

Getting things done – Nethergate



I have expressed concern that, [less than a year](#) after the resurfacing and relaying of the block paving surface at Nethergate outside Dundee Contemporary Arts, the road surface is already appearing to sink in places and is uneven – see right :

I have received three complaints from constituents about the road condition in just the past two days. The work to bring the road outside DCA on the Nethergate at the South Tay Street junction was undertaken in February and March last year. It is very concerning that, so soon after this work being completed, the road brickwork is uneven, exactly the issue with the road prior to the 2017 work. This needs to be urgently attended to.

One West End constituent said when reporting the matter to me :

'I have noticed that since the upgrade of the road outside the DCA that is it slowly going back to its condition of loose brick and developing pot holes. I think that this is due to the volume of heavy bus traffic up the Perth road, although it is pleasing to the eye the surface is not practical for the traffic volume. I am sure that the previous resurface cost a significant amount of money and I don't think we have got what we paid for here, therefore I would be keen to see, acknowledgment that this is an issue and any subsequent communication with the council roads team on what the long term solution is.'

I have reported the matter to the council's Roads Maintenance Partnership seeking urgent repair. This is a heavily used road and on a major bus route so it is important it is brought up to standard as soon as possible.

The costs of belonging to the single market and customs union

In what passes for a debate about Brexit I have got used to the barrage of commentary that thinks it is wholly or mainly about trading arrangements, when it is really about how we are governed, to whom our government is accountable, who raises and spends the tax money and who makes the laws. Many people voted leave to take back control, to bring back self government.

The commentary also usually wrongly assumes that membership of the single market and customs union has been wholly benign, and that if we just leave we will be worse off. The facts of our past membership do not prove this supposition. As I have often pointed out, our growth rate was faster in the years before we joined, than after we joined. There was no benefit or acceleration of growth when they “completed” the single market.

More importantly, lop sided reductions in tariffs and barriers meant we lost a lot of industry to continental competition, but were given no parallel benefits to compete in areas where we were stronger. Our fishing industry was badly damaged by the CFP and we plunged from net exporter to net importers. Our farming industry saw its domestic market share eroded badly, aided by EU policies on beef and milk which did not help.

The EU argues that single market membership added just over 1% to our economy over the whole time we were in it – yet it is difficult to see from the actual growth figures any positive contribution. You clearly need to knock off from the figures the 5% loss of GDP compared to trend caused by membership of the European Exchange Rate Mechanism, which the EU study leaves out. You also need to take into account the £12 bn net a year contribution or cost, which is a drag of around 0.6% of GDP every year. If we spent that all at home instead that would give us a welcome boost.

[Press release: PHE publishes independent expert e-cigarettes evidence review](#)

The report covers e-cigarette use among young people and adults, public attitudes, the impact on quitting smoking, an update on risks to health and the role of nicotine. It also reviews heated tobacco products.

The main findings of PHE’s evidence review are that:

- vaping poses only a small fraction of the risks of smoking and switching completely from smoking to vaping conveys substantial health benefits
- e-cigarettes could be contributing to at least 20,000 successful new quits per year and possibly many more
- e-cigarette use is associated with improved quit success rates over the last year and an accelerated drop in smoking rates across the country
- many thousands of smokers incorrectly believe that vaping is as harmful as smoking; around 40% of smokers have not even tried an e-cigarette
- there is much public misunderstanding about nicotine (less than 10% of adults understand that most of the harms to health from smoking are not caused by nicotine)
- the use of e-cigarettes in the UK has plateaued over the last few years

at just under 3 million

- the evidence does not support the concern that e-cigarettes are a route into smoking among young people (youth smoking rates in the UK continue to decline, regular use is rare and is almost entirely confined to those who have smoked)

PHE's evidence review comes just a few weeks after a US National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine report on e-cigarettes. Their conclusion on e-cigarette safety also finds that based on the available evidence 'e-cigarettes are likely to be far less harmful than combustible tobacco cigarettes.'

Professor John Newton, Director for Health Improvement at PHE said:

Every minute someone is admitted to hospital from smoking, with around 79,000 deaths a year in England alone.

Our new review reinforces the finding that vaping is a fraction of the risk of smoking, at least 95% less harmful, and of negligible risk to bystanders. Yet over half of smokers either falsely believe that vaping is as harmful as smoking or just don't know.

It would be tragic if thousands of smokers who could quit with the help of an e-cigarette are being put off due to false fears about their safety.

