

Smokefree Success Stories: Spotlight on smokefree countries



Scotland

Scotland led the way in the United Kingdom when it decided to go 100% smokefree from Spring 2006.

Smokefree status	100% smokefree
Smokefree since	March 2006 (Scotland) April 2007 (Wales & Northern Ireland) July 2007 (England)
People protected	60.8 million

On 26 March 2006, the Smoking, Health and Social Care (Scotland) Act 2005 to ban smoking in substantially enclosed public places was implemented with the aim of protecting non-smokers from the health effects of secondhand smoke.¹

Background

Scotland had the highest smoking rates of any part of the UK – about 28% of all adults smoke.² Before the smokefree law was passed, the health risks of secondhand smoke were impossible to avoid in many communities. One estimate indicates secondhand smoke exposure is responsible for between 1500 and 2000 non-smokers' deaths per year in Scotland.³

Faced with medical evidence on the dangers of secondhand smoke and the realities of Scotland's smoking culture, members of the Scottish Parliament took action and considered 100% smokefree legislation. Campaigning groups, health charities, professional associations, and unions joined forces to support them.

Finally, Scottish Government Ministers announced a public consultation process on going smokefree. They were flooded with responses – nearly 54,000 of them – representing the views of more than 1% of the adult population. Eight in every ten favored a smokefree law.

Ministers visited Dublin to look at Ireland's experiences. Then they announced plans to adopt a similar law in Scotland. This was new territory. While most other European countries had at least some legal restrictions on smoking in public places, Scotland had no regulations at all.

As the media grappled with the evidence being presented and the tobacco industry's spin, public support for the new law increased. By the time the law was introduced, a poll showed that 79% of Scots supported it. Meanwhile, the press lost its initial skepticism and hailed the new law as a major step forward for Scotland.

The Scottish smokefree legislation is, above everything else, about health. People are no longer exposed to secondhand smoke in public or at work. All of Scotland's enclosed public places – from pubs and bars to railway stations – are now smokefree. The law covers even private members' clubs. All public places that are more than half enclosed are also included. There are

a few exemptions – places like prisons, hospices, and long-stay psychiatric facilities – but for the most part, Scotland’s smoke-filled rooms are now history.

The new law was the subject of intense public debate and discussion. The instantly recognizable “no smoking” symbol is everywhere. “No Smoking” signs are now mandatory in all public places, and must include the name of an employee to whom people can complain if the law is being ignored.

Preliminary results from post-implementation studies indicate that the law has been a success:

- Between March and May 2006, enforcing authorities found that over 99.4% of premises were smoke-free during more than 3,900 inspections across Scotland, suggesting that compliance with the legislation is high throughout the community.⁴ Nationwide, only three businesses and three individual smokers were fined for breaking the law.
- In an opinion poll conducted by Cancer Research UK six months after the introduction of the legislation, an overwhelming 92 percent of Scottish bar staff said their workplaces are healthier since the smoking ban came into effect.⁵ In the same Cancer Research UK survey, more than 75% of those surveyed believe that the legislation will benefit their health in the long term.
- In a public opinion poll of 18-24 year olds conducted on 14 March 2006, right after the ban came into effect, 84% of those surveyed thought that ‘a smoke-free Scotland is something to be proud of’ compared with 79% of adults surveyed overall.⁶

The positive effects of the legislation on public health have also been seen within the first few months of its passage:

- Post-implementation studies showed a 17% reduction in heart attack admittances to 9 major Scottish hospitals, and an average reduction of 3% per year in Scottish heart attack admissions in the 10 years leading up to the ban.⁷
- One study comparing air quality pre- and post-implementation found an 86% improvement in air quality in bars, and a 39% reduction in secondhand smoke exposure in non-smoking adults and children.⁸
- The legislation seems to be supporting smokers to quit – stop smoking services in one part of Scotland saw a fourfold increase in demand in the three months before the law was implemented.⁹

Early signs are that Scotland’s law is going well. The largest ever study comparing air quality before and after smokefree legislation found an 86% reduction in exposure to secondhand smoke.¹⁰ In addition, bar workers suffer fewer respiratory symptoms,¹¹ and more than nine out of ten Scottish bar staff say their workplaces are healthier because of the law.¹²

¹ The Smoking, Health and Social Care (Scotland) Act 2005, Part I. Edinburgh: The Stationary Office, 2005.

² Global Smokefree Partnership. Smokefree in Action: Success Stories – Scotland. Tanith Muller. Available at: <http://www.globalsmokefreepartnership.org/evidence.php?id=16>. Accessed 10.31.07

³ Hole D. *Passive smoking and associated causes of death in adults in Scotland*. A report for the Scottish Executive 2004. <http://hebs.com/researchcentre/pdf/MortalityStudy.pdf>

⁴ Scottish Executive News. Smoking ban gets seal of public approval.

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/News/Releases/2006/06/26080617>. Accessed 10.30.07

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- ⁵ Cancer Research UK (2006). Scottish bars healthier since the smoking ban – Press release. Available online at: <http://info.cancerresearchuk.org/news/pressreleases/2006/september/215495>. Accessed 10.30.07
- ⁶ Cancer Research UK (2006). Young scots ‘most proud’ to be smoke-free as iconic image unveiled – Press Release. Available online at: <http://info.cancerresearchuk.org/news/archive/pressreleases/2006/march/126616>. Accessed 10.30.07
- ⁷ Sally Haw. Scotland's Smokefree Legislation: Results from a comprehensive evaluation. Presentation given at the “Towards a Smokefree Society Conference”, Edinburgh Scotland, 10 – 11 September 2007. Available at: <http://www.smokefreeconference07.com/programme.php>. Accessed 10.30.07
- ⁸ Semple S, Creely KS, Naji A et al (2007). Secondhand smoke levels in Scottish pubs: the effect of smoke-free legislation. *Tobacco Control* 16:127-132.
- ⁹ Bauld, L (2006). *Lessons from smoke-free Scotland...particularly for stop smoking services*. Presentation to Smoking Cessation Services Research Network. Available from http://www.scsrn.org/policy_guidance/smoke_free_scotland.swf. Accessed 10.30.07
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*
- ¹¹ Menzies D, Nair A, Williamson PA, et al (2006). Respiratory Systems, Pulmonary Function, and Markers of Inflammation Among Bar Workers Before and After a Legislative Ban on Smoking in Public Places. *JAMA*. 296(14) 1742-48.
- ¹² Cancer Research UK (2006). Scottish bars healthier since the smoking ban – Press release. Available online at: <http://info.cancerresearchuk.org/news/pressreleases/2006/september/215495>. Accessed 10.30.07