



Glasgow 2014 – Delivering a lasting legacy for Scotland

May 2008

Introduction

ASH Scotland welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Scottish Government's consultation *Glasgow 2014 – Delivery a lasting legacy for Scotland*. When Glasgow was awarded the 2014 Games in November 2007, ASH Scotland congratulated the city on its achievement, and expressed our hopes that this high profile sporting event would result in positive health outcomes for Glasgow and for Scotland as a whole.

ASH Scotland, being the leading voluntary organisation for tobacco control in Scotland, is especially concerned that the health inequalities surrounding smoking, and the wider health impacts of smoking as they affect Scotland, should be addressed by the 2014 Commonwealth Games. If the Games results in reduced health inequalities and lower national smoking rates, particularly among young people, this would be a legacy on which Scotland could justly pride itself.

Smoking has long been recognised as the biggest single preventable cause of ill-health and premature death in Scotland, accounting for almost 13,500 deaths every year.¹ We know that it is linked to diseases of the heart and blood vessels, the lungs, stomach, kidneys and other organs. As a result, smoking-related illnesses cost the NHS in Scotland an estimated £200 million each year.² The total costs to the wider Scottish economy have been estimated at £837 million per year.³ Among men in 2004, 40% of all cancer deaths and 91% of lung cancer deaths were attributable to smoking. For women, the figures were 29% and 88% respectively.⁴ For men and women aged between 35 and 69, 22 years of life were lost on average per death from smoking.⁵

Glasgow's hosting of the 2014 Commonwealth Games gives Scotland a fantastic opportunity to take positive steps to tackle the enormous negative health impacts caused by smoking. ASH Scotland calls for the following steps to be taken:

- The Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games being declared smoke-free
- A comprehensive ban on any tobacco product being sold, distributed, displayed, promoted or used at any of the Games' venues, accommodation or transport facilities
- Clear health messages about the benefits of smoking prevention and cessation being linked to the Games
- Increased cessation services being made available in the run up to the Games, capitalising on the healthy nature of this sporting event
- Increased youth participation in smoking prevention and cessation, again linked to the Games
- Games-related regeneration targeted at the most deprived communities in Glasgow, helping to lift them out of poverty and delivering improved health as a result.

Smoking and health inequalities

There are significant health inequalities within Scottish society, many of which are caused by smoking. There is in particular a very strong correlation between smoking rates and socio-economic deprivation: smoking rates among the most deprived decile of the population are almost four times higher than rates among the least deprived decile.⁶ The ratio is even greater among pregnant women from the most and least deprived sections of society: among the most deprived quintile, smoking rates are up to six times higher than among the least deprived quintile.⁷

Glasgow itself has some of the highest smoking rates within Scotland. Out of the ten Scottish parliamentary constituencies with the highest smoking rates, seven are located within Glasgow. With over 40% of adults smoking, Glasgow Shettleston is the constituency with the highest smoking rate in Scotland, with a smoking rate almost 13% above the national average. Glasgow Kelvin has the lowest smoking rate in the city, but even there rates are higher than the national average. Glasgow City is the Scottish local authority with the highest smoking rate – 34% of adults in the council area smoke, 7% above the Scottish average.⁸

Glasgow's high smoking rates are reflected in high death rates and lower life expectancy. Within the Greater Glasgow and Clyde Health Board, 34% of deaths in the 35-69 age group are attributable to smoking, 6% higher than across Scotland as a whole. Across all age groups, 29% of all deaths in the area can be attributed to smoking, 5% higher than Scotland.⁹

It is estimated that around half of the reduced life expectancy faced by poor communities is accounted for by tobacco use¹⁰, and that as a proportion of their total expenditure, the poorest households spend over five times more on tobacco than the richest.¹¹ A UK government inquiry into health inequalities found that in more than 70% of two-parent households on income support, parents smoked. In such households, around 15% of disposable income was spent on cigarettes. Children in smoking households on income support were found to be much more likely to lack basic amenities, including food, shoes and coats, than those in non-smoking households on income support.¹²

Glasgow's hosting of the 2014 Commonwealth Games provides an unprecedented opportunity for targeted regeneration across the city. Increased economic activity as a result of the games offers increased prosperity for the people of Glasgow, but while the potential exists for all to benefit, care must be taken to ensure that the benefits are enjoyed by those who need it most. Given the very strong correlation between smoking rates and socioeconomic background, anything that will reduce poverty and deprivation, particularly among Glasgow's most disadvantaged communities, is to be greatly welcomed.

