

STCA Membership Representative Guide



This guide contains information useful for informing colleagues about the work of the STCA and provides an outline of how Topic Groups and Working Groups Operate. It also outlines how the membership can generate activity and contribute to early policy development in tobacco control and public health.

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[The STCA Website](http://www.ashscotland.org.uk/ash/3357.6.73.html)
<http://www.ashscotland.org.uk/ash/3357.6.73.html>

The STCA Member's Area of the website.

[ASH Scotland Information Service](http://www.ashscotland.org.uk/ash/3802.7.html)
<http://www.ashscotland.org.uk/ash/3802.7.html>

Contact David to discuss ideas for future STCA events, to organise a policy debate or submit articles or advertise events in the STCA Bulletin.

Contact Jennifer to register for meetings and events, join an STCA Topic Group or source specifically STCA related publications.

For information relating to forthcoming meetings, Topic and Working Groups.

For access to meeting agendas and notes and to set up an on-line discussion.

The website has links to all the most relevant sources of information relating to tobacco control, health promotion and cessation. Information Service staff are there to help:

enquiries@ashscotland.org.uk
or phone 0131 225 4725

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What is the STCA?

The STCA is an alliance of diverse organisations with a common interest in increasing the knowledge base of organisations with a tobacco control involvement in Scotland and acts as a conduit for information exchange between different sectors.

It also has the role of enabling all those involved in helping to reduce the harm caused by tobacco in Scotland to inform and influence policy development and implementation, at both a national and regional level.

The STCA is funded by the Scottish Executive and managed through ASH Scotland.

Who can join?

Organisations may join and appoint a member of their organisation to represent them. Organisations eligible for membership include:

- agencies, organisations, local alliances, umbrella groups, academic institutions and community projects with an interest in tobacco control and health promotion
- any constituted group working with those vulnerable to tobacco

Individuals connected to organisations described above may register their support for the aims of the STCA by becoming a Tobacco Control Advocate.

Private sector organisations and individuals and organisations not operating in Scotland may register as Associate Members.

Only member organisations can exercise a vote on operational matters and all supporters are required to declare that they do not have connections, affiliations or holdings with the tobacco industry or its representatives.

How did the STCA start?

In 2000, ASH Scotland undertook a consultation designed to explore the need for an alliance and the role(s) that it might hold. The consultation was carried out using a range of techniques based on participatory appraisal theory. Following the consultation the desired roles for the Scottish Tobacco Control Alliance (STCA) were identified. Every three years the membership is consulted on a strategic plan implemented and evaluated by the STCA Coordinator working

closely with ASH Scotland. The STCA now has a wide membership, with a participative role in the direction and operation of the alliance.

Who are the Members?

Membership is drawn from the whole range of organisations and bodies that have a tobacco involvement in Scotland. Membership is thus drawn from education, health promotion, public health, research, enforcement agencies, royal institutions, charities and trades unions.

Depending on the particular topic of an STCA meeting different levels of representation may be required. For example, different personnel would be required for the discussion of cessation practice compared with those who would be needed to develop an initiative relating to smuggling and counterfeit sales of tobacco.

The STCA began with very active member organisations drawn mainly from health promotion and smoking cessation but now involves those with a role to play in research, school education, enforcement and social care. The strength of STCA activity is in the extent to which connections are forged between this diverse membership.

The Coordinator

ASH Scotland provides a member of staff whose sole responsibility is to co-ordinate the work of the STCA and to help develop local tobacco control alliances across Scotland.

The STCA Coordinating Group

The role of the Coordinating Group is to represent the views, concerns and priorities of the wider STCA membership to contribute to the development of a strategy for the STCA and to evaluate implementation of the plan on a yearly basis.

The Coordinating Group is comprised of 8 to 10 members elected bi-annually at the AGM, the Chief Executive of ASH Scotland and the STCA Coordinator. Elected Chairs from the various STCA Groups are also eligible to attend Cogroup

*Member Representatives (Mreps) should always remain aware that they represent their **organisation** and are not individual members of the Alliance.*

Sharing the work of their organisation and feeding back to line-managers and colleagues is vital part of a Mreps role.

meetings and additional members may be co-opted in order to better represent the spread of tobacco control concerns in Scotland. The Chair of the Coordinating Group is elected from within the Group in order that the Coordinating Group has ownership of this role.

In order to address concerns that the Group might become overly Central Belt focused, 2 places are reserved for those who work directly with, or represent, localities that can be described as rural or island based. Election to the Group is by a transferable vote system undertaken in accordance with Electoral Reform Society guidelines.

