

Leicester Tobacco Control Coordination Group

Challenges of waterpipe smoking in Leicester December 2015

Prevalence of Shisha use in Leicester aged 16+

The Leicester Health and Wellbeing Survey 2015¹ found that 2% of the city population aged 16+ years said that they smoked sheesha or hooka nowadays, equivalent to an estimated 5,300 individuals². Use is statistically significantly higher in younger residents, aged 16-34 (5%) and in those aged 16-19, where 10% of respondents in that age group said they used shisha nowadays. Use was also significantly higher in BME (3%) and Muslim residents (5%) and involved the same proportions of male (2%) and female (2%) smokers. Users were identified in all but three of Leicester's 21 wards, with a significantly higher proportion of users in Spinney Hill (8%), Stoneygate (6%) and Castle (6%) Wards.

These findings resonate with wider surveys. A national cross-sectional survey of over 12,000 adults in Great Britain in 2012/13 found that the prevalence of *ever* use of a waterpipe or shisha among adults was 12%, and frequent use was 1%. Frequent waterpipe use was more common among adults of Asian (7%), Mixed (5%) and Black (4%) ethnicity than among White adults (0.5%). Similar national cross sectional surveys were conducted in 2014 and 2015, producing similar results.

A separate Health and Wellbeing Survey of children and young people in Leicester is currently being undertaken, the results of which will be available in June 2016. This survey includes questions related to waterpipe use.

Frequency of use

There are very few studies of this in an English context. A random cross-population street survey of 1,183 18+year olds in six south east London boroughs designed primarily to establish the prevalence of shisha smoking and how frequently it was smoked found that Shisha use tended to be infrequent. Only a very small minority of those who reported ever having smoked shisha smoked it more than once every 2-3 weeks (approx. 3%) and more typically users smoked it between once and three times per year (approx. 40%).³

Trends in Shisha premises in Leicester

A feature of concern about Shisha has been the visibility of Shisha Cafes and premises. The information in Table 1 below shows the trend since 2007 in the number of commercial premises used for smoking shisha in Leicester. These rose from six premises recorded in 2007 to 21 in the first half of 2013, but their number appears to have declined by 2015, when ten premises were known to be actively trading. Their distribution within the city is shown in appendix A.

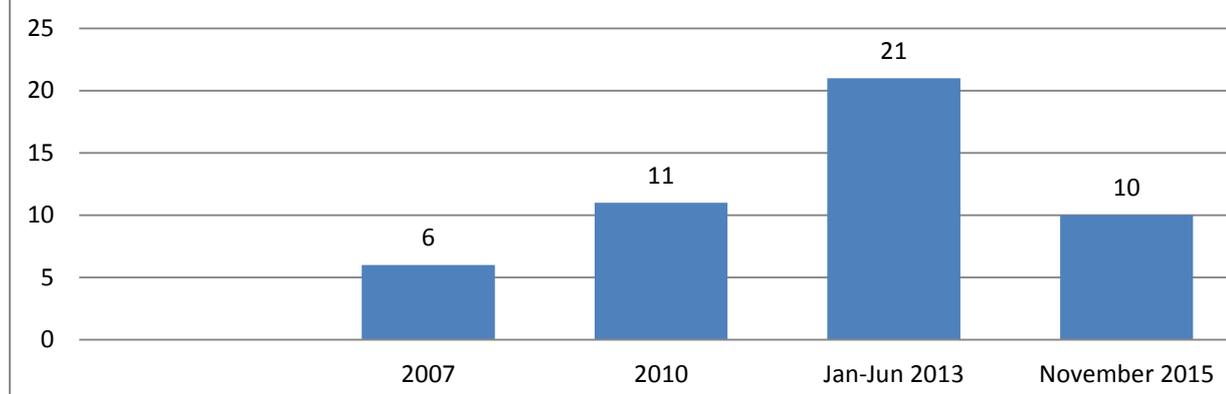
¹ <http://www.leicester.gov.uk/your-council/policies-plans-and-strategies/health-and-social-care/data-reports-and-information/leicester-health-and-wellbeing-survey-2015>

² Estimate based on ONS mid-2014 population estimates.