Professor Ann McNeill, lead author and Professor of Tobacco Addiction at King's College London said:

It's of great concern that smokers still have such a poor understanding about what causes the harm from smoking. When people smoke tobacco cigarettes, they inhale a lethal mix of 7,000 smoke constituents, 70 of which are known to cause cancer.

People smoke for the nicotine, but contrary to what the vast majority believe, nicotine causes little if any of the harm. The toxic smoke is the culprit and is the overwhelming cause of all the tobacco-related disease and death. There are now a greater variety of alternative ways of getting nicotine than ever before, including nicotine gum, nasal spray, lozenges and e-cigarettes.

Professor Linda Bauld, author and Professor of Health Policy, University of Stirling and Chair in Behavioural Research for Cancer Prevention, Cancer Research UK said:

Concern has been expressed that e-cigarette use will lead young people into smoking. But in the UK, research clearly shows that regular use of e-cigarettes among young people who have never

smoked remains negligible, less than 1%, and youth smoking continues to decline at an encouraging rate. We need to keep closely monitoring these trends, but so far the data suggest that e-cigarettes are not acting as a route into regular smoking amongst young people.

PHE is calling on smokers and a number of bodies to act on the evidence.

Smokers

Anyone who has struggled to quit should try switching to an e-cigarette and get professional help. The greatest quit success is among those who combine using an e-cigarette with support from a local stop smoking service.

Local stop smoking services and healthcare professionals

These should provide behavioural support to those smokers wanting to quit with the help of an e-cigarette. A new training course on e-cigarettes for healthcare professionals by the National Centre for Smoking Cessation and Training is now live.

Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA)

MHRA continue their work in regulating and licensing e-cigarette products and support manufacturers to expedite the licensing of e-cigarettes as medicinal quit aids. PHE believes there is compelling evidence that e-cigarettes be made available to NHS patients.

NHS Trusts

To become truly smokefree, Trusts should ensure

- e-cigarettes, alongside nicotine replacement therapies are available for sale in hospital shops
- vaping policies support smokers to quit and stay smokefree
- smoking shelters be removed
- frontline staff take every opportunity to encourage and support patients to quit

The government's new Tobacco Control Plan for England includes a commitment to 'maximise the availability of safer alternatives to smoking'. It makes clear that e-cigarettes have an important part to play in achieving the ambition for a smokefree generation.

Background

1. Read the report commissioned by PHE – [Evidence review of e-cigarettes and heated tobacco products](#) – McNeill A, Brose LS, Calder R, Bauld L & Robson D (2018).
2. Over the past few years, e-cigarette use has hovered at just under 6% of the adult population in Britain. The most common reason for e-cigarette use continues to be to help with quitting and they are the most popular quitting tool in England. At the same time, quit success rates have been improving and we are also seeing an accelerated drop in smoking rates (currently 15.5% in England): [smokinginengland.info/latest-statistics](#).
3. 79,000 people in England die every year as a result of smoking, and over half of long-term smokers will die from a smoking-related illness if they do not quit: [digital.nhs.uk/catalogue/PUB24228](#).
4. PHE 2015 e-cigarettes evidence review: McNeill A., P. Hajek et al, [E-cigarettes – an evidence update: A report commissioned by Public Health England](#), Public Health England, August.
5. [Authors'note](#) on evidence for 'around 95% safer' estimate.
6. [Nicotine without smoke: tobacco harm reduction](#), Royal College of Physicians, April 2016.
7. [Smoking Toolkit Study](#).
8. ASH (May 2017) [Use of e-cigarettes \(vapourisers\) among adults in Great Britain](#).
9. Bauld, Linda, Anne Marie MacKintosh, Brian Eastwood, Allison Ford, Graham Moore, Martin Dockrell, Deborah Arnott, Hazel Cheeseman, and Ann McNeill. ['Young people's use of e-cigarettes across the United Kingdom: Findings from five surveys 2015–2017.'](#) International journal of environmental research and public health 14, no. 9 (2017): 973.
10. [Towards a Smokefree Generation: A Tobacco Control Plan for England](#) Department of Health, July 2017.
11. [NHS Digital, Statistics on Smoking: England, 2017](#).
12. US National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (January 2018) [Public Health Consequences of E-Cigarettes](#).

About Public Health England

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Statement by Michel Barnier following his working lunch in London with David Davis

Good afternoon to all of you. First of all, I want to thank you, David, for your hospitality. I was very pleased to also meet today the Prime Minister, Theresa May. In a very short time, from now until October, we must advance on three fronts.

First, translating our Joint Report into legal text.

