

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## **Balls to Stop set to kick off new season**

**Balls to Stop**, a unique stop-smoking campaign run in partnership between the Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust Stop Smoking Service, Community Projects Plus and Soar Media, is set to start a new season of activity, which will see new ambassadors and supporters promote the help on offer to people wishing to kick the habit.

Having enjoyed a hugely-successful first year, the Balls to Stop campaign uses the power of sport and recognised sporting personalities to promote the benefits of stopping smoking, alongside the support available through the Stop Smoking Service, available for free across Leicestershire and Rutland.

Boxing hero **Rendall Munroe**, and World Cup-winning former Leicester Tiger **Neil Back** have pledged their support to Balls to Stop for a second year, and they will be joined by former Leicester City and Northern Ireland international defender, **Gerry Taggart** as Balls to Stop ambassadors for the 2014-15 season.

In addition, Balls to Stop has teamed up with **Leicester Hockey Club** and **Leicester Storm Rugby League Club**, with both becoming Community Partners

As part of the new season of activity, engagement through Community Projects Plus is to take place across 40 grassroots sporting events and locations over the course of five months, which will allow the campaign to interact with football and basketball players.

Alongside this activity, as an incentive to stop smoking, Balls to Stop will be offering individuals the opportunity to win 'money-can't-buy' experiences, courtesy of the campaign's sporting ambassadors and partners.

Leicester sports marketing agency Soar Media will assist Balls to Stop in the production of a series of promotional videos and case studies, alongside the provision of public relations and social media support.

Louise Ross, Stop Smoking services manager, said:

“We’re very excited to launch the second season of Balls to Stop, which was hugely successful in its first year, and are looking forward to all the activity that we have planned.

“I’d like to thank Rendall Munroe and Neil Back, who have been wonderful ambassadors for the campaign, for continuing to support Balls to Stop and I’d like to welcome Gerry Taggart as our newest ambassador.

“We’re looking forward to working with Leicester Hockey Club and Leicester Storm as community partners, as the impact of sport and the way that it allows us to engage with the public is both powerful and unique.

“The assistance that we have received from Community Projects Plus and Soar Media has been key to the campaign’s success thus far, and I’m sure will continue to be this season.”

Cllr Rory Palmer, deputy city mayor and lead member for health and wellbeing said ‘It’s really encouraging to see our local sportspeople supporting such an important campaign. Balls to Stop encourages people to give up smoking and adopt a healthy lifestyle by providing them with a healthy role model.

Smoking is by far the largest preventable cause of ill-health and death in Leicester; Leicester’s Stop Smoking service provides people with detailed and consistent support helping them stop smoking meaning they could live a longer and healthier life.’

To get in touch with the Stop Smoking Service, call 0116 295 4141.

For more information on Balls to Stop, visit [www.ballstostop.co.uk](http://www.ballstostop.co.uk)

## **ENDS**

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### **Note to editors**

Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust (LPT) provides a range of health and wellbeing services mainly for people living Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. The Trust serves a population of one million, has a budget in excess of £282 million and employs approximately 5,400 staff. For more information visit [www.leicspart.nhs.uk](http://www.leicspart.nhs.uk).

### **About Leicestershire Partnership Trust Stop Smoking Service**

The stop smoking service support people in Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland who want to stop smoking. Team members also offer training to workers such as healthcare teams to help them give good information to people who smoke, such as pregnant women. Some of the team also help discourage young people from starting to smoke, and improve the health and wellbeing of babies and children by encouraging families to keep their homes and cars smokefree.

Advisors explain how a programme gives you the best chance of success. The individually-tailored plan, which lasts up to 12 weeks, is a combination of support, medication to help stay

quit, and skills to stay smokefree. It's a free, friendly service run by those who understand what people going through.

The service currently employs about 40 people in total in the city and county teams, comprising about 20 people per-team. The services typically help over 7,000 people to stop smoking every year, with a very high satisfaction rate.

The service is delivered from:

- Hospitals
- Community centres
- Pharmacies
- GP surgeries
- Children's Centres
- Home visits
- Workplaces
- Libraries
- Other venues that are easy to get to for people who use the service

For more information, visit [www.ballstostop.co.uk](http://www.ballstostop.co.uk)

**Leicester City Council** has a lead responsibility for public health in Leicester.

This means that they are responsible for services such as smoking cessation, weight management, oral health and school nurses. They are ideally placed to prevent ill health as many causes of ill health are not just medical but environmental factors such as access to open green space. The local authority can look at its own population's needs and determine preventative health care, specific for the city.

Local authorities have a mandatory responsibility for:

- health protection
- national child measurement programme
- public health advice to the NHS
- health checks
- sexual health services

[www.leicester.gov.uk/ourhealthycity](http://www.leicester.gov.uk/ourhealthycity)

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