The Group meets quarterly with an agenda driven by submissions to the Chair and Coordinator from requests channelled from Member Representatives and other STCA groups. Contributions by relevant bodies from out with the STCA are often sought in order to inform the Group's decision-making.

Minutes of meetings are available to all STCA registered supporters and comments and contributions welcomed.

Working with the STCA

Why do organisations get involved?

The STCA is a democratic, pro-active, participatory body and encourages active engagement of its members. Participants may represent their organisations, sharing information on an ongoing basis with colleagues, or, be motivated by a personal desire to improve Scotland's response to the tobacco epidemic. There is a very genuine consensus of shared values and goals held by STCA Member Representatives and Advocates which manifests itself in very productive and worthwhile meetings. The commitment and professionalism displayed translates into valuable experiences for those involved.

Member organisations and individual advocates have access to the weekly STCA Bulletin, seminars, conferences, and other opportunities for information exchange. Membership and participation in STCA activity is supported by the Scottish Executive.

Trust and Ownership

The STCA is a virtual organisation. It does not have a constitution although the founding document does lay out the agreement reached by the founding members on the aims of the alliance and the participative and democratic mode

by which it conducts activity. Any changes in the way the alliance operates has come about following measured and substantial consultation and overseen by the elected Coordinating Group.

In order that a diverse membership covering statutory and non-statutory organisations may be harmoniously accommodated and to facilitate full engagement by all member representatives, the STCA does not campaign or lobby on tobacco related issues. This allows the alliance to concentrate on policy discussion to record ideas and respond to consultation.

ASH Scotland and the Scottish Coalition on Tobacco do have a lobbying role in respect of tobacco control and the STCA has communication links to these bodies in order to represent its network.

Playing a part in STCA information gathering

The most important feature of the STCA is its capacity to collect, collate, interpret, disseminate and share information. The STCA relies on members from a variety of backgrounds in health, education, research, management and policy formulation to filter information, share it within the Alliance and make a contribution to assessing its importance to our work across the spectrum of tobacco control issues.

STCA Mreps and Advocates can contribute to STCA activity by presenting the work of their organisation at STCA meetings or sharing the information through the STCA Bulletin. Mreps or colleagues may also be asked to represent the STCA on policy formulating bodies or other groups.

Currently STCA representation is present on the Ministerial Advisory Group on Tobacco, the PATH Advisory Group and the Scottish NSD Steering Group. Mreps feed information back to the Coordinating Group and when appropriate Topic Groups such as the TCIG.

The STCA Tracker

The tracker is a clever innovation of the Coordinating Group. It is designed to provide a running record of STCA activity with the aim of encouraging participation in event planning, contributions of ideas and offers of material support from member organisations as well as keeping the membership informed of progress on projects they might be interested in.

The STCA Strategic Plan provides a framework for activity but does not dictate what that activity should be; the membership supplies the ideas. Ideas for events or policy focus seminars are put forward by the membership at the annual

meeting, through Topic Group meetings, arise from SLWG activity and are channelled through the Cogroup.

If the Cogroup finds merit in a suggestion it is highlighted on the tracker in blue and is under discussion. The sponsoring or interested member organisations are listed and through the STCA Bulletin and further discussion in different STCA fora the idea gains support – or not. If the project gains sufficient momentum as to become an active plan it is posted as green on the tracker and once it is finally scheduled gains pink status.

Not every tracker idea becomes reality. Sometimes the timing is not right, or, the goal is met in a different way, or resources may be committed to priority ventures. Success of a proposal comes about in a variety of ways;

- Principally ASH Scotland is very supportive of any proposals that are in keeping with the STCA Strategic Plan and the close working relationship with the Coordinating Group through the CEO and Alliance Coordinator invariably gives STCA proposals a good prospect.
- Member Representatives push for action through discussion and debate and by their commitment and enthusiasm to take part in event planning or early policy development. The alliance is a virtual organisation with limited resources and success depends on member organisations encouraging and releasing staff to contribute to activity which in the end benefits the whole tobacco control and health promotion community.
- Organisations such as NHS Health Scotland, the UKPHA, Universities, Local Government and Health Boards pledge additional material support and this makes a huge contribution to extending and enhancing STCA activity.

[The latest STCA Activity Tracker can be found on the website](http://www.ashscotland.org.uk/ash/4046.6.361.html)

<http://www.ashscotland.org.uk/ash/4046.6.361.html>

Staying informed

The STCA Bulletin

The weekly news bulletin is based on the ASH Scotland Bulletin released every Friday by the ASH Scotland Information Service. The Bulletin is emailed as a word document to around 120 member representatives and a further 120 individuals who have requested the Bulletin directly as staff members of an affiliated organisation, or, interested colleagues from elsewhere in the UK.

