



**Health and Sport Committee**  
**Smoking Prohibition (Children in Motor Vehicles) (Scotland) Bill**

*Written evidence from YouthLink Scotland*

*May 2015*

**Introduction**

YouthLink Scotland welcomes the opportunity to submit written evidence to the Health and Sport Committee its call for evidence on the Smoking Prohibition (Children in Motor Vehicles) (Scotland) Bill. We strongly support the Bill as introduced which seeks to protect children under the age of 18 years from the negative impact of second hand smoke in enclosed spaces – namely cars and other motor vehicles.

*Our ambitions for improving the life chances of young people in Scotland (2014)* states: “Working together we can create a virtuous cycle of improvement to break the cycle of inequality and improve life chances of young people. We are committed to break this cycle and ensure that all young people have opportunities which will improve their life chances.”<sup>1</sup>

**Background to YouthLink Scotland**

YouthLink Scotland is the national agency for youth work. It is a membership organisation and is in the unique position of representing the interests and aspirations of both the voluntary and statutory sector. YouthLink Scotland champions the role and value of youth work, challenging government at national and local levels to invest in the development of the sector for the benefit of our young people.

Our vision is of a youth work sector for Scotland that offers sustainable, dynamic and accessible youth work opportunities that support young people to become successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors, and responsible citizens.

YouthLink Scotland is a member of the Prevention Sub Group of the Ministerial Working Group on Tobacco Control; we are also an active participant in the Youth Sector Tobacco Prevention Group.

**Supporting the Bill**

- YouthLink Scotland supports the Bill as introduced and believes that the benefits of legislating on this matter will go some way to addressing the harm that second hand tobacco smoke is to children who have smaller airways, faster rates of breathing and less developed immune systems. As a sector which champions young people and seeks to improve their life chances we were concerned by the recent SALSUS (2013) report which

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<sup>1</sup> YouthLink Scotland, Education Scotland, Scottish Government (2014) *Our ambitions for improving the life chances of young people in Scotland*. Edinburgh

states that 7% of 13 and 15 year olds were exposed to second hand smoke during 'all/most' of their car journeys.

- YouthLink Scotland supports the consistency of age 18 in all aspects of the Bill. We particularly support this from the perspective of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- YouthLink Scotland supports the position of the members of the Scottish Youth Parliament, who have endorsed the following Members Motion by Nicola Burley MSYP at their July 2014 sitting: *"SYP believes smoking should be banned in cars carrying children in order to protect our current and future generation, and will support efforts to tackle this issue."*
- We welcome the consideration given to motor vehicles which are also homes – and believe that the Bill at this time strikes the correct balance here. We would of course support the ongoing work of the Scottish Government to 'take it right outside' and the public health opportunities to raise awareness of the risks of second hand smoke within the home.

### **Closing Remarks**

YouthLink Scotland welcomes the introduction of this Bill and we believe it will go some way to influencing the behaviour of those exposing children to the harmful effects of second hand smoke. Whilst the challenges of implementation and enforcement will remain we do not believe this to be a reason not to proceed with legislation. We hope that for the 7% of young people for which this experience is a routine occurrence in their car journeys for this quickly to be behaviour of the past.

*For further information please contact Susan Hunter, Senior Policy and Research Officer.  
[shunter@youthlinkscotland.org](mailto:shunter@youthlinkscotland.org) or 0131 313 6815.*