

**Proposal for a smoke-free zone
around BCH: consultation responses**

Executive summary

An eight week consultation was carried out by Birmingham Children's Hospital (BCH) to understand how strongly people felt about setting up a smoke-free zone on both sides of Steelhouse Lane and Whittall Street outside of the hospital. The consultation was circulated through the media and BCH communication channels, as well as internally on staff briefings.

The consultation questionnaire was well responded to with over 1,100 people completing it. Respondents were most likely to be families and patients, members of the public who do not frequently use the zone, and BCH staff themselves. People who smoke and non-smokers responded.

The majority of people who responded supported action to stop people from smoking outside of the hospital and agreed that a smoke-free zone was the right way to do this. Support was very strong amongst staff, and also family members of patients. Many family members shared experiences of walking past people smoking with their children to illustrate their concerns. Over half of respondents against the zone both did not live in Birmingham and did not walk through the proposed zone.

People who were supportive of the zone thought that the proposed size of the zone was about right and that similar to the 'no smoking or vaping' policy on site, it should apply to e-cigarettes.

Signs were well supported amongst people in favour of the zone, and people wanted softer or positive messages on the signs. There was support for fines if possible. People also thought that staff or members of the public could monitor the zone informally by asking people who were smoking in the zone to move elsewhere - although most respondents said that they themselves would feel uncomfortable in speaking to people to ask them to move. Some respondents asked whether hospital security staff would be able to enforce it and made suggestions about including information about the zone in any routine correspondence that comes from the hospital.

Recommendations:

1. Given the strong support from the significant majority of the public, families and staff who regularly use the area around the hospital, BCH strongly believes that the introduction of a smoke-free zone around the hospital site is a necessary step.
2. BCH believes it will improve the experience of visitors, whilst also offering an opportunity to communicate a consistent and important public health message.
3. Based on consultation feedback, BCH believes that the zone should include vaping and e-cigarettes, maintaining consistency with the hospital site itself.
4. BCH will initially pursue the introduction of a voluntary zone, supported through signage that highlights the importance of the zone to children and families visiting the hospital.
5. BCH recognises the views of a number of people that they would like to see a more formal, enforceable zone introduced. BCH will ensure that any implementation of zone is appropriately monitored, and will support exploration of a stronger approach if a voluntary zone fails to address sufficiently the level of concern that the consultation has highlighted.

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1. Introduction

Birmingham Children's Hospital (BCH) routinely receives feedback from patients and families about people who choose to smoke outside of the hospital approaches. This causes anxiety for parents and children who have to walk past people smoking on their way to hospital appointments and visits.

A way to address the feedback would be to create a smoke-free zone around the hospital boundaries. The zone BCH proposed would encompass the sides of the hospital that patients typically approach from, and would cover all of the entrances from the Emergency Department on Steelhouse Lane to the entrance for the new clinical building. This zone is shown in figure 1. It aimed to address the areas where the majority of concerns arose, whilst not asking those who wanted to smoke to travel an unreasonable distance away from the hospital.