The STCA Coordinator adds an introduction highlighting an aspect of STCA activity and draws attention to several items within the Bulletin which busy Mreps

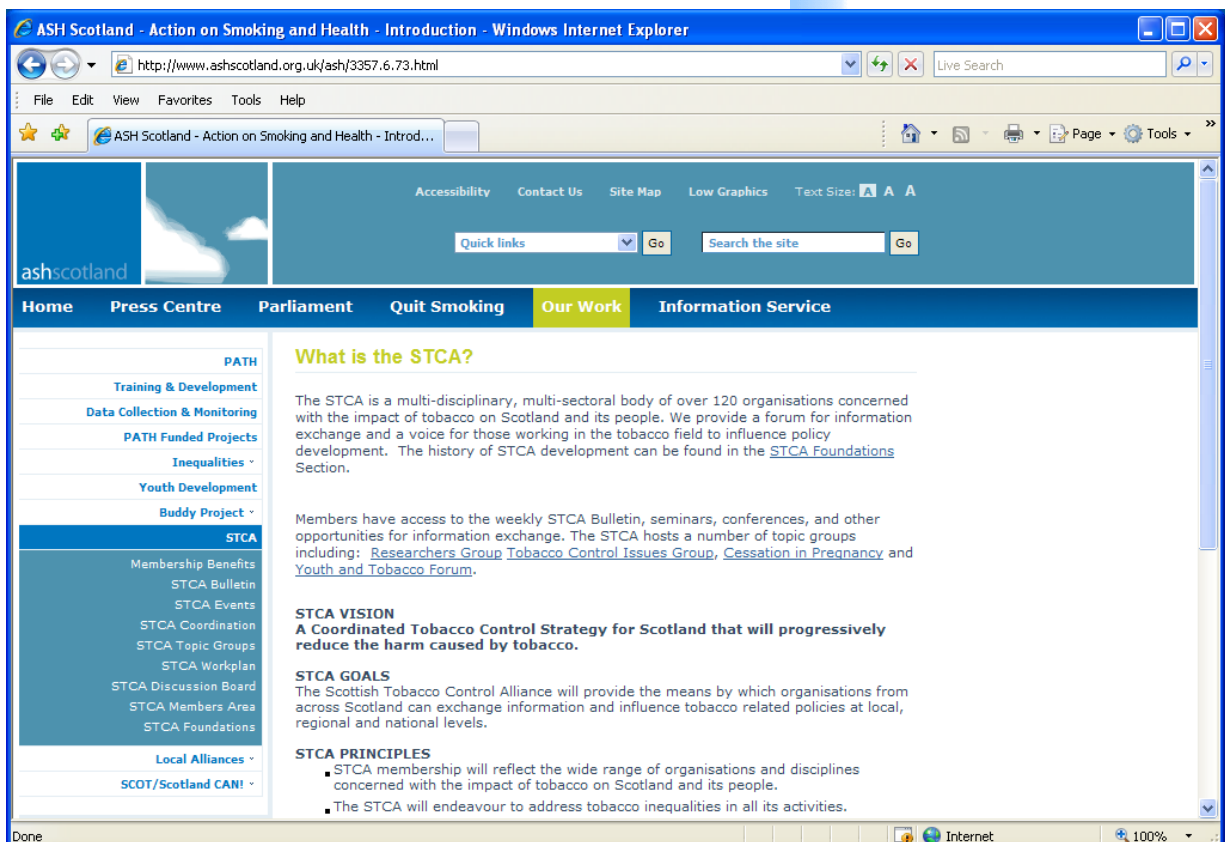
may find interesting. There is a calendar of important dates, a notice board for STCA activity, member updates, conferences and other professional development opportunities. In addition the Information Service records links to weekly tobacco related news stories, a comprehensive research trawl and a summary of parliamentary business from Holyrood, Westminster and Strasbourg.

Any organisation may seek to place information of relevance to tobacco control in the Bulletin although commercial items in relation to, for example, NRT or freelance work will not be published.

The Website

The STCA Website is integrated in the ASH Scotland Website and contains information about coming events, descriptions of Topic Groups and reports from STCA conferences and meetings.

There is a member's area that may be accessed with a user name and password and anyone from an affiliated organisation may apply for user rights. The member's area contains records of previous group meetings and draft agendas and there is a facility to enable members to debate issues on-line.



Management and organisation

The role of ASH Scotland

The STCA is managed by ASH Scotland. The responsibility for the execution of much of the STCA's strategic plan lies with ASH Scotland staff. The STCA's funding is part of ASH Scotland's core budget and alliance building is an important part of ASH Scotland's own Strategic Plan.

