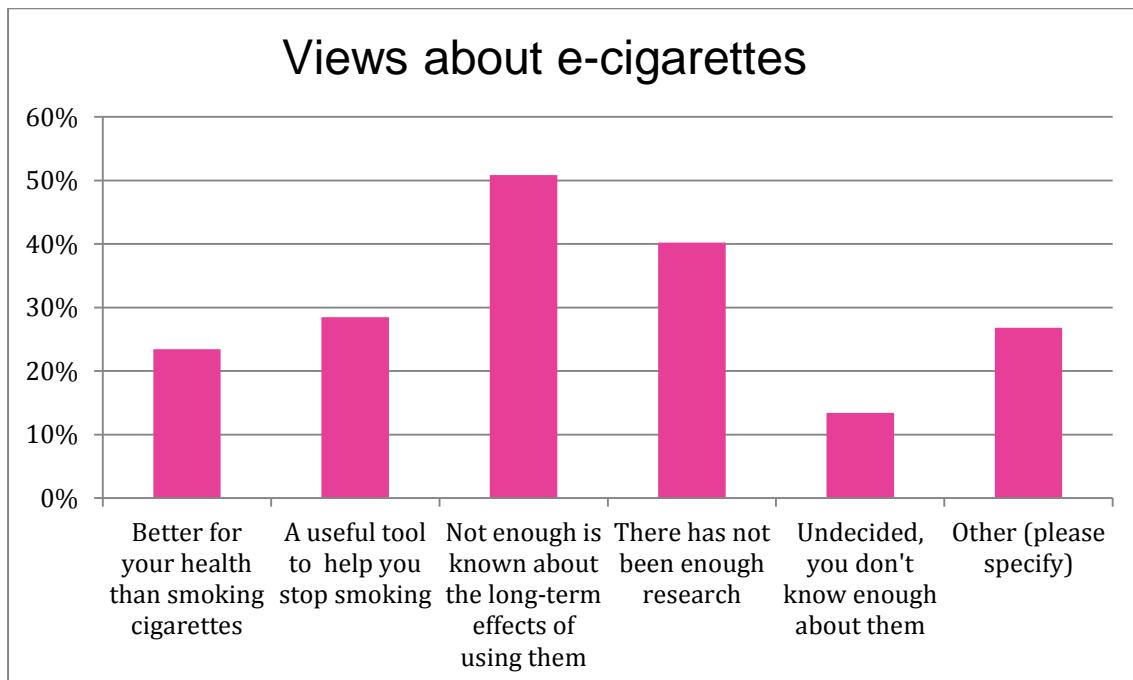


When we asked people whether the new policy would help them to stop smoking, 18 people told us it would, which is approx. 43% of the people who indicated they currently smoke.

The graph below indicates peoples’ preferred alternative to cigarettes, it’s worth noting that the “other” category mainly relates to people who said the question was not applicable to them.



There were varied views about e-cigarettes, many people felt there had been insufficient research about the long-term effects from using them. It’s important to note these responses could have been influenced by the fact there had been some recent publicity in the press and on TV about some deaths being linked to using e-cigarettes.



**Other key comments on the survey about e-cigarettes:**

- Will cause more problems
- Need to protect younger children
- Another bad habit
- More clear regulation needed
- Concerned after bans in the USA

Although the overriding view from people in the survey was that they were in favour of the new policy, there were a few people who acknowledged it would be difficult for people who smoked. There were a very small number who said they were not bothered about people smoking on-site and then there were small numbers who wanted everything banned including e-cigarettes and would like to impose fines for people smoking on site.

Our observations and recommendations from carrying out the survey and listening to patients, visitors and staff can be found in the Executive Summary on page 4 of this report.

Appendix 1

## Change is in the air.....

Healthwatch County Durham and Healthwatch Darlington are supporting County Durham and Darlington Foundation Trust to engage with patients, staff and visitors to gather their views about the Smoke-free policy which came into operation at hospital sites on the 1st October 2019. This means that no smoking can take place anywhere on hospital sites and the trust will be supporting patients, staff and visitors to be successful in this ambition. Going smoke free reflects the trusts commitment and responsibility for improving health and wellbeing. The use of e-cigarettes will be allowed in hospital grounds but not inside the hospital buildings.

We would like to thank you for taking the time to share your views today.

### 1. Hospital details

- University Hospital of North Durham
- Darlington Memorial Hospital

### 2. Do you smoke?

- Yes
- No

### 3. Are you completing this survey as

- A patient
- A visitor
- A member of staff

If a member of staff please tell us your job role

### 4. Please give your age

- 18 - 24
- 25 - 34
- 35 - 44
- 45 - 54
- 55 - 64



- 65 - 74
- 75 +
- Prefer not to say

**5. What is your gender?**

- Female
- Male
- Other
- Prefer not to say

**6. Please provide the first part of your postcode, for example DH5**

**7. Was the new policy about no smoking at the hospital site explained to you?**

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable

**8. Do you understand the new policy about no smoking on the hospital site?**

- Yes
- No

**9. If you have smoked or seen someone on-site smoking since the policy was implemented has a member of staff approached to explain that it's not allowed?**

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable

**10. Have options to help you remain smoke-free whilst on site or an inpatient been discussed with you?**

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable

**11. Do you think this initiative will help you personally to stop smoking?**

- Yes
- No

Not applicable

**12. What would be your preferred alternative to smoking cigarettes?**

Nicotine Replacement Therapy

Cold turkey

Champix/Varenicline

Zyban/Bupropion

E-cigarettes

Other (please specify)

**13.**

*In the UK e-cigarettes are tightly regulated for safety and quality. They aren't completely risk free, but they carry a small fraction of the risk of cigarettes. E-cigarettes don't produce tar or carbon monoxide, two of the most harmful elements in tobacco smoke. The liquid and vapour contain some potentially harmful chemicals also found in cigarette smoke but at much lower levels. Public Health England's 2015 independent evidence review found that, based on the available evidence, vaping is around 95% less harmful than smoking. What are your views about e-cigarettes (please tick the choices that apply to you)*

Better for your health than smoking cigarettes

A useful tool to help you stop smoking

Not enough is known about the long-term effects of using them

There has not been enough research

Undecided, you don't know enough about them

Other (please specify)

**14. Is there any other support the hospital could provide to help you to stop smoking?**

**15. Is there anything else you would like to tell us that is important with regards to no smoking at the hospital?**



## Appendix 2

Some of the images seen on hospital premises



# Thank You

We would like to thank everyone who took the time to complete the survey and share their views.