



Growing Together Radcliffe
Support CIC
www.gtr-centre.co.uk



**MAKE
SMOKING
HISTORY**

**A GREATER MANCHESTER
SMOKEFREE SPACE:
GROWING TOGETHER
- RADCLIFFE, BURY**

1. About the organisation

Growing Together Radcliffe Support CIC is a community-led organisation based in Radcliffe, Bury. The centre supports a wide range of local residents, including people experiencing economic hardship, those in recovery, and individuals with complex mental and physical health needs.

Services include a food bank, café, crisis support, recovery groups such as AA, and activities for community and youth groups. The centre also acts as a hub for partner organisations.

As Volunteer Coordinator, Tina Harrison explains:

"We've decided to run our centre around neighbourhood working... looking at what support is needed locally, particularly in a very deprived area such as this."

Creating a welcoming, inclusive and health-focused environment is central to the organisation's work.



2. Why they chose to create a smokefree space

The decision to introduce a smoke and vape free outdoor space was driven by both health concerns and the centre's location.

The main entrance sits on a busy street, directly next to a Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) family hub, meaning that children and families were regularly exposed to smoking as they entered and left the building:

"Their entrance is directly next to ours, so it was about supporting those families' health, but also thinking about our own cohort, many of whom are high risk."

The local health context also played a key role. The area has high rates of Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), often affecting people at younger ages:

"We're finding we're getting younger and younger people coming in with COPD. It's quite worrying when you're seeing somebody in their 30s with it."

The organisation was already working with Bury Live Well services to support smoking cessation, creating a natural opportunity to go further:

"We thought this was an opportunity to help people make a decision not to smoke in a public area where other people have to enter."

3. Their starting point

Before the policy was implemented, smoking outside the entrance was highly visible and created several challenges.

“You could have 15 or 20 people stood outside smoking... and it’s quite intimidating if you’re trying to enter the building.”

This impacted how people experienced the space:

“If you see a big group stood outside a doorway, you don’t really want to walk through it; I wouldn’t want to.”

This situation also led to ongoing environmental and operational challenges. Cigarette litter regularly accumulated in nearby flower beds, and volunteers were left with the daily task of clearing it away.

“Every day volunteers were cleaning cigarette stubs out of the flower beds; some days there’d be quite a big pile.”

Frequent smoking breaks also disrupted engagement with activities:

“People were in and out, having a cigarette between everything.”

4. How they used the Smokefree Spaces Toolkit

The Smokefree Spaces Toolkit provided structure, guidance and confidence to move forward.

Rather than using formal questionnaires, the team adapted the approach for their community:

“A lot of our cohort struggle to read and write, so we didn’t use questionnaires. We just had conversations with people instead.”

The toolkit supported informal engagement, provided adaptable communication materials, and offered guidance on how to approach conversations about smoking in a respectful and practical way.

“It was about asking questions, having chats and understanding how people felt about moving the smoking away from the entrance.”

It also provided reassurance:

“It helped us realise we weren’t the only centre facing this... it gave us a push to actually act on it.”

5. What they did

Implementation began with discussions with centre directors, group leads and service users. Conversations were informal and ongoing, ensuring that people understood the reasons behind the change and had opportunities to ask questions. The neighbouring SEND hub was also consulted to ensure alignment and support.

The physical space was then redesigned so that smoking was moved away from the main entrance. A designated smoking area was created to the side of the building, ensuring it remained accessible but not comfortable or inviting. The intention was to discourage prolonged use rather than create a social space.

"We identified an area round the side that was accessible but not particularly visible, and not somewhere people would want to sit all day."

They were intentional about how the space would influence behaviour:

"We didn't want to make it comfortable... no seating, no shelter; we want to reduce smoking, not encourage it."

Communication was both formal and informal:

"We put small flyers on tables, had posters up and told people from a certain date that smoking at the front wouldn't be tolerated, and showed them where they could go."

And expectations were clearly set:

"We told people they'd need to go round to the designated area, and explained why we were doing it."

6. Community and staff reactions

Reactions were more positive and straightforward than expected.

"I thought there'd be a lot of questions, but people didn't seem too bothered."

Most individuals adapted quickly:

"People just seemed to accept it and move — it didn't become a big issue."

Volunteers helped reinforce the change:

"Some of our volunteers vape and go to the designated area, so it's about leading by example."

There was limited resistance:

"There was one person who said, 'I'm not coming again' — but most people accepted it."

The neighbouring SEND hub responded very positively:

"They actually thanked us... it showed us the impact beyond our own users."

"I THOUGHT THERE'D BE A LOT OF QUESTIONS, BUT PEOPLE DIDN'T SEEM TOO BOTHERED."

— TINA HARRISON,
VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

7. Impact and benefits

The smoke and vape free space has led to a number of clear and meaningful improvements.

Reduced smoking at the entrance and a less intimidating environment:

"There's no longer people stood blocking the doorway and I think that's made it easier for people to come in."

Improved engagement and social interaction:

"People are staying in more, talking and socialising rather than going out for cigarettes all the time."

Reduced smoking behaviour overall:

"Because it's further to go, people just aren't going out as much... it feels like a bit more hassle than it's worth."

Increased uptake of support services and switching from tobacco to e-cigarette alternatives:

"We've seen more people accessing the Live Well vape service in the last few weeks."

A cleaner, more welcoming environment:

"We're not finding cigarette stubs in the flower beds anymore, which makes a big difference."

Increased footfall and accessibility:

"More people seem to be coming in... I think it feels less intimidating without that group outside."

8. Challenges and what they learned

Some challenges emerged, particularly around communication and behaviour change.

"It's about asking people to respect others... and that's not always easy."

Certain groups were more difficult to engage:

"The veterans were probably the most challenging... it's that sense of 'it's my choice'."

There were also some gaps in engagement, particularly where information was passed indirectly through group leaders rather than communicated directly.

"We would have gone into groups ourselves and explained the reasons; rather than relying on group leads to pass it on."

The diversity of the community also required flexibility, with different cultural attitudes towards smoking and emerging challenges around vaping among younger people. These experiences highlighted the importance of tailoring engagement approaches, using real-life health messages, and ensuring consistency in how the policy is communicated and applied.

"IT'S A LOT DIFFERENT AND NICER HERE. THERE'S A LOT LESS PEOPLE COMING OUTSIDE TO SMOKE. I THINK EVERYWHERE SHOULD BE SMOKE FREE."

— CHARMAINE, COMMUNITY MEMBER

9. What's next

The team plans to maintain and reinforce the smoke and vape free space through consistency and visibility.

"We don't want to make it a place people want to sit... we want to reduce smoking, not enable it."

They will continue promoting support services and building awareness of health risks:

"It's about helping people understand how smoking affects their body and encouraging them to access support."

Future priorities also include strengthening health education around conditions such as COPD, and maintaining consistent messaging and enforcement across all groups using the space.



10. Advice for other organisations

Tina's key advice is to take a collaborative and tailored approach.

"Consult with everyone who uses your space, not just staff and explain the reasons why you're doing it."

She also emphasises linking the policy to wider health outcomes:

"Use local health information and what's happening in your area; that helps people understand why it matters."

Above all, the focus should be on support rather than enforcement:

"It's about helping people improve their health, not just making rules."

"I'VE GOT COPD SO THE CENTRE BEING SMOKEFREE AFFECTS MY EXPERIENCE OF USING IT A LOT. THE AIR IS CLEARER NOW. YOU DON'T HAVE TO WALK THROUGH SMOKE."

— CHARMAINE, COMMUNITY MEMBER

WITH THANKS



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