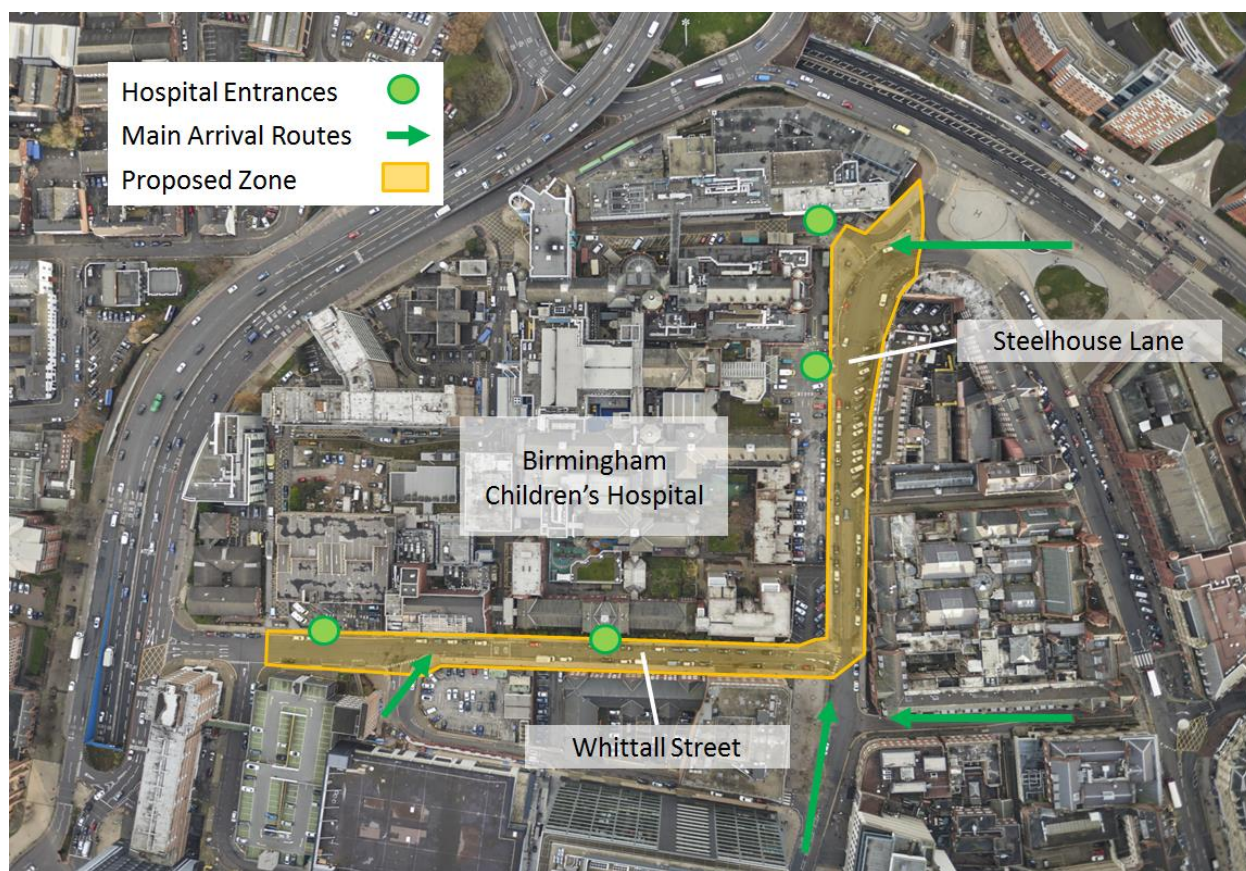


Figure 1. Proposed smoke-free zone

After initial discussions with Birmingham City Council, an eight week on-line consultation was carried out by Birmingham Children's Hospital to understand how strongly people felt about the hospital pursuing establishment of the zone. The consultation ran from the 3rd August until the 28th September 2016 and was promoted through social media, internal communications channels and a press release received coverage. Local businesses were also contacted. The consultation was hosted on the BCH website.

This report shows the responses to the consultation and the depth of feeling for the zone. All of the data presented is self-reported by people who responded to the consultation.

2. Who responded?

Key points

- There were 1,131 individual responses to the consultation questionnaire.
- There were a large number of responses from both genders.
- Several hundred people who smoke or who had previously smoked responded.
- More responders lived outside of Birmingham than lived within the city.
- Members of BCH staff and patients and their families were well represented amongst responders. The views of members of public who either did or did not frequently use the zone were also captured.

In total there were 1191 submissions through the web form. These submissions could contain multiples of themselves if the submit button was pressed multiple times before the page reloaded. In order to remove duplicates, the responses were sorted by their IP addresses and conditional formatting was used to highlight duplicate IP addresses. The highlighted responses could then be visually inspected for multiple submissions by looking for identical text in the open text fields.

Sixty such responses were identified, meaning there were 1,131 unique responses.

2.1 Demographics of the people responding

Although the demographic questions were not mandatory, most respondents completed them.

- Out of everyone who gave their gender, 438 said that they were male (39%) and 676 said that they were female.
- Seventeen respondents said that they were younger than 16 years old.
- A total of 1,120 respondents replied with their smoking status, and 235 respondents were current smokers, 305 were previous smokers and 580 had never smoked.
- Forty respondents said that they were responding on behalf of an organisation, of which 34 gave that organisation as Forest.
- Thirty eight percent of respondents (429) said that they lived in Birmingham and 689 indicated that they did not.

Respondents were asked to indicate their relationship with the hospital and the area around. The results are shown in figure 2. The largest group of respondents by number were members of the public who do not frequently walk through the proposed smoke-free zone around the hospital (364). This was followed by responses from patients and their families (360) and then members of staff at the hospital (215).

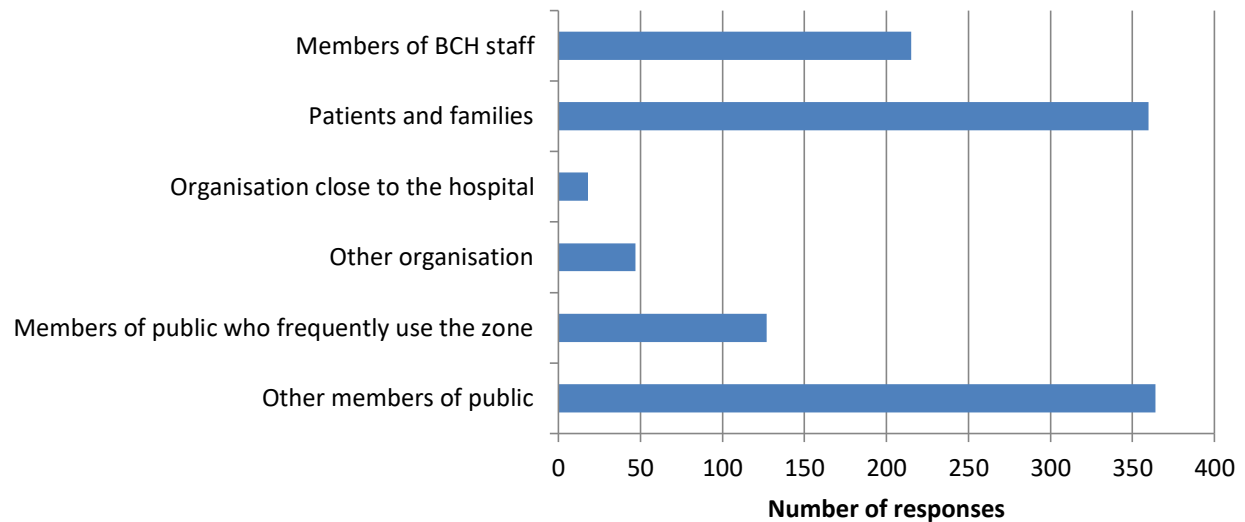


Figure 2. Number of responses by the relationship between respondents and the hospital.

There were differences in the proportion of respondents from each gender in each of the groups, and more respondents were female amongst BCH staff, and patients and their families. Conversely, amongst members of the public who do not use the proposed zone, more men responded.

