

A breath of fresh air



Smoking in all public places and work places in Surrey Heath has been stamped out to comply with the new smokefree legislation which came into force across the country on Sunday, July 1st.

What does the smokefree legislation mean?

The law means that virtually all enclosed and substantially enclosed public places and work places are now smokefree. This includes offices, factories, shops, pubs, bars, restaurants, membership clubs, public transport and most work vehicles that are used by more than one person. Businesses not only have to ensure their premises are smokefree, they must also display the legally required signs at the entrances to the premises.

Who will enforce the regulations?

The new regulations will be enforced by the Borough Council Environmental Health Department. People who do not comply with the law will be liable to a fixed penalty notice or prosecution and a fine for the offences of:

- Smoking in a smokefree place or vehicle
- Failing to display a no smoking sign
- Allowing smoking in a smokefree place or vehicle

Justine Fuller, the Borough Council's Environmental Health Officer who is overseeing the smokefree legislation, said: "The new legislation is not about removing people's right to smoke but about protecting non-smokers from the well known health risks of second hand smoke. Our intention is not to go undercover snooping to catch law breakers, we are

actually about educating individuals and businesses on what they need to do to comply with the law. The Borough Council has worked closely with local businesses to build compliance through education, advice and support. We don't want to prosecute people, although we will as a last resort when every effort to encourage compliance has failed."

What are the penalties and fines?

- Smoking in a smokefree premises or vehicle. A fixed penalty notice of £50 (discounted to £30 if paid within 15 days from the issue of a notice) or a fine by a court of up to £200.
- Failure to display no smoking signs in smokefree premises and vehicles. A fixed penalty notice of £200 (discounted to £150 if paid within 15 days from the issue of a notice) or a fine by a court of up to £1000.
- Failing to prevent smoking in a smokefree premises or vehicle. A fine by a court of up to £2500.

What should I do if I see someone smoking in a smokefree place?

Make a member of staff in the establishment aware of the situation so they can take the relevant steps.

What are the benefits of being smokefree?

Some businesses in Surrey Heath went smokefree before the legislation was introduced and have already been reaping the benefits. Mike Jones, Manager of Costa Coffee in Camberley, which has always been smokefree, said: "A lot of customers are quite pleased that

we are smokefree. It makes visiting Costa a more enjoyable experience for customers as they can enjoy their coffee experience in a smokefree environment. It is also a more pleasant environment for staff to work in, free from the haze and smell of cigarette

Where can you get help to give-up smoking?

The NHS has a range of free resources and advice. Visit www.givingupsmoking.co.uk or call 0800 1690169 for more information.

For more information about the legislation visit www.smokefreeengland.co.uk.



Mike Jones, Manager of Costa Coffee in Camberley

