

NCD Alliance Scotland

Scotland's Health:

Preventing Harm Through Action



NCD Alliance Scotland is calling for the Scottish Government to take the following legislative actions:



1. Restrict price and location promotions on high, fat, sugar and salt (HFSS) products.
2. Restrict the advertising of alcohol, HFSS products, and vaping and tobacco related products.
3. Introduce an alcohol harm prevention levy.
4. Create a mandatory requirement to provide health information (including drinking guidelines and health warnings), ingredient and nutrition information on alcohol labels.
5. Restrict the advertising and promotion of vaping products.
6. Make the tobacco control register conditional.
7. Introduce automatic uprating of the minimum unit price for alcohol.
8. Further restrict the display and promotion of alcohol in shops so it is only visible to those seeking to browse or purchase alcohol.

The case for action

Scotland has often led the way in improving public health. But progress has stalled. Bold legislative action, taken within this Parliament, could:

Save thousands of lives every year

In 2021, nearly 53,000 deaths were caused by non-communicable diseases (NCDs), 83% of all deaths.¹

Estimates by the British Heart Foundation suggest that around one in five of these deaths are directly related to alcohol, tobacco and overweight and obesity.²

These deaths are wholly preventable. By taking bold public health action now we can prevent thousands of deaths.

Reduce inequalities

The gap in healthy life expectancy is growing between the most and least deprived areas. The latest figures show the expected years of healthy life in the most deprived areas was 24 years shorter than in the least deprived areas.³ That means many of those in our poorest communities won't live to see their grandchildren grow up.

The negative effects of alcohol consumption, tobacco use and overweight and obesity are felt most in our most deprived areas and to help reduce the gap in our health we need to reduce the consumption of the health harming products that drive these inequalities.

Reduce the burden on our NHS

Ill-health and disability caused by tobacco, alcohol and overweight and obesity, is estimated to cost the Scottish economy between £5.6 and £9.3 billion every year.^{4,5,6}

They also are estimated to cost the NHS £1.6 billion every year.^{7,8,9} With the NHS under more pressure than ever, we must take action to reduce the impact of these health harming products on our health and on our NHS.

Improve the health of future generations

The environment we live in is shaping the future lives of our children. Exposure to marketing of alcohol, tobacco and unhealthy food and drink has been shown to lead to increased use of these products.

To meet the Scottish Government's targets of halving childhood obesity, creating a tobacco free generation by 2034, and reducing alcohol consumption and harm, we need to act now and protect the right of children to live a healthy life.

Make Scotland a leader in public health policy

Scotland has led the way with public health actions including the smoking ban and minimum unit pricing for alcohol. These measures have resulted in positive impacts to our health.

But to make Scotland a healthier place to live, we need to do more to tackle the factors that influence our use of health harming products.

Reverse the damage of Covid-19 on our lifestyles

The pandemic changed all of our lives, and evidence shows that it has negatively impacted many people's relationship with alcohol, tobacco and unhealthy food and drink.

Evidence has emerged that during the pandemic: many who drank heavily, drank more,¹⁰ progress in reducing smoking levels stalled,¹¹ and childhood obesity rose significantly.¹²

A crucial part of the Covid Recovery is not only regaining healthier habits from before the pandemic but going further to make Scotland even healthier.

Match the priorities of the Scottish people

Two thirds of Scotland's adults believe the Scottish Government should be doing more to improve public health.¹³

The people of Scotland want to see action to make their communities places where they can more easily live a healthier life.

To achieve this, we need to urgently tackle the influence of alcohol, tobacco and unhealthy food and drinks that are impacting the health of the nation.

The following organisations are supporting NCD Alliance Scotland's calls for action.



References used in this report can be found here:

www.bhf.org.uk/what-we-do/in-your-area/scotland/ncd-prevention-report