The number of respondents from each group who live in Birmingham is shown in figure 3. It was not necessarily true that members of staff or patients and relatives lived in Birmingham, although respondents from these two groups contributed the largest number of Birmingham residents.

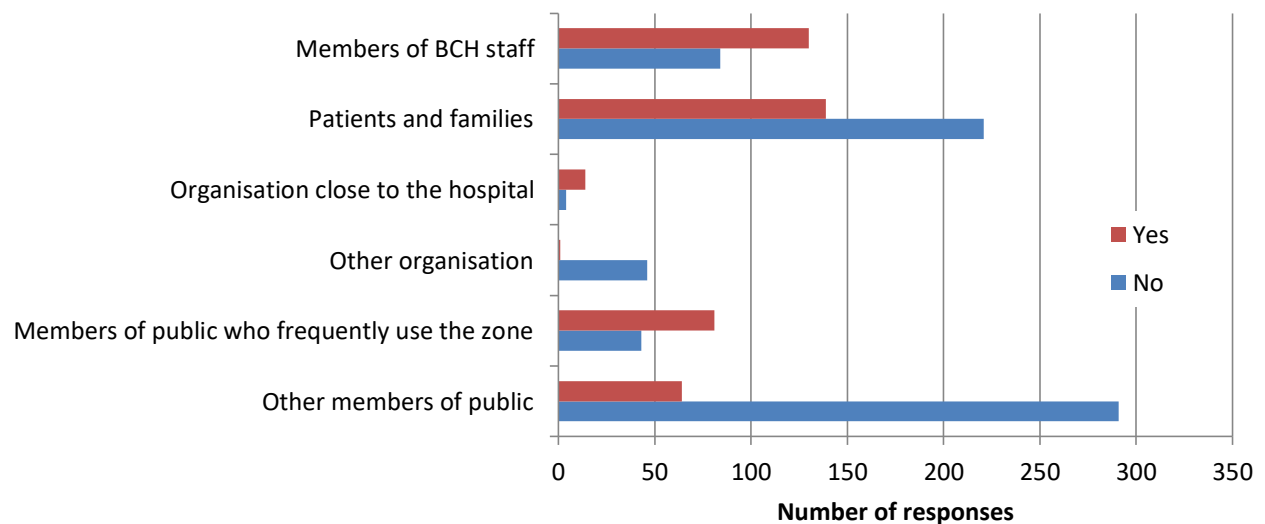


Figure 3. Number of responses by the relationship between respondents and the hospital and whether they live in Birmingham.

Over half of the responses came in the two days after the launch, and this is shown in figure 4. Reminders on BCH social media channels a week before the closing date coincided with the day where the third highest number of responses was received.

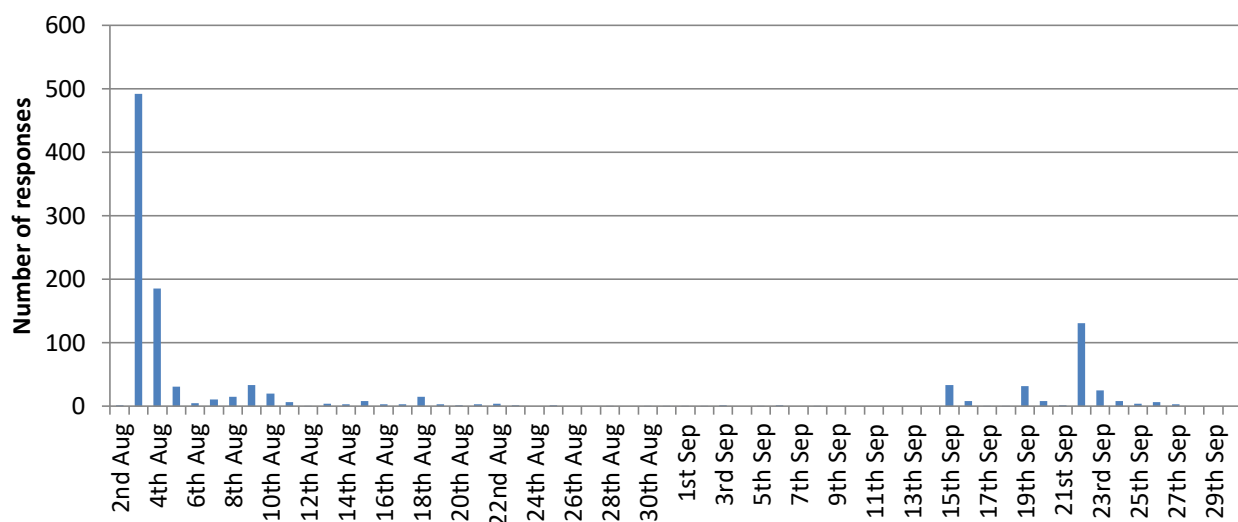


Figure 4. Number of responses by the date when they were received

3. What was the level of support for a smoke-free zone?

Key points

- The majority of people who responded supported action to reduce smoking outside of the hospital and agreed that a smoke-free zone was the way to achieve that.
- The majority of respondents supported the idea of a smoke-free zone.
- Birmingham residents were more supportive about the idea of a zone, with around three quarters of respondents who said that they lived in Birmingham indicating support.
- Patients and families, as well as BCH staff and local organisations strongly supported the zone.

Responders supported the idea BCH should be trying to reduce smoking around the hospital, with 596 respondents supporting it strongly and 62 supporting it. 398 respondents were strongly against action of any kind to reduce smoking outside of the hospital and an additional 59 were against any action to reduce smoking.

