



Effects on the health of children

National surveys illustrate that around 37% of all children live in a house with at least one person who smokes. Children exposed to SHS are at increased risk of bronchitis, asthma symptoms, middle ear infections (glue ear), meningitis and sudden infant death syndrome (cot death).

A report conducted by the Royal College of Physicians estimates that second hand smoke annually causes:

- 20,500 new cases of lower respiratory tract infection in children aged two years and under
- 121,400 new cases of middle ear infections in children of all ages
- 22,600 new cases of wheeze and asthma in children
- At least 200 new cases of bacterial meningitis

Based on these national figures, it is estimated that there are 3,057 additional incidents of childhood diseases each year within Lancashire, directly attributable to SHS. The effect of increased illnesses for children leads to loss of school days and decreased attendance leads to lower attainment.

Locally, it is estimated that exposure of adults and children to SHS in Lancashire, costs the NHS £15.67 million to treat every year. Having a smoke free home will therefore improve children's health, which will reduce GP appointments, hospital admissions and time off school.

This, in turn, will improve attendance rates and their time spent learning and socialising with friends. It will also reduce their exposure to smoking behaviour, which may help stop them from starting smoking themselves.

Children learn their behaviour from adults and those who live with smokers are 2-3 times more likely to smoke themselves.

Effects on health of adults

Non-smokers who are exposed to SHS in the home are at a 30% greater risk of fatal coronary heart disease

Non-smokers who are exposed to SHS are at a 20-30% greater risk of developing lung cancer

Approximately 5.1 million people suffer from asthma in the UK. For someone with asthma just one hours exposure to SHS can cause a 20% deterioration in lung function.