



**MAKE
SMOKING
HISTORY**

A GREATER MANCHESTER SMOKEFREE SPACE: HEALTHY ME, HEALTHY COMMUNITIES - GORTON, MANCHESTER

1. About the organisation

Healthy Me, Healthy Communities at Gorton Central is a busy social enterprise dedicated to improving health, wellbeing and community resilience in Gorton. The centre offers a broad mix of services, including a community grocer, accredited training such as food safety qualifications, employability support and space for partner organisations.

As Centre Coordinator, Kiana Campbell explains:

“Every day is completely different... we do a lot within community-led development, and even just getting people out of the house and into the centre is one of our main goals.”

The centre supports a wide range of local people, including families, older residents and those experiencing food insecurity or isolation. Creating a welcoming, healthy environment is central to its purpose.

2. Why they chose to create a smokefree space

The decision to introduce a smokefree outdoor space was closely aligned with the organisation’s identity and focus on health and wellbeing.

“Being a community centre and our name being Healthy Me, Healthy Communities... we really centre around health and wellness. So, creating a smokefree space just made sense for us.”

A key concern was smoking directly outside the entrance, and its impact on the indoor environment:

“We’ve seen that people will step out and smoke right in front of our door, and when the doors open, that smoke gets in our centre... especially at reception, you really notice it.”

This was particularly important given the vulnerability of many centre users:

“A large portion of our population are mothers, children and the elderly; people who are more impacted by cigarette smoke.”

**“IT’S NOT ABOUT LECTURING;
PEOPLE ALREADY KNOW
SMOKING IS BAD FOR THEM.”**

— KIANA CAMPBELL,
CENTRE COORDINATOR

3. Their starting point

Before the policy was implemented, smoking expectations were largely informal. While smoking indoors was not permitted, there was no consistent or clearly visible approach outdoors.

"We had a few signs, but nothing really official... it was more like common sense not to smoke inside, but outdoors there wasn't a clear approach."

Smoking near the entrance became a visible issue, but one that wasn't actively challenged:

"When people smoked, we just kind of let it happen. It was annoying, especially at reception, but we didn't really do anything about it prior to this."

The team wanted to introduce change in a respectful, non-judgemental way:

"Most people who are smoking already know it's bad for their health... so it's not about lecturing them or making them feel bad. It's more about where it's happening."



4. How they used the Smokefree Spaces Toolkit

The Smokefree Spaces Toolkit helped turn intention into action by providing practical guidance and ready-to-use resources.

"The checklist really helped my implementation because it gave me something to follow. I could tick things off and make sure I was actually doing it properly instead of just telling people."

Staff found the suggested scripts particularly helpful for building confidence:

"The scripts give you a good idea of different scenarios, especially if someone is frustrated or resistant, which is really helpful in a community setting like ours."

Email templates also improved communication quality:

"If I had to come up with something myself, it would probably just be a paragraph with a link, but the templates made it much more engaging and well thought out."

The team adapted the approach to suit their community:

"We decided to focus on cigarettes and allow vaping, because a lot of people use it to wean off, so that felt like the right approach for our centre."

5. What they did

Implementation was structured but manageable, taking place over around 4–6 weeks alongside other priorities. The team began by identifying where smoking typically took place:

“We looked at where people usually congregate to smoke and used that to decide where signage should go, because we didn’t want it to get lost among everything else.”

Staff engagement was a key priority. Alongside email communication, in-person briefings helped build confidence:

“Sometimes you send an email and people just glance over it... so doing a short briefing in person meant everyone was actually on the same page and felt more confident.”

Day-to-day communication with users of the space was informal rather than lots of proactive bulletins about the change.

“It was more word of mouth — when people came in, we’d just chat and explain the new policy, which worked well for our centre.”

“I THOUGHT THERE WOULD BE A LOT MORE PUSHBACK... BUT NOBODY HAS.”

— KIANA CAMPBELL,
CENTRE COORDINATOR

6. Community and staff reactions

Reactions from staff and community members have been positive, or at least neutral, with very little resistance.

“The team had very positive feedback; they thought it was a great initiative and it aligned with what we’re trying to do.”

Most users responded calmly and respectfully:

“Most people are just like, ‘okay’... and they’ll move somewhere else. It hasn’t been a big issue at all.”

Even people who smoke adapted quickly:

“I told one regular who smokes about it and he just said, ‘That’s fine, I’ll find somewhere else to smoke,’ and that was it.”

Signage has made conversations easier:

“It makes it less confrontational - instead of telling someone off, we can just point to the sign and say, ‘that’s the policy.’”

7. Impact and benefits

Although still early, the changes have already led to noticeable improvements.

"I've seen people with a cigarette glance at the sign and just go down the ramp to smoke, and for us, if people move just a few feet away, that's a success."

The indoor environment has also improved as a result:

"Before, when someone smoked right outside, it would come in and linger in reception; now that's happening a lot less."

There has also been a shift in staff behaviour, demonstrating more confidence and consistency:

"Before, we just kind of let it happen... now we're a lot more proactive about keeping the space smokefree. Having the signage and knowing where we draw the line has made it a lot more comfortable to enforce the policy."

**PEOPLE GLANCE AT THE SIGN
AND ADJUST WITHOUT BEING
ASKED, WHICH SHOWS IT'S
BECOMING THE NORM."**

**— KIANA CAMPBELL,
CENTRE COORDINATOR**

8. Challenges and what they learned

One of the biggest anticipated challenges, negative reactions, didn't materialise.

"I think I had it in my head that telling people not to smoke would be such an issue... that people would push back or feel strongly about it. But most people are really chill about it. If you ask them to move a few feet away, they're okay with it."

There were some practical challenges, particularly with short-stay visitors:

"It's harder with delivery drivers because they're only there for 20 seconds... but even then, the smoke still comes in. We generally make a call on a case-by-case basis for these scenarios."

The experience helped shift the team's expectations:

"I think I wouldn't focus as much on the worst-case scenarios next time, because most interactions just aren't like that."



9. What's next

The team plans to maintain the smokefree space through visibility and consistency.

"We've saved all the signage, so if anything gets damaged or moved, we can easily replace it and keep things consistent."

They will continue to offer support in a non-intrusive way:

"If someone wants to quit, we've got the resources ready, but we're not going to lecture people about it."



10. Advice for other organisations

Kiana's key advice is not to overestimate resistance.

"Don't dwell too much on the negative. Most interactions you have are not going to be negative. Most people will understand and just move."

She highlights simple but effective actions:

"Even just having leaflets at reception can make a big difference, because people naturally pick them up and read them while they're waiting."

And emphasises how accessible the process can be:

"The toolkit had everything there... it made it really easy to bring into the centre and get it up and running."

"THE CHECKLIST REALLY HELPED BECAUSE IT GAVE ME SOMETHING TO FOLLOW. I COULD TICK THINGS OFF AND MAKE SURE I WAS ACTUALLY DOING IT PROPERLY."

—KIANA CAMPBELL, CENTRE COORDINATOR

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