Almost every respondent who thought that smoking should be reduced outside of the hospital thought that a smoke-free zone was the best way to pursue this, three people who supported action disagreed with the proposal for a zone.

Figure 5 shows the number of respondents who supported or were against the proposed zone. More people indicated strong support than any other option. Strongly against was the next most supported preference, with only a small number of people holding a more ambivalent view.

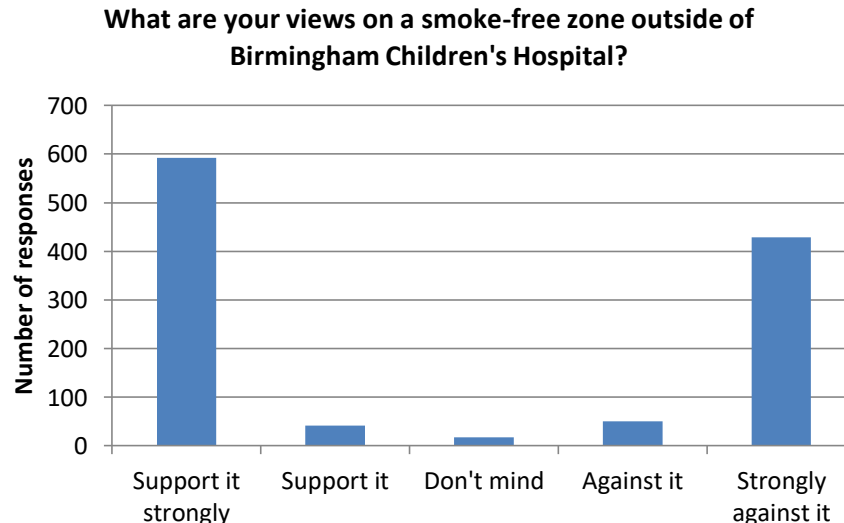


Figure 5. Number of responses by strength of opinion for the smoke-free zone.

Birmingham residents were stronger supporters of the zone than people who did not live in the city. Out of 429 Birmingham residents who responded, 311 (72%) supported or strongly supported the zone. Fewer respondents who did not live in Birmingham indicated that they supported or strongly supported the zone, with 322 (47%) indicating this opinion out of 689 in the group.

The support for the zone by smoking status is shown in figure 6. More smokers responded that they were strongly against the zone than were for it. Previous smokers were more evenly split between supporting and being against the zone. The majority of support came from non-smokers.

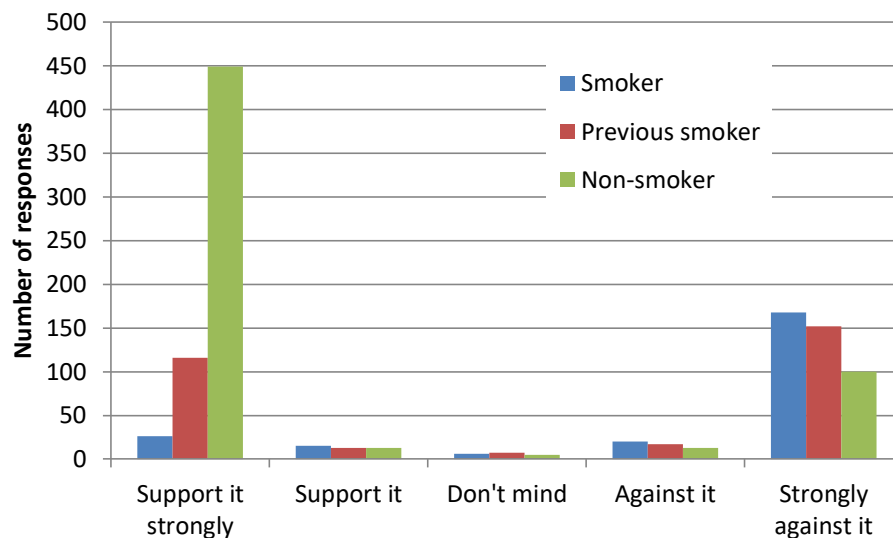


Figure 6. Number of responses by strength of opinion for the smoke-free zone and smoking status.

The large majority of people who smoked and were strongly against the zone lived outside of Birmingham, whereas people who smoked and lived in Birmingham were more likely to support the idea. 23 people who smoked and who lived in Birmingham supported or strongly supported the zone out of a total of 55 respondents in this group (42%). The equivalent level of support from people who smoke and lived outside of Birmingham was 10%.

Respondents in some groups were much more in favour of the zone, and this is shown in figure 7. BCH staff strongly supported the zone with 176 out of a total of 215 respondents indicating this. Similarly positive views were found amongst patients and families with 304 out of 360 being strongly for the zone. Although there were fewer responses on behalf of a local organisation, 13 out of the 18 respondents in this category strongly supported the zone.

The majority of respondents who were strongly against the zone were members of public who also indicated that they rarely if ever walked through the proposed zone. 245 respondents out of the 479 who were against or strongly against the proposed zone did not frequently walk through the zone and did not live in Birmingham (51%).

