



Smoke-free premises and grounds in NHS Western Isles

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NHS Western Isles has introduced a smoke-free policy in all its premises and grounds. This aligns with their mission of improving the health of the individuals and local communities it serves by taking a lead in challenging health issues.

The outcomes

NHS Western Isles, in collaboration with the Smoking Policy Partnership, set a target for all NHS Western Isles premises and grounds to become smoke-free by 30 November 2013. The initiative was branded the 'Final Countdown'. A media campaign was carried out to ensure public buy-in and the initiative was rolled out across all NHS sites in the Western Isles.

The outcome of smoke-free premises and grounds was achieved by the date set by the Health Board.

The Final Countdown project also led to other outcomes, such as the creation of partnerships that were pivotal in driving the smoke-free work forward and active participation from the local community.

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Drivers

The main driver for introducing a smoke-free policy for all NHS Western Isles premises and grounds was the Scottish Government's new Tobacco Control Strategy, which aims to reduce the number of people in Scotland choosing to smoke. More specifically, the Scottish Government has set a target of less than 5% of the population choosing to smoke by 2034.

In addition, the initiative is part of the Scottish Government's pledge to have all NHS grounds completely smoke-free by 2015. NHS Western Isles' ambition was to be one of the first Health Boards in Scotland to become completely smoke-free.

What we did

NHS Western Isles' mission is to improve the health of the individuals and local communities it serves by taking a lead in challenging health issues. Implementing a smoke-free policy in all NHS Western Isles premises and grounds meant the promotion of healthier, safer environments, which is an essential prerequisite to improving the health of the population in the Western Isles.

To successfully implement the smoke-free premises and grounds initiative, preparatory work with a wide range of key stakeholders and partners was required. The majority of this work involved the development of a tobacco policy by the NHS Western Isles Smoking Policy Partnership Group, with clear and concise guidance on how this should be implemented.

Furthermore, NHS Western Isles extensively promoted their smoke-free premises and grounds initiative, branded the 'Final Countdown', on an ongoing basis. The Final Countdown was promoted in various ways: open days in the hospital, providing staff with opportunities to find out more information about the scheme; several events with visual aids; production of communication resources (e.g. banners, posters, business cards, etc.); advertisements, interviews and articles in the local media (in both English and Gaelic); and by posting all the relevant information on the NHS Western Isles intranet, website and social media sites.

This work set the scene for the impending smoking ban within all NHS Western Isles sites, which was due for implementation by 30 November 2013. The morning of 1 December found all NHS Western Isles buildings and grounds smoke-free.

What we found difficult

The work around achieving smoke-free NHS Western Isles premises and grounds did not face any major challenges. Excellent partnership working, adequate planning and, most importantly, the buy-in from key strategic stakeholders resulted in the elimination of any major challenges.

One minor challenge that was encountered related to a small number of patients and visitors being unaware of, or opposed to, the smoke-free policy when caught smoking within hospital grounds. The challenge was overcome when patients and visitors were informed of

the rationale for the introduction of the new smoke-free policy. There have not been any further reports of such incidents since the implementation of the smoking ban.

What worked well

- The buy-in from strategic and key stakeholders (i.e. the Chief Executive, Health Board, staff groups, etc.), which was a pivotal and a powerful driving force for the success of the project.
- The partnership working among different organisations, staff and the local community was essential for a smooth transition to smoke-free NHS Western Isles premises and grounds.
- The work on the smoke-free policy raised the profile of smoking cessation services in NHS Western Isles.
- The production of a comprehensive tobacco strategy with clear guidance on its implementation.
- The work on the smoke-free policy complemented and tied in well with the Health Promoting Health Service tobacco action highlighted in CEL (1).

Who was involved

A wide range of professionals, professional groups and different departments within NHS Western Isles were involved from the early stages of the Final Countdown project until its implementation. All parties involved had a crucial role to play in the planning, set-up and implementation of the smoke-free initiative:

- NHS Western Isles Board Chief Executive.
- The local authority Comhairle nan Eilean Siar's (CnES) Tobacco Strategy Group.
- Human resources colleagues.
- Equality and diversity.
- Staff-side representation.
- The Smokefree Hebrides cessation service.
- Staff from Healthy Working Lives.
- Mental health.
- Communication and resources.

Evaluation

The NHS Western Isles tobacco team captured feedback from patients, visitors and staff during the promotion of the Final Countdown at open days and events which were held in hospitals.

Anecdotal evidence consistently highlighted an overall positive perception of the implementation of the smoke-free initiative.

In addition, there has been a noticeable increase in the number of referrals to smoking

cessation services in the Western Isles. The Final Countdown actively promoted the work of these services, which helped to raise their profile.

A formal evaluation of the project is not scheduled until the first anniversary of the NHS Western Isles premises and grounds becoming smoke-free. This scheduled evaluation includes a review of the tobacco policy which will inform future actions and any additional work required.

Future steps

NHS Western Isles aims to capitalise on all the learning from the work that was carried out in order to launch the smoke-free initiative.

The next key steps include a formal evaluation of the project and its progress at the end of year one and a review of the tobacco policy.

**For further information contact
Smokefree Hebrides
Tel: 01851 701623**