The Chief Executive Officer has a key role to play in the management of the STCA, ensuring that the activities of ASH Scotland and the STCA are complimentary and supportive, overseeing STCA activities from a national perspective, providing guidance on management, direction and evaluation of STCA activities.

The STCA Coordinator is the ASH Scotland Alliances Manager, with responsibilities for other Alliance work carried out by ASH Scotland. The Alliance Coordinator's principal role is to interpret the STCA Strategic Plan, translating it into events and facilitating early policy development, disseminating relevant information and digests of policy and research, communicating with alliance members; sharing achievements, action and intelligence.

ASH Scotland provides administrative support to the STCA through the Alliances Administrator who distributes information and passes enquiries from Alliance Member Representatives to ASH Scotland staff, provides secretarial support, helps project manage events and services the website.

STCA operational machinery

The Strategic Plan is implemented by the Alliance Coordinator in partnership with the Coordinating Group with over-view by the CEO of ASH Scotland.

Coordinating Group meetings are principally concerned with monitoring and evaluating the progress of the STCA Strategic Plan.

The Strategic Plan is the guideline to which all STCA Groups and the STCA Coordinator must work.

The STCA Annual Meeting, STCA Working Groups and other special consultative meetings submit recommendations to the Coordinating Group through the Chair and STCA Coordinator.

The Coordinating Group is tasked with converting those recommendations into a draft plan that can be presented to the whole membership for comment and approval.

The Coordinating Group is required to present a Plan to the wider membership that represents a consensus.

Ideas for activities generated by the Cogroup and which enjoy unanimous support may be referred to other groups for inclusion in their programme of activities.

Ideas for Strategic Plan activities generated by STCA Working Groups and which enjoy a consensus of support may be referred to the Cogroup for endorsement. The Cogroup consider the suggestions in the context of the Strategic Plan and the resources available.

Ongoing review of work between annual planning sessions is carried out by the Coordinating Group in partnership with ASH Scotland's CEO.

At various points the activity of the STCA will be evaluated by ASH Scotland as part of that organisation's own operational plan. On occasion, extra funding may be sought to conduct an evaluation of the Alliance by an external body.

Time and work commitment of Coordinating Group members

- STCA Cogroup members endeavour to attend 4 to 6, 2.5 hr group meetings per year.
- Take an active interest in the work of other STCA Working Groups.
- Are prepared to make themselves available for occasional representative duties associated with the STCA Work Plan.
- STCA Cogroup members ensure that their employer is in support of his/her involvement and is kept informed of STCA plans and activities.

Remit for the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Coordinating Group of the STCA

Attendance at meetings and Chairmanship

- Ideally, either the Chair or Vice-Chair would be available to attend the meetings of the STCA Coordinating Group and will chair the proceedings.
- The focus of Chairmanship will be on those parts of the meeting where debate, discussion or information gathering were timetabled.
- In the absence of both Chair and Vice-Chair, another Member Representative will be invited to chair the meeting, or the Coordinator may officiate.
- The Alliances Administrator or the Coordinator will record meeting notes.

The Chair and Vice-Chair liaise with the Coordinator in respect of meeting agendas, events or consultations relevant to STCA Coordinating Group interests.

The Chair and or Vice-Chair attend STCA Coordinating Group meetings regularly, chair meetings, advise on agenda items, liaise with the STCA Coordinator and ASH Scotland CEO (or proxy), act as a sounding board for the groups membership and represent the STCA at tobacco control events.

Election of Chair

The Chair and Vice-Chair are elected to office for a maximum period of two years. All members of the STCA Coordinating Group are eligible to vote. The Coordinator is exempt from voting unless a casting vote is required.

Election of office bearers normally follows the annual election of Cogroup members. Group members may nominate themselves or a colleague as candidates for Chair or Vice-Chair. If several members indicate a willingness to stand, a ballot for Chair and/or Vice Chair is conducted amongst the group members.

If only one nomination is made the group endorses the candidate as office bearer at the next meeting of the Group. When required there is an election to the office of Vice-Chair. Voting is by email to the Alliances Administrator.

In the event of a tie between candidates, the Coordinator makes a casting vote.

STCA Topic Groups

STCA groups have been formed in order to focus Alliance discussion and activity on specific areas of interest. As the Alliance has grown, groups have evolved from initial meetings and seminars. The advantage of registering as a group member is that you learn about group meetings directly, before the information appears in the Bulletin, you have priority where places are restricted and you are consulted on agendas and meeting notes directly.