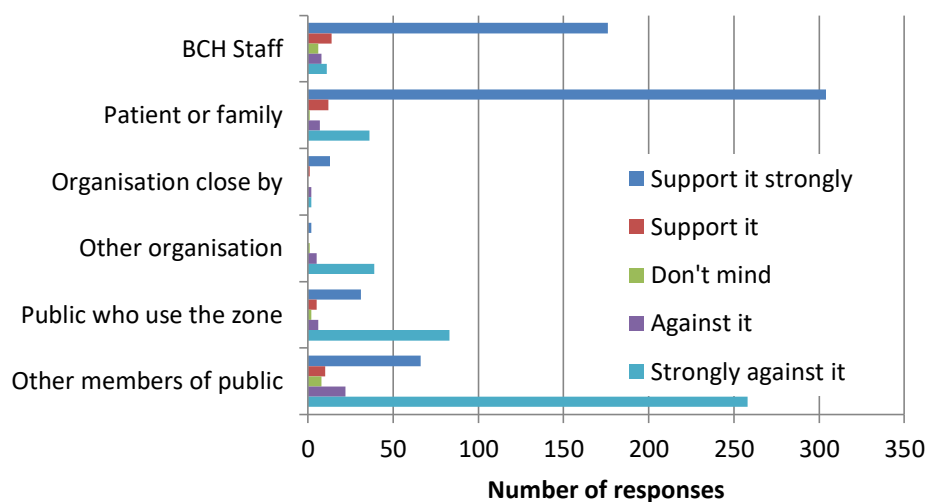


Figure 7. Number of responses by strength of opinion for the smoke-free zone and respondent group.

The families of patients frequently explained their support by sharing their stories and experiences of people smoking in the open comments:

My baby daughter is under the care of a paediatric cardiac consultant who works at both BCH & UHCW. She is incredibly sensitive to cigarette smoke - literally within seconds of it being around her she will be coughing & spluttering. I think this idea for a smoke free zone is fabulous & I wholeheartedly support it.

Respondent 546, patient or family member

Having a child with cystic fibrosis smoking is very harmful to him and really upsets me when I have to quickly run past everyone smoking so he doesn't breath it in

Respondent 30, patient or family member

It really needs to be done! I understand it is a stress relief for some of the children's families but it is damaging the health of already poorly children and actually, gives a really poor first impression of the wonderful BCH!

Respondent 186, patient or family member

This is a fantastic idea. I hope you can do it and roll it throughout all NHS hospitals. I have a premature son which had breathing difficulties going in and out hospital via entrances were just full of plumes of smoke.

Respondent 201, patient or family member

Please do it [...] it is awful to walk through smokers at the main door and A & E, we are regulars at Birmingham Children's.

Respondent 698, patient or family member

3.1 The views of parents who smoke

Thirty responses were received from parents who also smoked. Thirteen were strongly against and one was against the idea of a smoke-free zone. Twelve strongly supported the idea and three were for it. One stated that they didn't mind.

The parents who were supportive generally cited the places around the hospital where they did smoke, and these were typically outside of the proposed zone:

I walk to the alley or over to the open grass area - by the helipad

Respondent 395, patient or family member

I am mostly a social smoker. When at the hospital with my daughter I do not smoke. If I really feel the need then generally I either go round by the court in the alley or up by the office tower block a 10 minute walk away.

Respondent 63, patient or family member

However, there were strong comments from the parents who smoked and who were against the idea of a zone:

I feel the boundaries are ridiculous. Poor parents with sick children, very stressed, need a cigarette (which is legal!) but can't leave their child for very long. Just adds to the misery!

Respondent 399, patient or family member

I think you need to make a smoking area, from a smoker myself when your child's in intensive care etc. I would not walk far away to smoke therefore regardless to signs enforcements I would still smoke outside

Respondent 66, patient or family member

3.2 The views of local businesses

Eighteen responses were received from employees at local businesses, although none of these indicated that they were responding on behalf of the organisation.

Two stated that they were strongly against the idea and two were against it. Conversely one stated that they supported it and thirteen strongly supported it.

None of the respondents detailed how the introduction of the zone would have a wider impact on them. One respondent also smoked and explained where they currently smoked

In relation to the hospital I only smoke on the police station side of Steelhouse Lane. I understand that the presence of smoke where families and patients often wait outside the entrance of the Hospital directly outside on the other side of the road is unpleasant for them and that I should not be imposing my choice to smoke on others.

Respondent 86, A member of staff at an organisation close to the hospital

4. What did people think about the proposed boundaries?

Key points

- Respondents in favour of the zone also largely felt that the proposed size of the zone was right.
- The most popular change to the zone suggested was to extend it to Loveday Street and St Mary's Row which are roads both internal and surrounding the site and also next to hospital buildings.

Respondents were asked about their views on the size of the proposed zone and where it should be increased or reduced to. Figure 8 shows the responses to the question about the size of the proposed zone, with respondents who were against the idea of the zone represented in green. Respondents who had not indicated they were against the idea of the zone largely felt that the size of the proposed zone was about right.

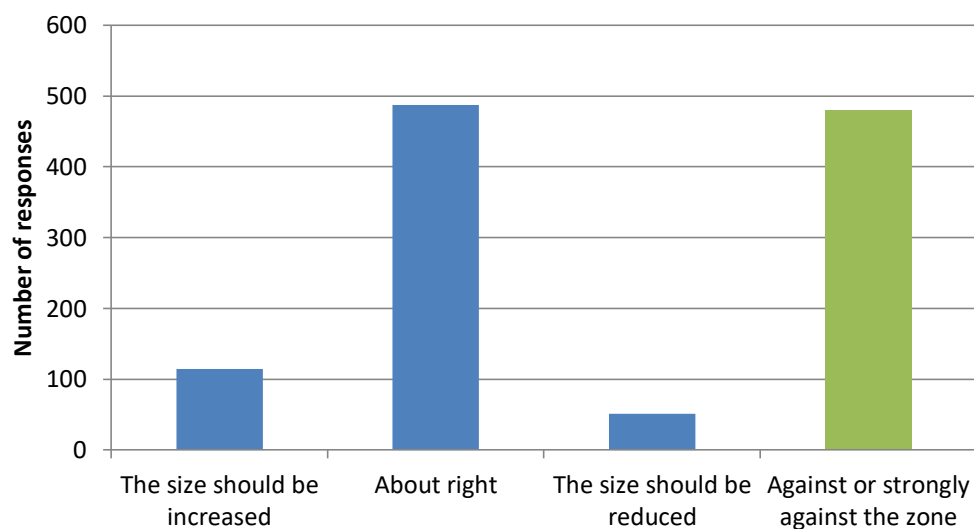


Figure 8. Number of responses by views on the size of the zone.

