

**Press Release: 17<sup>th</sup> of February 2021**

## **Launch of Clare's 'Not Around Us' Campaign - Towards a Tobacco & Vape Free Clare**

On this National No Smoking Day (Wed, 17<sup>th</sup> February) County Clare is launching our 'Not Around Us' campaign. The initiative is being led by Clare County Council's Healthy Clare team in partnership with a range of stakeholders including the HSE's QUIT-Mid-West team, Clare Comhairle na nÓg, Clare Children and Young People's Services Committee, Clare Youth Services, Clare Sports Partnership, Greener Clare and Healthy Ireland.

*"Not Around Us"* is another step *Towards a Tobacco and Vape Free Clare* by promoting environments where it is easier for those who smoke to quit and stay quit and to help denormalise smoking for the next generation. The campaign is in response to the government's national target for a less than 5% smoking prevalence in Ireland by 2025.

It is about supporting Chapter 7 of the *Tobacco Free Ireland policy* - denormalisation of smoking and protection of children and young people.

### **The purpose of *Not Around Us* is to:**

- Help protect children and young people from second-hand smoke exposure.
- Contribute to the denormalisation of smoking for children and young people.
- Reduce environmental nuisance, cost of cleaning and damage that discarded tobacco products create.
- Signpost the HSE Quit services.

This National No Smoking Day marks the initial launch of the campaign in Clare; with an aim of raising awareness of the Not Around Us initiative leading up to World No Tobacco Day on the 31<sup>st</sup> of May 2021.

Not Around Us, outdoor signage and window stickers are available for different settings (e.g. at school gates, in a playground). Organisations interested in the signing up to the campaign should go to the Healthy Clare [webpage](https://www.clarecoco.ie/services/community/healthy-clare/) (<https://www.clarecoco.ie/services/community/healthy-clare/>).

**Pat Dowling, Chief Executive Officer, Clare County Council said:** *"Clare County Council is delighted to be fulfilling our commitment to Healthy Ireland and the Tobacco Free Ireland policy through the launch of the Not Around Us campaign."*

*It is paramount that the environments in which we live, grow, learn, work, and play in are protective of health and wellbeing. The Not Around Us campaign is a step towards ensuring healthy environments not only of our children here in County Clare, but also of our older citizens of the future".*

**Mary Howard, Cathaoirleach said:** *This National No Smoking day Clare County Council is leading the way with the launch of our Clare, Not Around Us campaign. The Towards a Tobacco and Vape Free agenda is much welcomed here in Clare as we are acutely aware of how tobacco products negatively impact both our health and the environment.*

*It is fantastic to see the collaborative effort involved all in the name of health for people and the environment. I encourage all organisations where children and young people are likely to frequent to sign up to this campaign, by doing so you are ensuring that the next generation of young people living in County Clare spend their time in healthy, clean environments.*

**Karen Fennessy, Healthy Clare Co-Ordinator** added: *“The Clare Not Around us Campaign forms part of a wider vision for a healthier Smoke & Vape-Free Clare. This campaign receives the full support of the Healthy Clare Strategic Working Group and the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC).*

*A Tobacco Free Clare is not just about adults quitting smoking but about respecting open spaces particularly where children play thereby creating a culture of support, caring for oneself and those around you. Our vision is to make our beautiful County a healthier place to be for everyone.”*

*I encourage any organisation where children and young people are likely to be to get involved in the Not Around Us campaign and actively participate in the Towards a Tobacco and Vape Free Clare agenda.*

**Karen Foley, Environmental Awareness Officer:** *Not only is smoking bad for your health but cigarette littering is also harmful to our environment. Karen Foley, explains “In Clare, 58% of all litter comes from cigarette littering. Cigarette butts are plastic based and do not biodegrade in the natural environment. They break down over time to micro plastics and chemicals which are harmful to wildlife both on land and in water”.*

*Furthermore, Karen Foley explains “Community Groups, including Tidy Towns group, will relate to difficulty in picking up cigarette litter, during community clean ups. Greener Clare is excited to partner with the Not Around Us campaign in supporting tobacco free spaces, thus helping to curtail the number of these products entering our environment. We appeal to those who do smoke to dispose of cigarette butts responsibly”.*

**Martina Blake, National Tobacco Free Ireland Programme Lead** said: *“It is truly wonderful to see Healthy Clare and all its partners embracing the vision for a tobacco free environment in their county. We want to build together an environment where the next generation of Irish children do not fall in to the trap of Nicotine addiction. The evidence tells us that tobacco free environments prevent second hand smoke exposure, reduces smoking initiation among children, encourages smokers to think about quitting and provides a space which supports those who are trying to quit to stay quit.*

*It also has other positive outcomes like encouraging children and carers to use family friendly spaces, reduces litter, protects our environment, and can help to promote and boost the local economy through tourism.*

**Mary Mc Mahon, Quit Mid West Coordinator**, notes *“the Clare Not Around Us campaign is particularly significant as most adult smoking starts in adolescence and continues into adulthood. While there are many factors, both social norms and tobacco environments strongly influence smoking behaviour. There is also growing evidence that adolescents who vape are more likely to become smokers and so the vape free message is an important aspect of this campaign”*.

*“Quit Mid West is delighted to support the Clare Not Around Us Campaign and offers free support to any person who would like to quit smoking. The Quit Mid West service can be contacted at 065 6865841. The service offers tele-health or telephone support and face to face clinics will resume as soon as possible within the context of the Covid pandemic”*.

For more information about the *Not Around Us* campaign visit the Healthy Clare [webpage \(https://www.clarecoco.ie/services/community/healthy-clare/not-around-us-campaign/\)](https://www.clarecoco.ie/services/community/healthy-clare/not-around-us-campaign/) or search '**Not Around Us**' on [www.clarecoco.ie](http://www.clarecoco.ie)

*The HSE QUIT service provides personalised, free support by phone, email, SMS and live chat. Smokers can **free call 1800 201 203** or visit [www.QUIT.ie](http://www.QUIT.ie) for stop smoking tips and resources, a free QUIT Kit, and to create a QUIT Plan.*