

Consultation response from the National Heart Forum

Consultation: A walking strategy for
Scotland

Consulting body: The Scottish Executive
development department

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Dear Mr Brown

Consultation document: A walking strategy for Scotland

The National Heart Forum would like to commend the Scottish Executive and offer its full support for the development of a walking strategy for Scotland. For too long policies that would support and encourage walking in the UK have been neglected in favour of policies that encourage the use of the car and/or that support the interests of the motoring lobby. The recommendations set out in the walking strategy demonstrate a clear commitment to improving the environment in which people live, work and socialise, and to increasing opportunities for health gain. It is particularly refreshing that this strategy hails from a multi-disciplinary Forum and recognises the diversity of benefits across different sectors that will be derived from actions to encourage increased walking.

The Forum is right to set an overall national target whilst acknowledging that there may be a need to set less or more ambitious targets locally that are sympathetic to local transport, health or environmental needs.

Consultation with the public will be crucial to the local ownership of the walking strategy. As the strategy rightly states in paragraph 7.4, it is the local people who will provide the framework for implementation of the recommendations, by describing current journeys, reasons for current behaviour and the desire lines for where they wish to get to and where they wish to cross roads.

We recommend that the final strategy is accompanied by guidance on how to work collaboratively at the local level. In particular, it would be constructive to reiterate how collaborative working can help the various sectors to meet their own targets and milestones, as this may facilitate the release of money towards joint projects.

The National Heart Forum has a wealth of scientific and policy experience in matters relating to transport, physical activity and health, and is uniquely placed to offer support during the further development and implementation of the walking strategy. Details of the National Heart Forum are appended for your information.

I wish you every success in taking the strategy forward.

Yours sincerely

Alison Giles PhD
Associate Director

ABOUT THE NATIONAL HEART FORUM

The National Heart Forum is the leading alliance of over 45 organisations working to reduce the risk of CHD in the UK. Member organisations represent the medical and health services, professional bodies, consumer groups and voluntary organisations. Members also include many individual experts in cardiovascular research. Government departments have observer status. The purpose of the NHF is to work with and through its members to reduce disability and death from CHD. Our four main objectives are:

- To provide a forum for members for the exchange of information, ideas and initiatives on coronary heart disease prevention;
- To identify and address areas of consensus and controversy;
- To develop policy based on evidence and on the views of member organisations;
- To stimulate and promote effective action.

The NHF embraces professional, scientific and policy opinion in current issues in CHD prevention. It coordinates action to reduce heart disease risk through information, education, research, policy development and advocacy.

OUR MEMBERS

Age Concern England
ASH (Action on Smoking and Health)
ASH Scotland
Blood Pressure Association
British Association for Cardiac Rehabilitation
British Association for Nursing in Cardiac Care (BANCC)
British Association for Sport & Exercise Sciences
British Cardiac Society
British Dietetic Association
British Heart Foundation
British Medical Association
British Nutrition Foundation
CASH (Consensus Action on Salt and Health)
Chartered Institute of Environmental Health
Child Poverty Action Group
Community Practitioners' and Health Visitors' Association
Consumers' Association
CORDA
Coronary Prevention Group
DATA (Design and Technology Associates)
Diabetes UK
Faculty of Public Health Medicine
Health Development Agency
Health Promotion Agency for Northern Ireland
HEART UK
King's Fund
National Association of Governors and Managers
National Heart Research Fund
NHS Confederation
Northern Ireland Chest, Heart and Stroke Association
Nuffield Trust
Primary Care Cardiovascular Society
Royal College of General Practitioners
Royal College of Nursing
Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health
Royal College of Physicians of London
Royal College of Surgeons of England
Royal Institute of Public Health
Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain
SHARP (Scottish Heart and Arterial disease Risk Prevention)
Society of Cardiothoracic Surgeons of Great Britain & Ireland
Society of Health Education and Health Promotion Specialists
Society of Occupational Medicine
Sport England
Trades Union Congress
UKPHA

OUR PUBLICATIONS

- Towards a generation free from coronary heart disease. Policy action for children's and young people's health and well-being
- Let's Get Moving – A physical activity handbook for developing local programmes
- Fuel Poverty and Health toolkit
- Coronary heart disease: Estimating the impact of changes in risk factors
- Looking to the future: Making coronary heart disease an epidemic of the past
- Social inequalities in coronary heart disease: Opportunities for action
- At Least Five a Day: Strategies to increase vegetable and fruit consumption
- Preventing coronary heart disease: The role of antioxidants, vegetables and fruit
- Preventing coronary heart disease in primary care: The way forward
- Coronary heart disease: Are women special?
- Physical activity: An agenda for action
- School Meals Assessment Pack (Computer nutrition programme)
- Healthy School Food: A Guide for School Governors and School Boards
- Coronary Heart Disease Prevention: A Catalogue of Key Resources

Visit the National Heart Forum website: www.heartforum.org.uk