It is known that economically inactive members of all socio-economic classes are more likely to smoke than those who are in work. Around 45% of unemployed routine and manual workers smoke, compared with around 35% of their employed counterparts.¹³ If the 2014 commonwealth games succeeds in providing permanent, high quality employment prospects across Glasgow, this will help in reducing the numbers of economically inactive workers, which in turn could contribute to lower smoking rates and improved health.

Youth smoking prevention

In 2006 it was reported that around 15% of 15 year olds classified themselves as regular smokers;¹⁴ a further 15,000 young people between the ages of 13 to 24 start smoking each year.¹⁵ **At an average rate of 41 each day, over the eleven days of the 2014 Commonwealth Games, Scotland will acquire over 450 new young smokers.**

The Scottish Government is shortly due to publish its Smoking Prevention Action Plan, the follow-up to *Towards a future without tobacco*, the report of the Ministerial Smoking Prevention Working Group. It is hoped that the opportunities presented by the forthcoming Commonwealth Games will be fully embraced in taking forward effective policies designed to reduce the uptake of smoking among children and young people. During the run-up to the Games, one way to promote smoking prevention and cessation among young people would

be to portray healthy images of successful, non-smoking international athletes, role models for a healthy generation of young Scots.

Other policies that the Scottish Government could link with the Games are measures to reduce the availability, visibility and affordability of tobacco products, as well as to develop effective health education messages. Positively linking these policies to the forthcoming Commonwealth Games will increase the profile of the Scottish Government's smoking prevention campaign, particularly among those most affected – Scotland's young people.

A smoke-free Commonwealth Games?

ASH Scotland is calling for the 2014 Commonwealth Games to be smoke-free. The 2006 Games hosted by Melbourne were the first to declare themselves smoke-free; smoking was not permitted in any of the Games' venues, nor in the athletes village, nor in any accommodation, training facilities or in any of the vehicles transporting athletes or officials. In addition to comprehensive restrictions on smoking, there was a ban on the sale, advertisement or promotion of any tobacco products within any of the Games' venues.¹⁶ The Games organisers and the State of Victoria (which introduced tobacco control legislation to coincide with the games) wished not only to protect athletes and visitors from the effects of second hand smoke, but also to send a strong message about the benefits of a smoke-free and healthy lifestyle to all those living in the State of Victoria. By declaring the 2014 Glasgow Commonwealth Games smoke-free, the organisers and the Scottish Government would send a similar message to the people of Scotland. While there is an existing tobacco advertising ban and a ban on smoking in enclosed public spaces, extending this to a ban on all tobacco displays, and to a ban on smoking in all public spaces – whether enclosed or not – would send a powerful message that the 2014 Commonwealth Games is determined to rise above the negative health impacts caused by tobacco. A fully smoke-free celebration of the Commonwealth Games would help to denormalise smoking by reducing the visibility and ubiquity of cigarettes and tobacco across a city with traditionally very high smoking rates.

Conclusion

ASH Scotland considers that the forthcoming Commonwealth Games provide the perfect opportunity for the Scottish Government to increase smoking cessation services and smoking prevention measures as part of a Scotland-wide sports related health campaign. As well as using the games as a means to communicate health messages to all Scots, the Government could harness the public enthusiasm generated by the games to inspire young people to take up sports and to take a more active interest in their own health and fitness.

Measures such as declaring the Games smoke-free, implementing a comprehensive ban on all tobacco products within the Games' venues, linking youth participation, smoking prevention and cessation to the Games, and using targeted regeneration linked with the Games to tackle issues of poverty and deprivation within Glasgow City – all these would ensure that the Scottish Government achieved the maximum potential health gains from the unprecedented opportunity that the 2014 Commonwealth Games offers.

This major international sporting event is likely to capture Scotland's imagination. If the Scottish Government can harness this imagination and link it to positive health messages in order to bring about a culture change in Scotland's health, that would be a lasting legacy of which we could all be proud.

Sources

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