

Media Release

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The logo for The Union, featuring the text "The Union" in white, sans-serif font on a dark blue rectangular background.

**International Union Against
Tuberculosis and Lung Disease**
Health solutions for the poor

The Union and University of Aberdeen launch new free toolkit for measuring air quality in hospitality venues

Edinburgh, UK, 3 August 2016 – A new toolkit designed for public health professionals to assess compliance with smoke-free laws in hospitality venues has been developed – and made publicly available – by the International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease (The Union) and the University of Aberdeen.

It was compiled following publication of research in the journal *Nicotine and Tobacco Research* that tested whether air quality monitoring (AQM) practices could be used in indoor public places in low and middle income countries where outdoor air pollution levels are high. Data from six cities around the world that participated in the study provided robust evidence to advocate for stronger smoke-free legislation and enforcement. Results were widely shared with policymakers, enforcement agencies and media.

‘This kit includes all the tools and instructions needed to conduct a complete full smoke-free compliance assessment anywhere in the world. Our goal is to fully equip public health professionals to gather the robust data needed to mobilise policymakers, and venue owners, to properly protect people from the harms of second-hand smoke,’ said Dr Angela Jackson-Morris, Head of the Grants Programme at The Union’s Department of Tobacco Control, and co-creator of the toolkit. ‘At The Union we assist governments and civil society to put effective tobacco control laws in place, and monitoring is vital to ensure legislation is well enforced. This toolkit is a practical part of this process.’

The toolkit provides technical guidance on how to carry out smoke-free compliance assessments in cafes, restaurants and bars using a low-cost air quality monitoring device that gathers objective air quality data by measuring fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}). It also includes simplified software for downloading data as well as templates for researchers to record any evidence of smoking observed in venues. The World Health Organization (WHO) states that there is no safe level of exposure to second-hand smoke, and detection of PM_{2.5} can be used to provide evidence of the health dangers

where smoking is observed. Outside air PM_{2.5} in the vicinity is also measured during the same period so that non-smoking sources of air pollution can be taken into account.

‘Even where national smoke-free legislation is in place, rigorous enforcement may not be. And some countries have weak laws that still allow tobacco use in designated smoking areas. Exposure to any level of second-hand smoke can be hazardous to health so it is crucial that these laws give full protection and are rigorously enforced,’ said Dr Sean Semple, Senior Lecturer at the University of Aberdeen and co-creator of the toolkit. ‘This toolkit is freely available and offers a low-cost, easy to follow, method for measuring air quality in bars and restaurants around the world. We hope it will be widely used because effective smoke-free laws save lives.’

There is no safe level of exposure to second-hand smoke. Harms to health include cancers, heart disease and severe respiratory illnesses. Major progress has been made globally on banning smoking in public places, but more needs to be done. Tobacco kills nearly six million people globally every year.

You can access the toolkit [here](#).

Read about the original study [here](#), and find out more about smoke-free policies [here](#).

About the International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease (The Union)

For nearly 100 years, The Union has drawn from the best scientific evidence and the skills, expertise and reach of its staff, consultants and membership in order to advance solutions to the most pressing public health challenges affecting people living in poverty around the world. With nearly 17,000 members and subscribers from 156 countries, The Union has its headquarters in Paris and regional offices in Africa, the Asia Pacific, Europe, Latin America, North America and South-East Asia. The Union’s scientific departments focus on tuberculosis and HIV, lung health and non-communicable diseases, tobacco control and operational research. For more information on The Union’s tobacco control work please visit www.tobaccofreeunion.org.

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About the University of Aberdeen

Founded in 1495, the University of Aberdeen is Scotland's third oldest and the UK's fifth oldest university, and is consistently ranked among the top 1% of the world's universities.

For more information please visit www.abdn.ac.uk

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