If you filled in a registration form you may have indicated which groups you wish to be associated with. If you subsequently decide to join a group you may do so in two ways; registering with Alliances Administrator [Jennifer Black](#) or attending a meeting and requesting registration to the group.

Anyone from an STCA affiliated organisation may join these Topic Groups. Interested individuals working in the field of tobacco control, research and health promotion are welcome by recommendation.

STCA Topic Groups have a Chair and Vice-Chair endorsed or elected from within the group membership. Members are encouraged to communicate directly with their group Chair in regard to group activity and future priorities. Contact details are supplied through the website.

The Tobacco Control Issues Group

TCI Group is aimed at those for whom all or a significant part of their remit includes tobacco related work in the fields of prevention, awareness raising, education, training, cessation service coordination and policy development.

The TCI Group intends to focus on the development of a holistic approach to tobacco control involving health, education and enforcement. Meetings generally include a presentation or information exchange opportunity.

Research Group

Professionals with an interest in both research into tobacco related issues and the policy environment surrounding research development are encouraged to network through this Group.

The Research Group is a useful forum for exchange between researchers and those who commission research and topics covered include evaluation of

cessation services and health promotion initiatives as well as the latest advances resulting from social, economic and medical research.

Cessation-promotion Healthcare Group

This Group is composed of representatives from cessation services and specialist projects that specialise in providing a service to pregnant women and their families. Such specialisation has been found to be useful in addressing the particular needs and concerns of pregnant and nursing mothers and the Group aims to provide a forum for the exchange of information and good practice and to monitor policy development in relation to this key cessation target group.

The Youth and Tobacco Forum

This Topic Group allows those involved in research and policy development, enforcement, youth and community work, health education, smoking cessation and paediatric medicine to network and exchange information specific to young people.

The Youth Forum is coordinated by the ASH Scotland Youth Development Officer.

Events Groups and Short-life Working Groups (SLWGs)

SLWG's are often formed to focus on particular events or areas of concern within the membership. The Youth Forum began as a focus group for youth and tobacco issues and became a Topic Group as did the Cessation in Pregnancy Group. Currently there are several such groups which meet irregularly:

- The Tobacco and Cannabis Working Group began as a conference planning group and continues to meet to review progress on some of the issues raised by the Fags and Hash Conference 2005.
- The Cessation in Secondary Care Working Group remains as a virtual list following it's work on a Secondary Care Cessation Conference in 2006.
- The Smoking and Mental Health Working Group is a collaboration with the ASH Scotland Inequalities Project and is coordinated by the Development Officer for that project.

You do not need to be an STCA Mrep or Advocate to join a group; you need only be part of an affiliated organisation or have the recommendation of a colleague STCA supporter.

Maintaining appropriate levels of contact

All Member Representatives and STCA Advocates agree to share contact details with other members when completing the membership application. If an STCA supporter wishes to contact another member, details can be accessed through the STCA Administrator.

Normally additional permission is sought before contact information is made available in summary tables or on the website or may be a condition of Topic Group membership.

Caution is exercised with the supply of contact details; providing access to collated lists can lead to an increase in unwanted email traffic. Access to the contact details of some groups such as the Youth Forum and Coordinating Group is available through the password protected members' area of the website.

In recognition that a member interest in STCA activity may form only a small part of their work communications are channelled through the STCA Bulletin and Topic Group lists. The provision of a facility to email selected groups of STCA members may be granted in appropriate circumstances; communications relayed from NHS Health Scotland or the Scottish Government for example.

Email rings and discussion fora may be in operation for various tasks at any given time, but these must be opted into and are never unsolicited.

The ASH Scotland Local Alliances Project

The Local Alliance Project is managed by the ASH Scotland Alliances Manager (the STCA Coordinator) and grew out of the original founding aspirations for the STCA. Consequently the STCA strategic plan identifies ways in which it may support local alliance development and local alliance work coordinates well with STCA activity.

As one would expect many STCA supporters are active in their local alliances and this brings synergy as well as referrals for new membership.

The aims of the current local alliances project are:

- To support local agencies in every region of Scotland to work together to meet national tobacco control targets and strategies through effective communication, information and hands-on support.
- To support the development, reach and depth of local alliances so that they effectively engage the health sector, local authorities and voluntary organisations in each Health Board area.
- To continue to support local alliances to share information and good practice, through high quality information and events which reach growing audiences.
- To continue to develop effective links with relevant networks to ensure the project adds value to tobacco control activity and wider health promotion work at every stage.

The Local Alliances Officer reports regularly to STCA Topic Groups and to the STCA Coordinating Group and maintains the local alliances section of the ASH Scotland website which is a growing body of advice and links for those involved in local tobacco control development.