

Glengarry Centre Service Users,
Glengarry Centre,
125 High Street,
Fort William PH33 6DG
01397 700574

12.4.05

Health Department,
Tobacco Control Division,
St. Andrews House,
Regent Road,
Edinburgh EH1 3DG

re. Scottish Executive consultation with regards proposed smoking legislation.

Dear Sir/Madam,

We, the undersigned, are a group of people with mental health problems who use the Glengarry Centre in Fort William, Inverness-shire. This is a drop-in centre offering social support to people who are experiencing mental health problems of any kind. Some of the people who use the centre have diagnoses of severe and enduring mental illnesses including schizophrenia, bipolar disorder and depression.

We are writing because of our concern about the proposed legislation regarding smoking in public places and about its possible impact on the centre if centre users were unable to smoke in the centre.

A larger percentage of people with mental health problems smoke than in the total population.

Some people with mental health problems use smoking to relieve stress.

While some people with mental health problems who smoke would wish to give up, few would regard it as a priority when they are experiencing their mental health problem.

The centre provides an environment for relaxing and activities. Some people would be unable to relax for a very long period without smoking. Therefore some

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people who benefit from the support of the centre would have their usage curtailed, or might even stop using the centre completely. This might lead to isolation and the deterioration of some peoples conditions.

We hope these views will be considered and an exemption considered for facilities supporting people, like ourselves, who smoke and have mental health problems.