³ Dr Gerald Power, Shisha Smoking in South East London A cross-population survey of shisha use and awareness in South East London, Sponsored by the London Boroughs of Bexley, Bromley, Greenwich, Lambeth, Lewisham and Southwark through the SE London Illegal Tobacco Group, July 2014, <https://www.lambeth.gov.uk/sites/default/files/ssh-shisha-smoking.pdf>

Table 1: Shisha premises in Leicester 2007-2015

Source: Premises known to Environment & Enforcement, Business Regulation, Leicester City Council



Key messages regarding health harm

A review conducted by the Division of Public Health in Leicester City Council took into consideration the evidence available up to November 2013 (see appendix B). In light of this review, the wording of some of the text and messages promoted were amended, particularly the claim that an hour of waterpipe smoking is equivalent to inhaling the smoke from 100-200 cigarettes. The essential message is that waterpipe or shisha smoking is not a harmless alternative to cigarette smoking.

The National Centre for Smoking Cessation Training (NCSCT) published a briefing on waterpipe tobacco smoking in 2013.⁴

Smoking Cessation

There is also a lack of evidence on the nature of addiction compared to cigarette smoking and no evidenced based approaches to lowering prevalence. National policy does not require smoking cessation services currently to treat waterpipe smokers, though support is offered locally.

Second Hand Smoke

Front line health workers and the general population are reporting that there is a lack of awareness in the public domain that waterpipe smoking is as harmful as cigarette smoking. With respect to second hand smoke, the risks should be considered the same as cigarettes. It would be important to consider the potential increased risk to women and their unborn babies.

With regards to waterpipe smoking there are no tailored messages concerning second hand smoke. The generic information on second hand smoke should be considered relevant to waterpipe smoking as the review of evidence indicates.

Enforcement of Smokefree Legislation

The ban of smoking in public places in 2007 came into force with the public generally accepting smoking cigarettes outdoors as the new norm. The ban included prohibition of smoking waterpipes indoors in public places. This has created a conflict between some business owners wanting to operate shisha cafes and Environmental Health teams. In Leicester intelligence led activity by Environmental and business regulation teams has resulted in successful prosecutions. It is however thought by environmental health and business

⁴ Waterpipe Tobacco Smoking, (Briefing 13) http://www.ncsct.co.uk/usr/pub/waterpipe_briefing.pdf

regulation officers that the fines and penalties issued have a relatively small impact on the businesses as the overall profitability from shisha is thought to be high.

Illicit tobacco

It is likely that some of the tobacco used for waterpipe smoking is smuggled, considering the price at which it is sold to the consumer. The supply of illicit tobacco used for waterpipe smoking is of a significantly lower volume than cigarettes and hand rolling tobacco. Disruptions of supply could be achieved locally where there is good intelligence to inform regulatory action. However, it is doubtful that the effective cessation of the supply of illegal tobacco for waterpipes could be delivered by action at the local level alone.

Labelling

All tobacco products sold to consumers should be accompanied by health warnings. It is thought that in the vast majority of transactions where a waterpipe is hired with tobacco, the pipe is supplied without any health warnings. The law does not cover the issue of health warnings to users of waterpipes in sheesha cafes.

Underage Supply

The law prohibits the sale of tobacco to those who are under 18. Front line health workers and those who work with young people are reporting that young people under the age of 18 know of waterpipe smoking and have smoked it at shisha cafes. Attempts have been made to carry out test purchases and surveillance activity. The on-going methods in gathering intelligence however are problematic as young volunteers are required. It is thought that the compromise in safety and risks to health in smoke filled environments is too high to continue this method of surveillance and enforcement for underage sales.

Local Actions in Leicester

- Use has been made of evidence informed statements on the health risks of Shisha use in leaflets and posters (see Appendix D) and the media (see e.g., <http://www.leicestermercury.co.uk/Dangers-shisha-smoking-spelt/story-26077132-detail/story.html>)
- Continued monitoring of the trends in shisha venues in Leicester
- Inspections, advice and where appropriate prosecution of premises selling and using Shisha
- Support to regional efforts to reduce the smuggling and illegal sale of tobacco and tobacco products.

