ash scotland
Taking Action on Smoking and Health

Engaging communities towards being smoke-free:
Reducing poverty and health inequalities

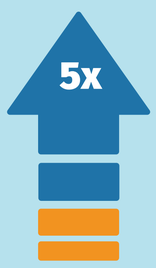
Smoking is a major contributor to health inequality



Current situation

Smoking is the leading cause of preventable illness, disability and premature death in Scotland. The harm caused by tobacco is a major factor in the life expectancy gap between those living in the most and least deprived areas and the gap is not closing, if anything, it is widening...

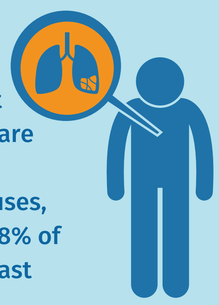
On average, smoking prevalence in the most deprived areas of Scotland is **five times** higher than in the least deprived areas



In the most deprived areas smokers are at a **four times** higher risk of being hospitalised due to tobacco



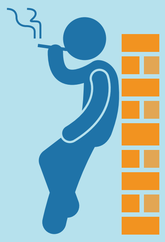
35% of deaths in Scotland's most deprived areas are from smoking-attributable causes, compared with 8% of deaths in the least deprived areas





One third of people with mental health issues in the UK smoke

In the most deprived areas smoking prevalence among people with mental health issues is **40-50%**



Smoking prevalence among people with mental health issues is **almost double** to those without



...making this one of the key inequality issues.

Why does this matter

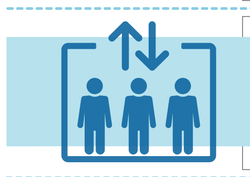
The cost of smoking falls most heavily on communities that are already struggling and experiencing poverty. The relationship between smoking, poverty, inequalities and mental health is very complex.



Smoking is highly addictive, most people were still children when they started and 67% of current smokers say that they want to stop.



Addressing smoking can contribute to reducing poverty and tackling health inequalities.



69,000 households could be lifted out of poverty if smoking costs were removed.



£16 million in tobacco costs could be saved annually, for every 1% reduction in the smoking rate.



People with mental health issues who quit, see greater improvements in mental wellbeing than those who continue to smoke.

ASH Scotland works alongside community organisations to provide support to improve people's mental, physical and financial wellbeing through addressing smoking. We're working to shape understanding, test ways forward and embed new practise in a compassionate, supportive and person-centred way.

Working with Community Organisations

Project aim

"We will engage with communities in SIMD 1 and 2, aiming to learn from their experiences, put tobacco on their agenda, and work together to shape understanding and test positive ways forward."

Project overview

ASH Scotland's Engagement Team has been piloting a new project to support community groups in areas of high deprivation to respond to the impact of smoking.

We:

- Engage with local partners, with an interest in ending poverty and reducing inequalities.
- Take a compassionate, supportive and person-centred approach.
- Provide small grants and package of tailored support to community organisations.
- Embed new practice with organisations we're working alongside.
- Deliver training and learning opportunities to raise confidence and knowledge in discussing smoking in a community setting.
- Developed a new eLearning module: Smoking in Scotland's areas of high deprivation, for people working with communities.
- Signpost to Quit Your Way services, where people can get free, expert support to quit.

> "Let's not put smoking and its harms on the back burner. It's a big issue that is often forgotten about"
>
> Session Participant

> "The Very Brief Advice takes off the pressure, you can revisit it and not assume that just because someone is in poverty and has mental health that they do not want to give up."
>
> eLearning Participant

> "Previously I struggled and panicked about the topic as I felt I had to persuade people, now I understand it's about introducing the idea and leaving it to them."
>
> eLearning Participant

Organisations responding to the impact of smoking

Dean & Cauvin Young People's Trust
Improving lives in Scotland since 1733

Dean & Cauvin Trust organised a summer wellbeing programme which included smoking and vaping in the context of physical and mental health, physical activity, healthy eating and coping strategies. Young people decided what they wanted to learn, were involved in budgeting and built trusting relationships with staff and carers - which was vital for facilitating conversations about smoking. The young people involved reported being more aware of smoke-free coping strategies and ways to support their own wellbeing.

MEN'S SHED Moffat & District

Members of the Men's Shed often face a range of mental and physical health issues, bereavement and isolation. With the help of a small grant and support from ASH Scotland they are producing their own online health and wellbeing resources, sharing messages about smoking and putting in place a smoke-free policy for their shed. They have connected with local stop-smoking services and one member has successfully quit smoking!

shopmobility PAISLEY & DISTRICT

A small grant was awarded to Shopmobility in Paisley to help towards creating a space to better facilitate conversations about giving up smoking. They are playing a vital role in raising local awareness of the mental, physical and financial benefits of being smoke-free and the support that is available for those considering quitting.

How we can help

Work with ASH Scotland to help tackle the harm and inequality caused by smoking:

Our Engagement Team provides a wide range of free support, resources and training to enable organisations to address smoking and improve the health and wellbeing of the communities they support.

Contact our Engagement Team to arrange a conversation about how we can help.

Website: www.ashscotland.org.uk/inequalities
eLearning: www.ashscotlandmoodle.org.uk
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