Second, the transition period, which you just mentioned, David. Let me recall that the UK government has decided the date of the UK withdrawal: [the 29th March 2019](#). This was the UK's sovereign decision. Mrs May has asked to benefit from the Single Market and the Customs Union for a short period after this. The European Council has indicated its readiness to consider this request. The conditions are clear: everyone has to play by the same rules during this transition. Let me add one point about this transition: the certainty about the transition will only come with the ratification of the withdrawal agreement.

Number three: our future partnership between the UK and the EU. On that point we need also clarity about the UK's proposals for the future partnership. The only thing I can say now is that without a customs union- and being outside the Single Market – barriers to trade and goods and services are unavoidable. The time has come to make a choice. Thank you.

News story: Drivers' hours: changes to fines for commercial drivers

Updated: Updated with the date (5 March 2018) that DVSA traffic examiners

will start issuing on-the-spot fines for any drivers' hours offences committed in the last 28 days.

If you drive a lorry, bus or coach, you must follow [rules on how many hours you can drive](#) and the breaks you need to take.

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) can fine drivers up to £300 if they're caught breaking the rules. They can also be prosecuted or have their vehicle immobilised.

At the moment, DVSA can only fine drivers for:

- offences committed that day
- ongoing offences, like manipulating tachograph records, which record drivers' hours

Drivers will be fined for older offences

From Monday 5 March 2018, DVSA traffic examiners will start issuing on-the-spot fines for any drivers' hours offences committed in the last 28 days.

In a single [roadside check](#), DVSA traffic examiners will issue fines for up to 5 drivers' hours offences. It means you could be fined up to £1,500 in a single check if you've consistently broken the rules.

It won't matter if the offences took place in Great Britain or elsewhere.

The rules will also apply to drivers who don't live in Great Britain. However, they'll need to pay any fines immediately, before being allowed to continue their journey. DVSA will immobilise their vehicle until they pay.

Fines to deter drivers from not resting properly

As well as giving fines to drivers for recent offences, DVSA traffic examiners have started issuing fines to deal with drivers who don't properly rest.

Lorry, bus and coach drivers must take a 45-hour rest break at least every fortnight.

Since 1 November 2017, DVSA has started to fine drivers up to £300 if they spend their full weekly rest break in their vehicle in places where it causes a problem. For example, if a lorry driver spends their full break in the cab of their lorry in a layby.

Illegal parking, noise and litter nuisance

Spending the weekly rest break in the cab can:

- contribute to drivers not properly resting
- expose drivers to poor living conditions

It can also cause problems in local communities. In some areas, lorry drivers have parked illegally or inappropriately while taking the 45-hour break, and have caused residents to complain about noise, litter and anti-social behaviour.

During 2016, authorities in Kent took action against 3,700 lorry drivers for parking illegally or inappropriately.

Targeting problem areas

DVSA traffic examiners will target places where this is causing the biggest problems, such as residential areas and laybys.

DVSA will also work with its counterparts in other countries to deal with overseas operators whose drivers regularly do this.

Devastating consequences of driving tired

Crashes involving tired lorry drivers can be devastating. Almost a quarter of injuries in accidents involving lorries are fatal or serious.

About 40% of sleep-related accidents involve commercial vehicles.

According to the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA), driving while tired may be responsible for:

- 1 in 5 of all accidents
- up to a quarter of serious and fatal crashes

6,300 drivers' hours fines were given to lorry drivers by DVSA between April 2015 and March 2016

Source: [Vehicle enforcement data for Great Britain](#)

In addition to the devastation caused to families and communities, road collisions cost the economy an estimated £16.3 billion a year, and add pressure on the NHS and emergency services.

Protecting you from unsafe drivers and vehicles

DVSA Chief Executive, Gareth Llewellyn, said:

DVSA's priority is to protect you from unsafe drivers and vehicles.

These tougher fines will help us to take stronger action against any drivers or operators who break drivers' hours rules and will help make our roads safer.

There's no excuse for driving while tired. The results of falling asleep at the wheel of 40 tonne lorry can be devastating to

families and communities. Any drivers breaking these rules is putting other road users at risk and could face losing their licence and livelihood.

James Firth, the Freight Transport Association's Head of Licensing Policy and Compliance Information, said:

For some years, DVSA officers have been virtually powerless to take effective action against non-UK HGV drivers who may have committed a string of offences in the days and weeks before the vehicle is stopped.

These new powers mean the enforcement authorities will be more able – and more likely – to take action against all drivers who are found to have repeatedly flouted these critical road safety laws.