Next steps

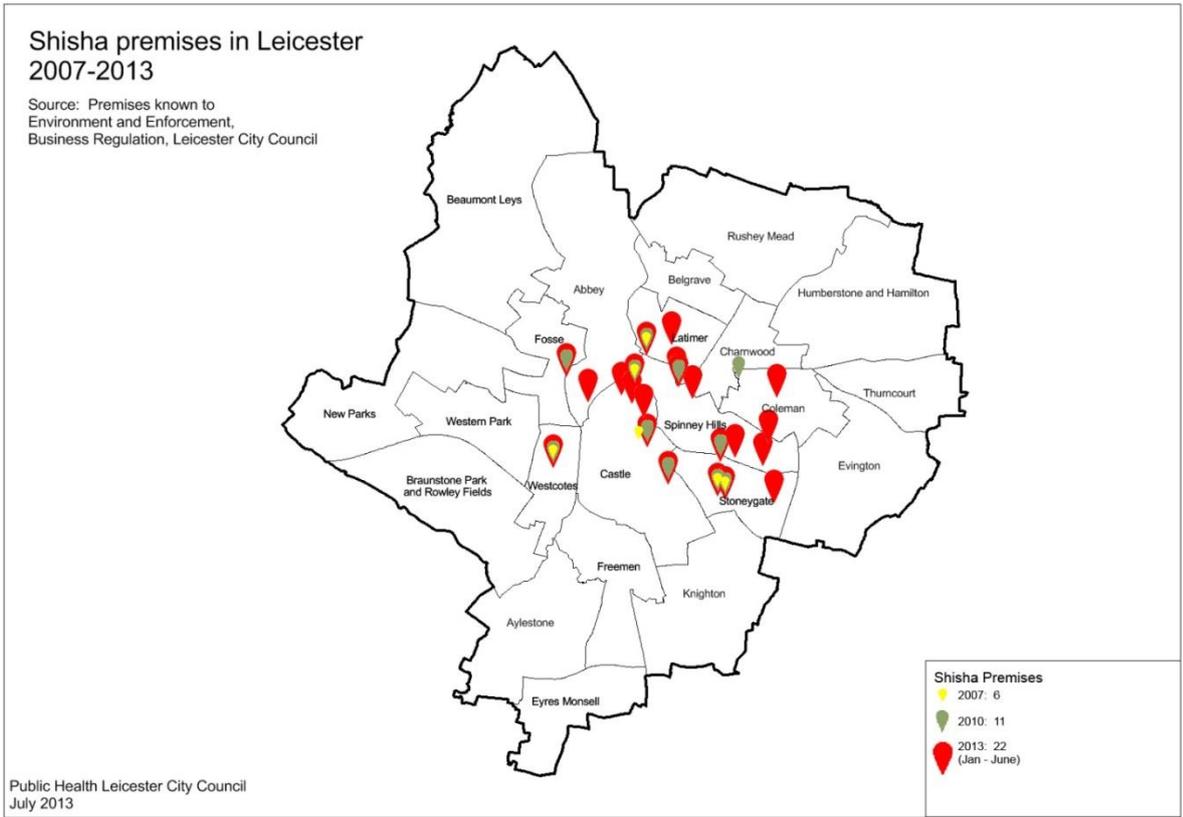
The Tobacco Control Coordination Group will review this briefing and identify necessary actions following consideration of the results of Leicester Children and Young People's Health and Wellbeing Survey in the spring of 2016.

V2 February 2016

Comments and questions re this note are welcomed. Please contact Sandie Harwood
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This is an updating of a previous similar briefing prepared in 2013.

Appendix A



Appendix B

Waterpipe smoking (Shisha): Potential effects and recommendations for further action. January 2013.
Mary Hall, StR Public Health, Division of Public Health, Leicester City Council. PDF link below.