Out of the 114 respondents who felt that the size should be increased, several gave specific suggestions. The most popular of these were that the zone should be increased to Loveday street (14 respondents), encompass all sides of the hospital (13 respondents), extend further beyond the entrance of the ED and towards the helipad (12 respondents), extend further down Steelhouse Lane towards the town centre (12 respondents) and extend to the end of Whittal Street (10 respondents). Suggestions with fewer than 10 respondents were to include St Mary's Row and Collieridge Passage opposite the hospital.

Out of the 51 respondents who felt that the size should be reduced, the main view was that it should just cover Steelhouse Lane (16 respondents). Other views was that it should only cover the pavement closest to the hospital (9 respondents) and only cover close to the entrances (5 respondents)

5. Should the zone apply to e-Cigarettes?

Key points

- Respondents in favour of the zone were largely for it applying to e-Cigarettes.
- Several respondents highlighted that a zone might discourage quit attempts using e-Cigarettes, although no respondents indicated that they personally would be affected in this way.

Figure 9 shows the views of respondents about whether the zone should apply to e-Cigarettes. Again, those against or strongly against the zone are shown in green. 500 respondents out of a total of 652 for the zone were in favour of it also applying to e-Cigarettes (77%).

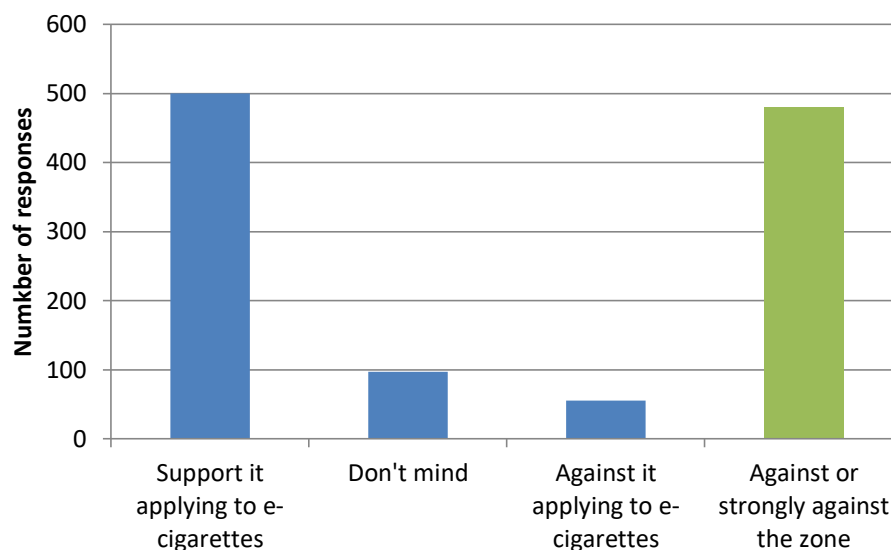


Figure 9. Number of responses by views on whether the zone should include e-Cigarettes.

An analysis of the views of smokers and former smokers who were for the zone but against it applying to e-Cigarettes was conducted. This was to see if there was a group of people who would potentially use, or are using, e-Cigarettes as a tool to quit smoking, who would feel that the zone would be a barrier to them doing so.

In total, 9 smokers and 22 previous smokers supported a smoking zone, but not it applying to e-Cigarettes. Several comments were made by members of public who do not use the zone highlighting the role that e-Cigarettes play in helping people quit

You should be seen to be encouraging smokers to at least try vaping so ecigs should not be included in any ban.

Respondent 217, other member of public

Vaping/electronic cigarette use should, as per recent Public Health England guidance and the Royal College of Physicians report, be allowed in all outdoor places where smoking is not. This will encourage smokers to switch to a safer alternative that has no health impact on others.

Respondent 633, member of the public who uses the zone

One member of staff who was for action to reduce smoking but against the idea of a zone also highlighted the issue around e-Cigarettes:

If e-cigarettes are included this may impact on those trying to give up smoking by using e-cigarettes. It could force them back into a smoking environment or make them feel there is no benefit.

Respondent 784, member of BCH staff

However, no comments were made by respondents who said that their attempt to use e-Cigarettes to quit smoking would be made more difficult if the zone applied to e-Cigarettes.

6. How did people think the zone should work?

Key points

- Signs were almost wholly supported by respondents who were for the zone, or who had no strong opinions either way.
- Respondents were more favourable to signs that contained information on the consequences of smoking to patients, locations of places to smoke and used hand drawn images.
- Respondents wanted to see signs throughout a smoke-free zone.
- There was high support for staff or members of the public informing smokers of the zone, however, when referring to themselves individually people felt more uncomfortable about asking people to move.
- There was strong support for formal enforcement and the risk of fines.

6.1 Signs

The majority of respondents felt that there should be signs to inform people about the zone. Out of the 652 people who supported or did not mind the zone, only 6 did not want signs.

