Knitting the way to tobacco-free generation

‘Jenny and the bear’ is a story aimed at young children to highlight the dangers of second-hand smoke. It has proved to be very popular with both children, carers and education staff.

Building on early successes of this initiative supporters of Scotland's Charter for a Tobacco-free Generation, have been working as part of an intergenerational project, supporting a local knitting group to make Jenny and the Bear hand puppets as part of the development of a second hand smoke resource suitable for use in nurseries and early year settings.

North Lanarkshire Carers Together, the host organisation for the Motherwell Consortium for Health & Social Care Integration is working collaboratively with the Early Years Consortium, NHS Lanarkshire's Smoking Prevention Team and Ailsa Family Learning Centre. The aim of the consortium is to help facilitate new developments at a local level that can improve the health and wellbeing of local people including unpaid carers.
The partnership looked at ways of engaging local people to share the message of the **dangers of second hand smoke.** They involved a local knitting group who have knitted puppets that are used to deliver *Jenny and the Bear* sessions within the family centre.

**The puppets are used to tell the story of the impact of second hand smoke at an age appropriate level.**

The puppets have been knitted to support a **home-link resource** for use in early years settings. It complements the existing Smoke in Your Eyes & Jenny & The Bear educational materials that are currently being used in Lanarkshire schools.

The idea is that this new resource will be used by nurseries and at home with parents to gently convey key messages whilst learning about the **harmful effects of second-hand smoke.** It's hoped the resource will encourage parents and carers to become **tobacco-free role models**—whether they smoke or not—and make their homes and cars smoke free.

If this approach proves effective it may be rolled out across Lanarkshire. The resource was incorporated into a **wider 6 week health programme** including healthy eating, mindfulness and physical activity.

*“The pilot is still ongoing but already we’re seeing some positive outcomes which include:*

- **5 unpaid carers within the nursery (both parents and staff) have been identified and signposted to stop-smoking support**
- **5 people have signed up to a stop smoking group which has been established within the nursery and meets weekly**
- **5 people have been referred to North Lanarkshire Leisure Active Health Programme**

*The programme will be evaluated to look at how successful it has been in helping local people access NHS stop smoking services or changing their smoking behaviours by taking their smoking right outside.”*

**Marc Howard, Project Worker**