Waterpipe smoking
(Shisha) Potential eff

Appendix C

Leicester Shisha cafe breached smoking laws - <http://www.thisisleicestershire.co.uk/Leicester-Shisha-cafe-breached-smoking-laws/story-17863802-detail/story.html%20#axzz2dpVrmsMe>

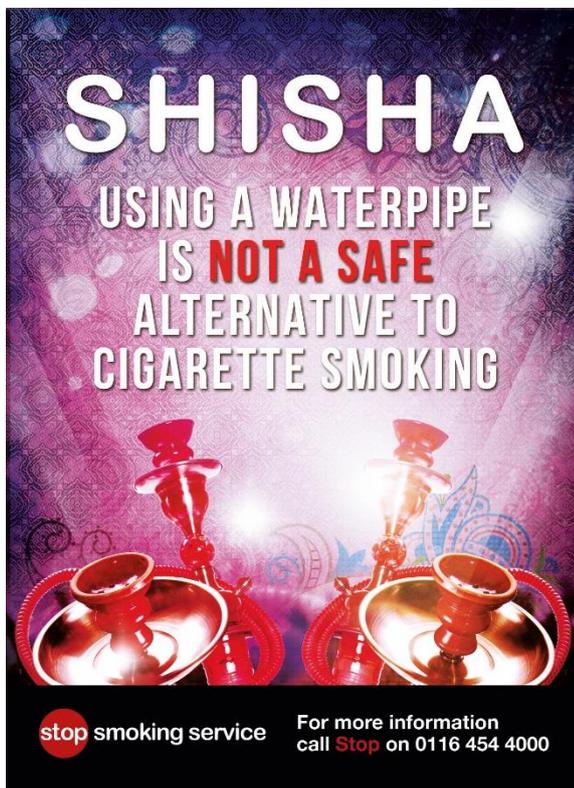
Café Owner Found Guilty Of Allowing Shisha Smoking In His Premises -
<http://www.leicester.gov.uk/business/health-safety/health-and-safety-at-work/whats-new-in-health-and-safety/press-releases/marhaba/>

Restaurant Owner Pleads Guilty To Allowing People To Smoke In Enclosed Shelter -
<http://www.leicester.gov.uk/business/health-safety/health-and-safety-at-work/whats-new-in-health-and-safety/press-releases/al-mashrig/>

Three men fined for running an illegal shisha bar
<http://www.leicestermercury.co.uk/men-fined-running-illegal-shisha-bar/story-23627129-detail/story.html>

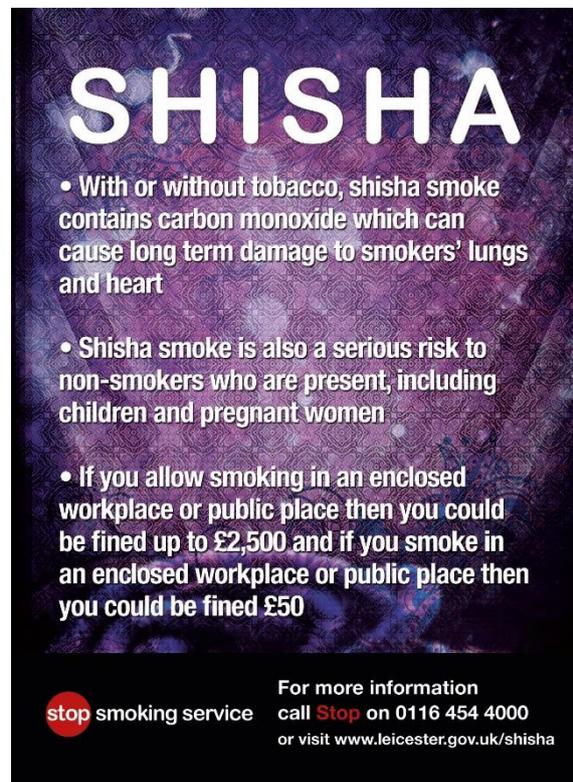
Shisha cafe bar owner in Leicester fined for allowing smoking
www.leicestermercury.co.uk/Shisha-cafe-bar...Leicester.../story.html

Appendix D



SHISHA
USING A WATERPIPE
IS **NOT A SAFE**
ALTERNATIVE TO
CIGARETTE SMOKING

stop smoking service For more information
call Stop on 0116 454 4000



SHISHA

- With or without tobacco, shisha smoke contains carbon monoxide which can cause long term damage to smokers' lungs and heart
- Shisha smoke is also a serious risk to non-smokers who are present, including children and pregnant women
- If you allow smoking in an enclosed workplace or public place then you could be fined up to £2,500 and if you smoke in an enclosed workplace or public place then you could be fined £50

stop smoking service For more information
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or visit www.leicester.gov.uk/shisha

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