Respondents were asked a series of questions about what information the signs should contain. Figure 10 shows the responses of the 652 people who supported the zone or did not mind.

	Signs should include this information	Signs should not include this information	Percentage in favour
Consequences of smoking to patients?	604	48	93%
Locations of places to smoke?	558	94	86%
Children's hand-drawn images?	558	94	86%
How to contact stop smoking services?	438	214	67%
Consequences of smoking on your own health?	322	330	49%
Hard hitting visual images?	291	361	45%

Figure 10. Number of responses by views on what information signs about the zone should contain.

There was strong support for signage throughout the zone, with 585 respondents being in favour of this. 63 preferred to see signs at the entrance to the zone and 4 only supported signs within the hospital.

Respondents also commented on the signs in the open text boxes. Some commented on different approaches or messages for the signs:

Thank people. Have a talking sign (like they do at airport security) of a child with asthma or similar telling people how the smoke makes them ill and thanking people for not smoking to keep them well. Have a number of stories to keep the signs fresh

Respondent 888, member of BCH staff

Having a child with cystic fibrosis smoking is very harmful to him and really upsets me when I have to quickly run past everyone smoking so he doesn't breath it in, signs and info of how smoking affects poorly children and hand written statements off children about how it makes them feel would be really good.

Respondent 30, patient or family member

Wall mounted signs and posters do not work. Floor markings work better and people respond better to them as it's so obvious

Respondent 139, member of BCH staff

Many respondents urged balance for the messages on the signs, and that the signs themselves should not add to the stress that smokers outside of the hospital might be under.

Hard hitting images would most likely be inappropriate for children attending the hospital.

Respondent 447, patient or family member

While I agree that the public should be discouraged from smoking around the hospital, many of those smoking in this area will have enough problems to deal with already, as their presence is likely to be the result of their children being admitted to the hospital. It would seem unhelpful to add more stress by overly high impact policies or signage.

Respondent 155, other member of public

I think the idea of signage with the intent to scare or insight feelings of guilt are ineffective and this type of advertising already exists on smoking packaging.

Respondent 822, member of BCH staff

6.2 Other measures to make the zone work

Respondents were asked about informal measures for making the zone work, and who might have conversations to ask people to stop smoking.

The majority of respondents believed that members of the public should ask people to stop smoking in the zone, with 460 of the 652 people (71%) agreeing. A slightly higher proportion of staff agreed with this (75%) than members of the public (70%).

There was more support for members of staff to ask people to stop smoking in the zone. 566 out of the 652 respondents (87%) who did not oppose the zone felt that staff should ask people. Members of the public were more likely to say that staff should enforce the zone (91%) than members of staff themselves (80%).

Figure 11 shows how comfortable respondents would be to ask someone to move away from the hospital to smoke. Respondents who answered this question were most likely to say that they would be uncomfortable or very uncomfortable.

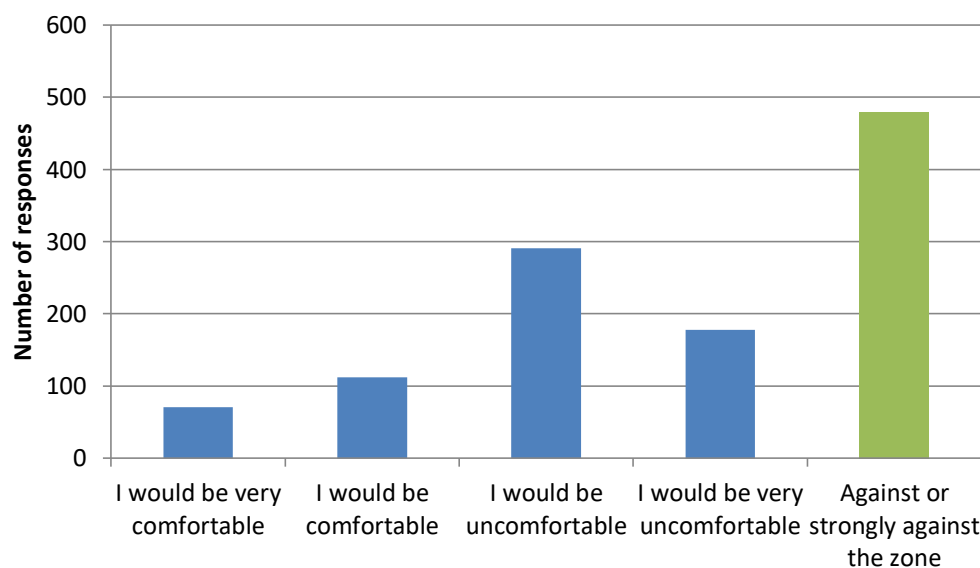


Figure 11. Number of responses by how comfortable respondents felt about asking smokers to stop smoking outside of the hospital.

Respondents were also asked whether a zone would make them feel more or less comfortable in asking people to move on. The results are shown in figure 12. Although respondents felt that the zone would help them feel more comfortable, the respondents who replied that it would not already felt uncomfortable about asking.

