

Public health reform

A Scotland where we reduce the use of and harm from alcohol, tobacco and other drugs



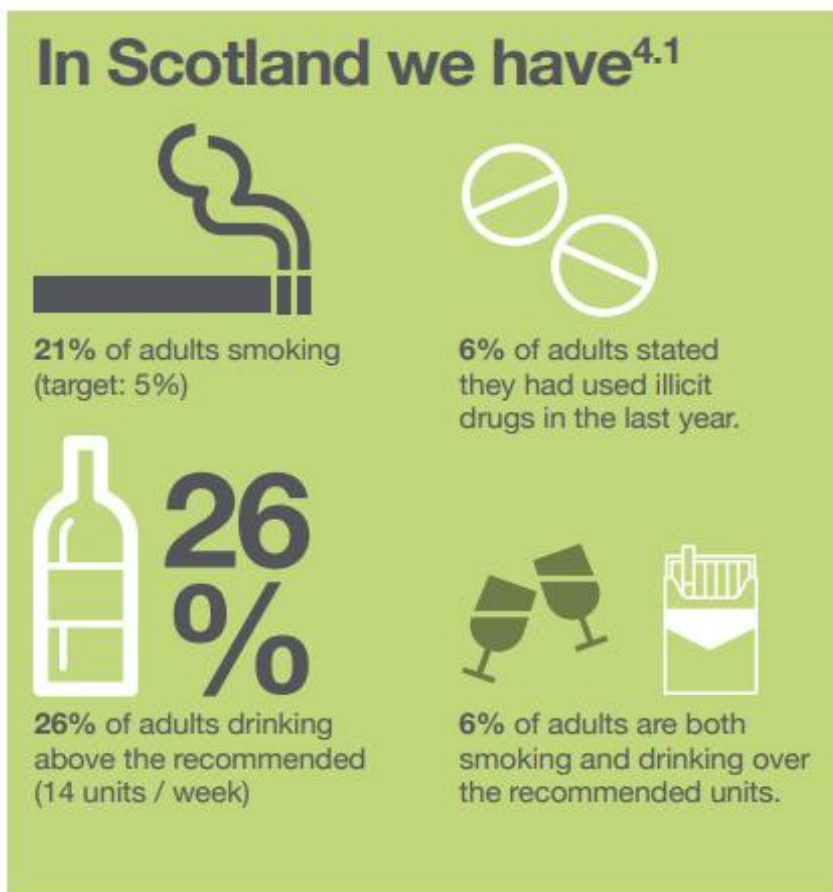
Scotland's public health priorities

The Scottish Government and COSLA agreed six [Public Health Priorities](#) in June 2018. These are intended to support national and local partners across Scotland to work together to improve healthy life expectancy and reduce health inequalities in our communities. They include the priority: [A Scotland where we reduce the use of and harm from alcohol, tobacco and other drugs](#).

Why harm reduction is important

We need to reduce the harm caused by smoking, drinking and drugs in Scotland. The number of people using these substances and the harm caused to both them and those around them can be minimised.

To improve Scotland's health and wellbeing we need to work together to shift our focus to preventing ill health, reducing inequalities and working more effectively in partnership. This will require a different way of working that supports everybody, as part of a wider system, to move towards a shared vision for public health.



£3.6bn

It has been estimated that alcohol alone costs the Scottish economy **£3.6 billion a year** in health, social care, crime, productive capacity and wider costs. Only 7% (£268 million) of this is estimated to be incurred by the NHS.^{4.3}

50%

Half of Scots report being harmed as a result of someone else's drinking.^{4.4}

The source for all statistics used in the graphics are available via the full Public Health Priorities [document](#).

Public health priorities and a whole system approach

To improve Scotland's health and wellbeing we need to work together to shift our focus towards preventing ill health, reducing inequalities and working more effectively in partnership. This will require a different way of working that supports everybody as part of a whole system to move towards a shared vision for public health.

Whole system approach (WSA)

Underpinning the public health priorities is the need to work more effectively together as part of a whole system approach. Whole system working can be defined as applying systems thinking and tools that enable:

“An ongoing, flexible approach by a broad-range of stakeholders to identify and understand current and emerging public health issues where, by working together, we can deliver sustainable change and better lives for the people of Scotland.”

A whole system approach to alcohol, tobacco & other drugs

Drawing on established models and engagement with stakeholders, Public Health Reform has defined a set of **nine** core characteristics of a Whole System Approach:



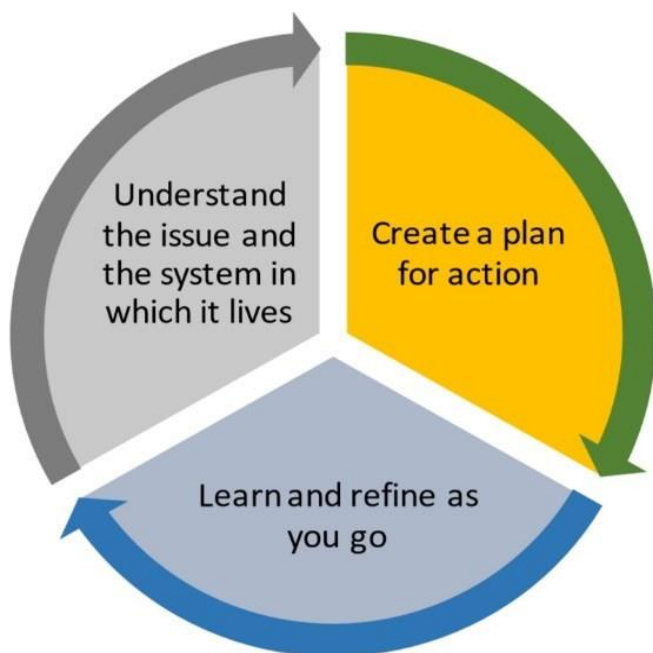
For a more detailed look at the characteristics please see this [document](#).

Applying a whole system approach

A whole system approach involves application of complex systems thinking, methods and practice to better understand public health challenges and identify collective actions. Adopting a whole system approach to Scotland's Public Health Priorities is a long-term endeavour. It will require new partnerships between a broad-range of stakeholders to deliver better lives for the people of Scotland.

Led by the alcohol and drugs partnership this work will likely involve partnerships with those working in the licensing of alcohol, tobacco and entertainment venues, health professionals, local businesses, education, health, early years, policing and criminal justice, housing, third sector organisations and others.

There are many tools and methods that have been developed to support whole system approaches. Put simply, there are three phases that can help stakeholders adopt a whole system approach: *



- Collectively form an **understanding of the issue, context and wider system.**
- **Create a plan for action collaboratively** with a wide set of stakeholders. Actions should be aligned and jointly prioritised.
- **Learn and refine as you go by involving stakeholders and embedding monitoring and evaluation.** Considering the 'so what?' and 'now what?'

*Adapted from FSG [Systems Thinking Toolkit. Putting systems thinking into practice in your organization](#) and Australian Prevention Partnership Centre (2018) [Systems Change Framework](#).

Measuring impact

The [National Performance Framework](#) (NPF) sets out a vision for national wellbeing. Looking at the sort of Scotland we want to see. By adopting a values-based approach to improving the public's health we will be able to successfully demonstrate that we are truly working differently.

Public Health Reform – useful links

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