Candidate 3 evidence

Title: How can Scotland reduce smoking rates?

To: Cabinet Secretary of health and social care

From:

Date: 27/03/2026

Decision: Increase funding for NHS stop smoking services

Introduction

My name is and I am researching the issue of smoking in Scotland. Smoking is still a major public health issue and cause serious health problems such as lung cancer, heart disease and breathing problems. Around 14% of adults in Scotland smoke, and in 2022 there were about 8,942 deaths linked to smoking. 1 in 5 deaths are linked to smoking in Scotland. There are on average 88,779 smoking related hospital admissions every year, which places significant pressure on the NHS, this costs the NHS millions of pounds every year. Smoking is also linked to inequality as 26% of people smoke in the most deprived areas compared with 6% in the least deprived areas. All of this shows that it should be the Scottish Governments priority to reduce smoking rates.

Option 1- Increase tax on cigarettes

One way to reduce smoking is by increasing taxes on cigarettes, higher prices can discourage people particularly teenagers from starting smoking as cigarettes would become less affordable.

In source 1 it shows that increasing tobacco taxes can reduce smoking rates. This shows that raising prices could reduce the number of people that start smoking especially those with less disposable income.

Cigarette prises have also been slowly going up and now cost roughly about £14 a pack in the UK. As a result, some smokers may decide to quit because they can no longer afford it . This may lead to a reduction in smoking rates over time.

However this option has some downsides , as it may unfairly affect people on low income , as they could just continue to smoke but would have to spend more money on cigarettes. This could increase financial pressure without actually reducing smoking, and could lead to an increase in illegal cigarette sales so would reduce how good this policy is.

Option 2- Increase funding for NHS stop smoking services.

Another option is to increase funding for NHS stop smoking services. These services are normally advertised through doctors, pharmacies and public health campaigns. These services are available to anyone who wants to quit smoking but are particularly targeted

at people who want to quit but live in deprived areas where smoking rates are higher. The services that are offered are advice and nicotine replacement therapy and also someone to talk to.

Source 2 states that people are more likely to quit when they receive professional medical help. Which is why this would be the best option because this would directly help people quit because it directly helps with the nicotine addiction which is the reason so many people struggle to quit smoking. Although this could be a helpful policy the Scottish Government would have to increase funding for it, which may be difficult due to the tight budgets.

Option 3-Reduce more smoke free public areas

A third option would be to have more public spaces where smoking is banned. Places such as parks and outside public buildings.

In Scotland in 2016, it was banned for anyone to smoke in their car if it had a child in it and it significantly reduced the amount of second-hand smoke children were getting exposed too. This shows that a similar policy could have success and help reduce the amount of smoke people are breathing in. But many people feel this would take away their freedom and it would be hard to enforce though so may not actually work in practice.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I think option 2- increasing funding for the NHS would be the most effective option in reducing smoking rates in Scotland, as option 1 increasing tax on cigarettes may unfairly disadvantage those on low incomes and option 3 ban smoking in more public places because that would be hard to enforce and make sure it was being followed. Source 2 also states that smoking is easier to quit with professional support so that is another reason I think increasing funding for the NHS stop smoking services is best to reduce smoking rates in Scotland.

Modern studies resource shee

Topic: Smoking in Scotland

Source 1: Cancer research UK- https://www.cancerresearchuk.org

Source 2:NHS Inform- https://www.nhsinform.scot

Source 3: ASH Scotland- https://ashscotland.org.uk

Source 4: Economics Help- https://www.economicshelp.org