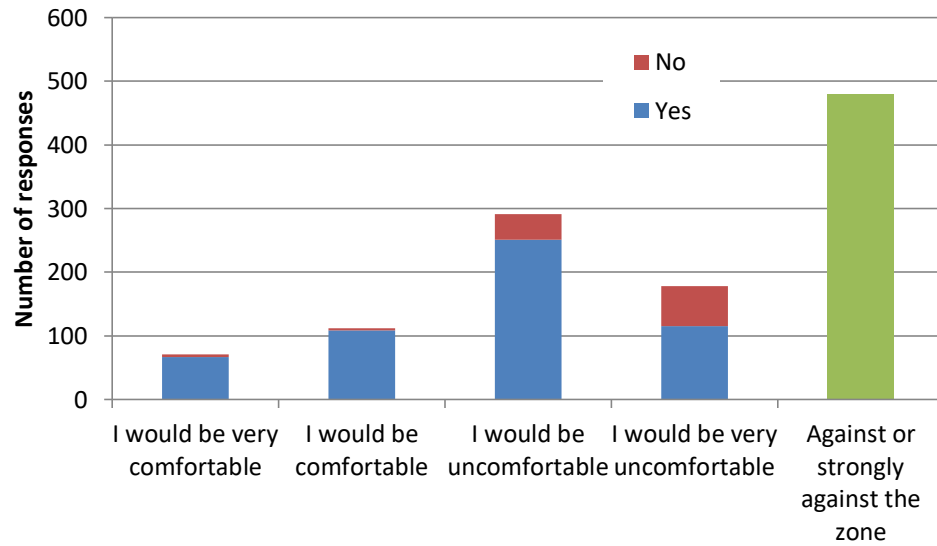


Figure 12 *Number of responses by how comfortable respondents felt about asking smokers to move out of a zone.*

When asked about formal enforcement, 577 people who supported the zone to some degree also supported the use of fines. This was compared against 75 people from the same group who did not support fines and 479 who did not support the zone.

7. Wider comments

Key points:

- Respondents felt that security staff should monitor the zone.
- There was support for including information about the zone in literature.
- Designated smoking areas were identified as a way of moving people who want to smoke away from the road.
- Positive messages on signs were supported.

Comments from a random sample of 20% of responses were analysed for themes that had not already been addressed by the questions.

7.1 Staff monitoring of the zone

Many respondents stressed the importance of monitoring the zone and suggested practical ways that this could happen. Several respondents elaborated on the idea of staff enforcing the zone by suggesting it becomes part of the role of security:

Security should patrol outside main entrances to move smokers along and point out signs

Respondent 95, member of BCH staff

Security staff need to [...] start moving people away from smoking by the entrance, I saw a family smoking outside the Loveday Street entrance the other day right by the risk of explosion sign! Another time I had to fight to get past with my son

Respondent 1035, patient or family member

The smoke free zone needs to be 'policed' properly. Currently parents are still smoking on hospital premises, e.g. at the front of the hospital, but no-one is telling them they shouldn't be doing it. Maybe security staff could do regular 'walk arounds' to police the smoke free zone.

Respondent 592, member of BCH staff

This was also balanced against concerns about how people smoking might react:

I feel that it will only work if the rules are enforced and people caught smoking are told to move. As a member of staff I feel I should do this but won't as I would be concerned as to how some people may react; I already have concerns over my safety.

Respondent 196, member of BCH staff

Having been a Police Officer for 30 years I feel it would be dangerous to get into conflict with people who are smoking...

Respondent 327, patient or family member

7.2 Informing people about the zone in hospital literature

Make sure everyone is advised on appointment letters. There's no excuse of ignorance then.

Respondent 34, patient or family member

I would like all hospital correspondence from BCH to have a reminder of no smoking rules printed on them.

Respondent 418, patient or family member

7.3 Designated areas

Several respondents thought that designated smoking areas were the way to manage the balance:

If enforcement isn't achievable then I think the best solution would be to provide a single designated smoking area that is away from areas involved in patient care so that people aren't smoking by the entrances.

Respondent 196, member of BCH staff

A designated area should be identified for stressed out parents who smoke who need to stay close to the hospital. However children with reduced lung capacity should not have to walk through smoke. This is a serious issue for my child.

Respondent 418, patient or family member

I truly believe that the only way you can efficiently implement a smoke free zone is by providing a designated smoking zone for parents/carers/visitors; this way smokers would be more likely to use this rather than standing at the entrances to the hospital

Respondent 941, member of BCH staff

Other respondents however, felt that areas would not help people to quit smoking:

Do not provide smoking areas and do not forward people to areas where they can smoke, as that is merely condoning the habit.

Respondent 649, other member of public

7.4 Contents of signs

Several respondents re-iterated the need for softer and positively framed comments on the signs:

Create signage that is child friendly and from a child's view rather than visual hard hitting images. Bullying doesn't work but people visiting the hospital will have more understanding for non-smoking zones for the wellbeing of their children/grandchildren/etc. Make it positive rather than threatening punishment

Respondent 540, other member of public

I think signage will be ample. Hard-hitting visual images are just offensive and won't change anything - a person has to want to give up.

Respondent 945, member of BCH staff

8. Recommendations

Based on the feedback, the following recommendations are made:

1. Given the strong support from the significant majority of the public, families and staff who regularly use the area around the hospital, BCH strongly believes that the introduction of a smoke-free zone around the hospital site is a positive step.
2. BCH believes it will improve the experience of visitors, whilst also offering an opportunity to communicate a consistent and important public health message.
3. Based on consultation feedback, BCH believes that the zone should include vaping and e-cigarettes, maintaining consistency with the hospital site itself.
4. BCH will initially pursue the introduction of a voluntary zone, supported through signage that highlights the importance of the zone to children and families visiting the hospital.
5. BCH recognises the views of a number of people that they would like to see a more formal, enforceable zone introduced. BCH will ensure that any implementation of zone is appropriately monitored, and will support exploration of a stronger approach if a voluntary zone fails to address sufficiently the level of concern that the consultation has highlighted.