

Embargoed press release: White van man struggles to quit

Embargoed 10th March 2010

Research to mark No Smoking Day tomorrow (10 March) shows smoking is increasingly the preserve of routine and manual groups in Britain. Van drivers, builders and secretaries are now twice as likely to smoke as people in managerial and professional occupations, including doctors and teachers.

The research, conducted by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), highlights a rapid fall in smoking prevalence amongst professional groups in recent years, with much slower reductions amongst routine and manual groups.

Of the nine million UK smokers, almost a third now live in routine and manual households.

BBC Dragon's Den star and No Smoking Day president Duncan Bannatyne says, 'These findings show that whilst we are succeeding in controlling the smoking epidemic amongst the better off, cigarettes are now the primary cause of health inequalities in the UK.'

The good news is most smokers want to quit, and with the expectation that expected that nearly a million people will stop on No Smoking Day 2010, the downward trend in smoking prevalence continues. And with the NHS Stop Smoking Services, there's never been a better time to quit; you're four times more likely to succeed with NHS support.

Andy McEwen, Assistant Director Tobacco Studies, University College London says, 'We know it is not due to difference in motivation to quit but those from poorer backgrounds do seem to find it hard to succeed. This may be due to a number of factors: availability of cigarettes, less conducive environment and higher levels of nicotine dependence are possibilities.'

Duncan Bannatyne today launches the No Smoking Day campaign with a new website for smokers (www.wequit.co.uk), featuring his own unique version of Queen's iconic 'I Want to Break Free' video.

The No Smoking Day campaign, now in its 27th year, is run by a charity of the same name in collaboration with a range of UK public health agencies.

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Notes to editors

For interviews with Duncan Bannatyne and/or Andy McEwan; case studies; photos of Duncan Bannatyne, contact Laura Luxton, PR and Marketing Manager, No Smoking Day tel: 020 7739 5100, mobile: 07977 411831, email: laura@nosmokingday.org.uk. An ISDN line is available at No Smoking Day.

ONS

The ONS survey results were published in the annual report, Smoking and drinking among adults, 2008 (the General Lifestyle Survey).

Whole report:

http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme_compendia/GLF08/GLFSmoking&DrinkingAmongAdults2008

WeQuit

No Smoking Day has launched a dedicated website and Facebook application to help smokers give up. The website, www.wequit.co.uk, invites smokers to make their own pledge to quit, and allows them to invite their friends to join via Facebook and Twitter so that together they can help to beat the cravings. The site also includes a video blog and first hand testimonials from ex smokers who have successfully broken the habit, along with tips and advice for first time quitters. www.wequit.co.uk/facebook is a Facebook application that allows you to create rewards for success, forfeits for failure, or even try and raise money for charity with a sponsored quit. However you choose to motivate the attempt, WeQuit uses the power of Facebook to help make quitting fun.

No Smoking Day

No Smoking Day is organised by a charity of the same name run by four full time staff. Based in London, the charity is funded by a coalition of governmental and voluntary sector organisations with an interest in health. No Smoking Day aims to help people who want to stop smoking by creating a supportive environment for them, and by highlighting the many sources of help available to people who want to quit.

Duncan Bannatyne

No Smoking Day's president is entrepreneur, TV personality, and anti-tobacco campaigner Duncan Bannatyne OBE. Bannatyne, an ex-smoker who famously took on the British American Tobacco at its AGM in April 2008, supports the charity by being the celebrity spokesperson for the campaign as well as encouraging the public and other celebrities to participate.