



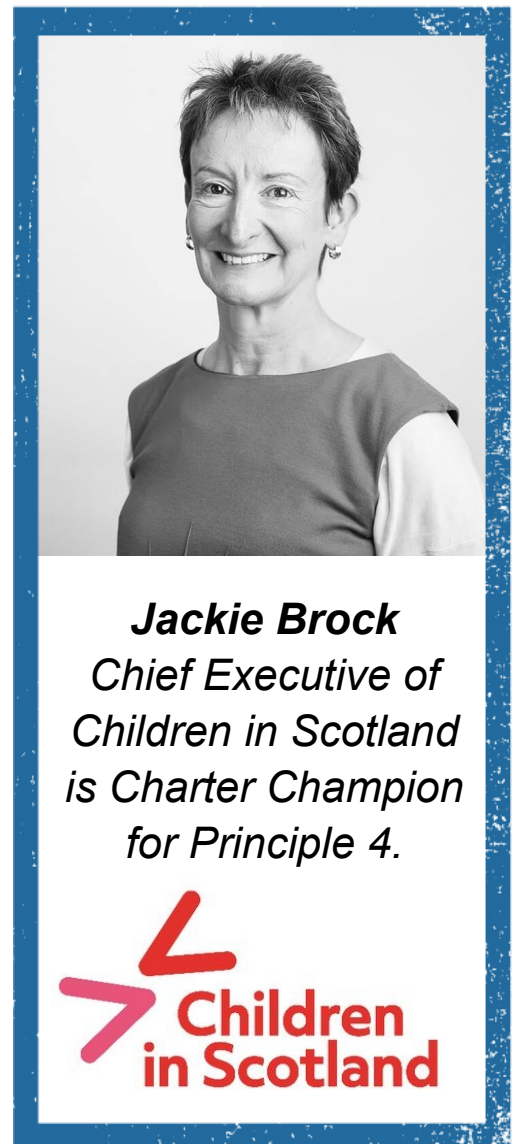
Towards a tobacco-free generation through effective education

Children in Scotland was one of the founding signatories of [Scotland's Charter for a Tobacco-free Generation](#) back in 2015, so when I was approached earlier this year and asked to personally Champion Principle 4, it was an easy decision.

Most adult smokers started when they were children, two-thirds of smokers start before they are 18 and almost nobody starts to smoke after the age of 25. Taking up smoking has the ability to radically alter the life outcomes of thousands of children and young people in Scotland every year.

So how can we deliver on the Scottish Government commitment for the next generation to grow up tobacco-free?

Restricting young people's ability to access tobacco and reducing the attractiveness of the product itself is an essential part of the parcel. My fellow [Charter Champions](#) have highlighted how we can go about this. Significant progress has been made in changing attitudes and behaviour towards smoking in recent years, but on average 36 children take up smoking every day in Scotland and that's still far too many...



Jackie Brock
*Chief Executive of
Children in Scotland
is Charter Champion
for Principle 4.*

The good news is that Children in Scotland and our member organisations are working with communities, parents and children day-in-day-out, using our influence to effect cultural change and promote the powerful fact that smoking is now a minority activity. Together we can equip our young people with the knowledge and confidence to remain tobacco-free.

Curriculum for Excellence and Getting it Right for Every Child make it clear that schools, early years and youth work providers have a vital role to play, nurturing and supporting young people as they make the transition into adulthood, affording an obvious link to Charter Principle 4.



Every child has the right to effective education that equips them to make positive informed choices on tobacco and health

We know that providing young people with knowledge of the harmful effects of smoking will help to shape, inform and guide the choices that they make in the future, but often competing priorities and declining numbers of young people smoking, mean tobacco issues can be put on the back burner.



By reviewing and updating the way in which tobacco education is delivered and by introducing prevention messages more broadly across the curriculum, young people in Scotland will be supported to make informed and balanced choices about their health, securing better outcomes, maximising incomes and avoiding health damage associated with smoking.

A subtle shift in school policies to support both health promotion and policy compliance helps schools to formalise their position as positive role models and cement an ethos that encourages young people to make healthy choices and remain smoke-free into adulthood.

You don't need to go it alone...

ASH Scotland has worked in partnership with NHS Lothian and NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde to develop a range of [practical tools and resources](#) for schools to help develop tobacco-free policies. They have been specifically designed to support, enhance and inform each stage of Tobacco-Free School policy development and implementation.

Most encouragingly of all schools, pupils and teachers have worked together to find solutions that will shape, inform and guide the choices that young people make on smoking.

This approach has already been successfully piloted and used by [twelve secondary schools in Lothian](#) to introduce tobacco-free policies that support teachers, staff and pupils to make healthy and positive lifestyle and behaviour choices on smoking and tobacco. The

project has evaluated well and was so successful it's being repeated with twelve more schools this academic year.

Not only have they developed new tobacco-free policies but I was most impressed to see schools start to introduce [tobacco prevention messages across the curriculum](#) in Modern Languages, science subjects, PE, Maths and Social Sciences – embracing the ethos of the Curriculum for Excellence.

Scotland has a target to be tobacco-free by 2034. Ensuring that young people in Scotland have access to effective education that equips and supports them to make informed positive choices on their health will help to achieve a tobacco-free generation.

Breathe easy at the school gates



Pupils from St Nicholas Primary School in Broxburn, West Lothian turned the tables by teaching their parents about the dangers of smoking. The P7 pupils designed and launched a "Breathe easy at our school gates" campaign, along with a banner to have on prominent display at the school gates.

P7 children prepared and delivered a Tobacco Education Showcase for parents, showing parents a short movie about smoking put together by a group of P7 students. There were other activities including games, a quiz and a cooking show along with smoke-free homes pledges for parents to sign.

St Nicholas Primary endorsed [Scotland's Charter for a Tobacco-free Generation](#) to highlight their commitment to ensuring children's environments are smoke-free.