



Bristol Health and Wellbeing Board

Title of Report:	Shaping healthier behaviour
Author (including organisation):	Marcus Munafò, University of Bristol
Date of Board meeting:	27th February 2020
Purpose:	Information and discussion

- Paper to be no more than two pages long please
- Draft papers are reviewed by the Public Health team
- Board correspondence: HWB@bristol.gov.uk

1. Executive Summary

There is an opportunity to improve public health across the City via choice architecture interventions that “nudge” behaviour towards healthier options without making use of typical policy levers such as taxation or restriction of access.

The proposal is to implement two intervention pilots, one to reduce tobacco use (by creating vaping spaces), and one to reduce alcohol consumption (by increasing the availability and visibility of alcohol-free options).

2. Purpose of the Paper

To open a discussion around the possibility of Bristol introducing a limited number of choice architecture interventions, focused on reducing tobacco and alcohol use.

3. Evidence Base

Tobacco and alcohol use represent two major contributors to morbidity and premature mortality. Reducing both tobacco and alcohol use would result in substantial public health benefits, and downstream economic benefits.

4. Recommendations

Two proposals are presented for discussion, one to reduce tobacco use and the other to reduce alcohol use.

In order to reduce tobacco use, the proposal is to create opportunities for smokers to transition to e-cigarette use (whilst recognising the need to prevent uptake among young people). This could be done by creating a “gradient” between smoking and vaping, so that the latter is easier than the former. For example, public spaces could be designated smoke-free whilst allowing vaping, or outside spaces in workplaces could be similarly designated as available for vaping but not smoking. This would create an incentive for smokers to transition to vaping. Public Health England advice

and National Centre for Smoking Cessation guidance recommends the use of vaping as an alternative to smoking.

In order to reduce alcohol consumption, the proposal is to require public houses and bars that serve lager / ale on draught to offer at least one alcohol-free option on draught (perhaps limited to those with a certain minimum number of taps). Preliminary evidence from the University of Bristol suggests that this will increase the selection of alcohol-free drinks rather than alcoholic drinks by increasing their availability and visibility. There is also anecdotal evidence that the opportunity to consume an alcohol-free option in a pint glass would reduce any social stigma associated with selecting alcohol-free options, since the fact that it is alcohol-free would be essentially “invisible” after purchase. This could be delivered as a pilot (e.g., in the city centre) initially.

5. City Benefits

Reducing tobacco and alcohol use will result in substantial public health benefits. These proposals offer an opportunity to “nudge” individuals towards less harmful choices, without actively restricting choice or increasing costs.

The alcohol-free market is growing and improving the selection and promotion of non-alcoholic drinks provides an opportunity for licensed venues to reduce alcohol consumption without losing revenue.

Tobacco use is strongly socially patterned, so reductions in smoking are likely to benefit less advantaged groups. The impact of offering alcohol-free options may be more attractive in more advantaged groups, which will require monitoring.

6. Financial and Legal Implications

Not applicable.

7. Appendices

Not applicable.