



**NCD ALLIANCE**  
SCOTLAND

# **NCD Prevention:** A Commercial Determinants of Health Approach

A 10-Year Vision for a Healthier Scotland

**Public Engagement Summary Report**





## Public Engagement Summary: Diffley Partnership

### Commercial Determinants of Health and Public Attitudes: A Deliberative Research Approach<sup>1</sup>

**NCD Alliance Scotland commissioned the Diffley Partnership to run a deliberative research project to provide an insight into public attitudes around the commercial determinants of health (CDoH). This research recognised that public perception of public health interventions is critical for Scotland adopting a commercial determinants of health approach to NCD prevention. Crucially, it looked to understand how a CDoH lens can change public attitudes to measures that are required for a healthy future for Scotland.**

Initially, a short national survey was issued to a representative sample of adults in Scotland in June 2023. This survey received 1,074 respondents who answered an initial series of qualitative questions about the role of industry in public health. A representative sample of 31 panellists from across Scotland were then selected to take part in five deliberative sessions.

These deliberative sessions included ongoing surveys of views to provide a measure of how attitudes changed after the presentation and discussion of evidence; discussion with independent experts who offered impartial evidence; and detailed deliberation among panel members.

The national survey and Session 1 gave good insight into pre-existing public opinion of NCDs and the CDoH. Before being exposed to evidence and education on industry action, survey responses attributed the highest responsibility for an individual's overall health to individuals themselves. There was consensus that industries should be held responsible for the harm caused by their products, but there was reluctance to involve them in the development of public health policy

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##### Reference 1

This sentiment began to change as soon as Session 2, 'Personal Choice vs Government Responsibility', where an expert presentation

evoked strong reactions from the panellists, who were surprised by the extent of industry influence. The evidence prompted a heightened call for industry acknowledgement of its responsibility, and case studies led to discussion of the ethical considerations of charity donations from an alcohol company.

Sessions 3 and 4, 'Industry Tactics' and 'Potential Interventions and Policies', underscored the need for a comprehensive approach to address the influence of industries on public health. During these sessions, there was a significant shift in perception regarding government role in addressing NCDs and moving towards a more hopeful, healthier future. As sessions progressed, panellists became more receptive to regulatory measures, especially if proven in specific contexts, highlighting the legislative potential of a joined-up approach across health-harming industries.

Overall, the deliberative process saw a significant shift in the views of the panellists. When asked to rate the responsibility of actors for an individual's overall health, scores for food and drink manufacturers and the Scottish Government rose from 5.5 and 6.7 to 8.8 and 8.5 respectively. Additionally, agreement that children were too exposed to health-harming products rose from 83% to 100% by the end of the sessions.

This research shows how discussion and communication around the role of the commercial determinants of health helps to evolve attitudes towards industry actors in the context of public health. The potential for public support for a CDoH approach is compelling, especially with a strong communications strategy that prioritises education and awareness of industry tactics and NCD harms.



## Public Engagement Summary: Children in Scotland

### Creating a Healthier Scotland for Everyone Workshop — Engagement with Children and Young People on Health-Harming Products and the Commercial Determinants of Health<sup>2</sup>

NCD Alliance Scotland commissioned Children in Scotland to engage with children and young people on the commercial determinants of health. The one-day workshop involved 14 children aged 8 to 17 from five local authorities. Interactive activities facilitated open discussions, allowing participants to explore evidence on the CDoH in discussion with experts. Some discussions took place within smaller groups which were made up of participants from a range of ages. Sessions aimed to understand their perceptions of the risks associated with health-harming products and identify support needed for healthy choices.

Participants' views evolved during the workshop as they received evidence and alternative perspectives to consider the CDoH. By the end, they felt that the government bore greater responsibility for an individual's health, more so than family or businesses. They clearly articulated that the burden of responsibility lay with the government as a regulator, not on businesses to self-regulate.

The marketing of health-harming products was a key concern of children and young people across alcohol and tobacco-related product areas. Participants favoured restrictions on the marketing of vapes, including a ban on 'sweet-shop flavours'; and all participants favoured an introduction of physical barriers in shops that sell alcohol to prevent children from seeing alcohol brands and products. Availability and price were more significant discussion points for high fat, salt, and sugar food and drinks; with participants articulating their right to be free from harm to health through a fast-food buffer zone around schools. There was a prevailing opinion that the higher cost of healthy foods discriminated against those on lower incomes.

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Reference 2

Participants in this workshop had a sound understanding of the role that industry plays in marketing health-harming products,

and generally supported interventions that restrict commercial influences. Participants commented that frequent exposure to health-harming products normalises them; associates them with leisure activities; and teaches children and young people that they are desirable.

It is important that the views of children and young people meaningfully inform policy and strategy development. Government policy should restrict marketing of health-harming products that children and young people see in their daily lives, as part of a combination of approaches to regulation that promote healthy choices. Children and young people in this workshop did not believe that a single policy intervention alone would be sufficient to address the impact of health-harming products, supporting the joined-up systems approach of the 10-year strategy.

## References

- 1 Diffley Partnership. (2024). Commercial Determinants of Health and Public Attitudes. Retrieved from <https://diffleypartnership.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/NCD-Deliberative-Research-Diffley-Report.pdf>
- 2 Children in Scotland. (2024). Creating a healthier Scotland for Everyone Workshop — Engagement with children and young people on health-harming products and the commercial determinants of health'. Retrieved from <https://www.bhf.org.uk/what-we-do/in-your-area/scotland/ncd-prevention-report>





## NCD ALLIANCE SCOTLAND

**NCD Alliance Scotland** is a coalition of 24 health organisations and charities campaigning for action to reduce the ill health and death driven by health-harming products (alcohol, tobacco and unhealthy food and drinks). Originally formed in 2020, the group has grown in recent years and has established itself as a key network to campaign for progress in prevention and reduction of non-communicable diseases.

More information can be found here:

[www.bhf.org.uk/what-we-do/in-your-area/scotland/ncd-prevention-report](http://www.bhf.org.uk/what-we-do/in-your-area/scotland/ncd-prevention-report)