Children in Scotland welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Committee’s call for views on the Health (Tobacco, Nicotine etc. and Care) Scotland Bill.

We are the umbrella body for the children’s sector, including education, health, social care, early years and childcare. We have over 490 members and our staff deliver a wide range of projects and programmes in schools and other settings, with a variety of public, private and third sector partners. It is Children in Scotland’s vision to make Scotland a world leader in securing the wellbeing of every child and improving the quality of every childhood.

1. Do you support the Bill’s provision in relation to NVPs?

Children in Scotland is one of the original signatories to Scotland’s Charter for a Tobacco-free Generation. We have a long history of calling for increased regulation of the use and sale of tobacco, due to the serious and long term detrimental effects that such products have on the health and wellbeing of children and adults.

We support further restrictions in the sales of nicotine vapour products (NVPs).

Children in Scotland previously called for additional advertising restrictions in relation to NVPs in a recent Scottish Government consultation held in January 2015.

In line with the consultation response submitted by our member organisation ASH Scotland, we support the prohibition of advertising of NVPs where the advertising has the potential to promote the use of lit, smoked tobacco and of course for e-cigarettes. We strongly believe that children’s health must be protected through preventative measures as far as practicable. Children in Scotland supports the position articulated by ASH Scotland that the minimum purchase age of NVP and tobacco products should be set at 18, and that vendors should register and adopt an age verification policy in order to ensure that this policy is implemented and enforced.

We support the view that the sale of NVPs should be brought into line with the regulations that are currently in place for tobacco products.

In December 2014, Children in Scotland circulated a survey to its members, as well as to external bodies. Whilst we only received a small response, all of the nine respondents stated they would like the Scottish Government to take further steps to regulate the domestic advertising and promotion of e-cigarettes to young people and adults.

Many shared our concerns, as evidence in the responses below.

“The e-cigarettes are to help people stop smoking and should be targeted at those people who have been smoking for a number of years hence restrict
advertisements of these devices to after the watershed. More preventive ads for young people to not start smoking or quit because they have a better chance of reversing the harm caused by smoking.”

“Regulation should allow the promotion of e-cigs to existing adult smokers, as a less harmful alternative to smokers. Need to exclude promotion to non-smokers, particularly children.”

2. Do you support the proposal to ban smoking in hospital grounds?

We want every child to have the best start in life and the best support throughout their childhood. In order to do this, we must endeavour to protect children from harm and promote healthy lifestyle choices.

We endorse the statement by ASH Scotland that “Selected outdoor smoking bans should also help to denormalize smoking in outdoor areas.”

In line with the aforementioned Children in Scotland survey quoted above, we would like to see the ban on e-cigarette and tobacco use in public spaces go further to include all spaces that are regularly used by children and young people, including:

1. Play parks and play areas

2. Parks, sports pitches and the immediate vicinities of sports centres and/or community centres etc.

3. Within 50M of schools, school playgrounds and health care settings.

4. Playgrounds, family eating areas and smoke free areas in outdoor areas of pubs and restaurants.

In March 2014 Scotland became the first country to set a national target to reduce the percentage of children exposed to second-hand smoke from 12% to 6% by 2020.

Children in Scotland supports the Scottish Government in its ambition to reduce the harm children are exposed to through second-hand smoke. We believe this Bill, alongside public awareness campaigns and support for smoking cessation programmes could have a positive impact towards reducing the number of those who smoke, as well as limiting children’s exposure to cigarette smoke.

Children in Scotland

Children in Scotland is the national umbrella agency for organisations and professionals working with and for children, young people and their families. It exists to identify and promote the interests of children and their families and to ensure that policies and services and other provisions are of the highest possible quality and are able to meet the needs of a diverse society. Children in Scotland represents more than 490 members, including most of Scottish
local authorities, all major voluntary, statutory and private children’s agencies, professional organisations, as well as many other smaller community groups and children’s services. It is linked with similar agencies in other parts of the UK and Europe.

The work of Children in Scotland encompasses extensive information, policy, research and practice development programmes. The agency works closely with MSPs, the Scottish Government, local authorities and practitioners. It also services groups such as the Cross Party Parliamentary Group on Children and Young People (with YouthLink Scotland). In addition, Children in Scotland hosts Enquire - the national advice service for additional support for learning, and Resolve: ASL, Scotland’s largest independent education mediation service.