

**Scottish Directors of  
Public Health Group**

**E-CIGARETTES AND NHS TOBACCO POLICIES –  
POSITION STATEMENT by Scottish Directors of Public Health**

**Thursday 6 June 2013**

Scottish Directors of Public Health **strongly advocate** that e-cigarettes should be treated in the same way as normal cigarettes within NHS Tobacco policies, i.e. if the local policy indicates no smoking is permitted in NHS buildings and grounds, the same should apply to e-cigarettes. They have reached this conclusion for the following reasons:

- Scottish NHS Boards are working hard to reduce the harm from tobacco to the health of Scottish people. Through our tobacco control work we seek to prevent individuals from taking up smoking, protect others from the effects of second hand smoke and assist current smokers to stop. The use of e-cigarettes in NHS grounds perpetuates the idea that smoking is normal behaviour and acceptable in public areas.
- Scottish NHS Boards are trying to be exemplar organisations in providing smoke-free environments and will be moving to smoke-free grounds by March 2015. Our patients, visitors and staff may be confused by the similarity of e-cigarettes to normal cigarettes and may mistake them for real cigarettes. This is almost certain to hamper the implementation of NHS Tobacco Policies, which is already a challenge in most health board areas.
- The risks to health from the inhalation of e-cigarettes are unknown. These devices are currently unregulated and may contain varying amounts of nicotine
- The health and safety risks from using these e-cigarettes are also currently unknown.
- The potential for e-cigarettes to be a tool in a harm reduction regime for smokers is still under consideration. However, there are other evidence based nicotine replacement therapy products which can be used to assist those who wish to stop smoking and can be used when people are visiting NHS premises.



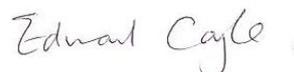
**Director of Public Health  
NHS Ayrshire & Arran**



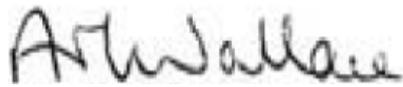
**Director of Public Health  
NHS Borders**



**Director of Public Health  
NHS Dumfries & Galloway**



**Director of Public Health  
NHS Fife**



**Director of Public Health  
NHS Forth Valley**



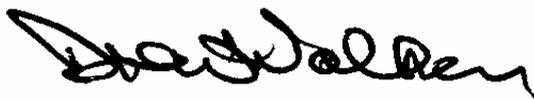
**Director of Public Health  
NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde**



**Director of Public Health  
NHS Lanarkshire**



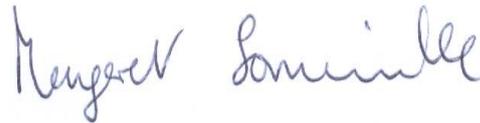
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NHS Orkney**



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NHS Grampian**



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**Director of Public Health  
NHS Lothian**



**Director of Public Health  
NHS Shetland**

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**Vacancy : Director of Public Health  
NHS Western Isles**

Background notes:

- 1 An e-cigarette (electronic cigarette) is a battery operated, nicotine vapour inhaler device. These devices administer vaporised substances into the bronchi, lungs and bloodstream. An odourless vapour is then released into the air as the smoker exhales.
- 2 Research into the effect of e-cigarettes is currently inconclusive, however further evidence is expected from the Medicine and Health Care Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) in 2013.

This research has been commissioned because there is concern that nicotine delivery to the lung might result in stronger toxicological, physiological and addictive effects and these concerns require to be addressed in scientific studies.

- 3 There are currently inconsistencies in e-cigarette product contents and in the labelling of these products.
- 4 e-cigarettes do not break the connection between the physical holding of a cigarette, breathing in of smoke and the effect of the nicotine on the body and therefore may delay efforts to break the habit of smoking.
- 5 Advice on smoking cessation can be accessed via local NHS Board smoking cessation services.