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**Development and Launch  
of the Active Healthy Kids  
Scotland Report Card  
2013**

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## **Development and Launch of the Active Healthy Kids Scotland Report Card 2013**

The programme was funded by the Scottish Universities Insight Institute (SUII) and ran from March 2013 to October 2013.

### **Programme Team**

#### **The programme team members were:**

Prof John J Reilly, University of Strathclyde;

Prof Geraldine McNeill, University of Aberdeen;

Dr Smita Dick, University of Aberdeen;

Prof Mark S Tremblay, Healthy Active Living and Obesity Research Group, Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario Research Institute

#### **The programme team was supported by an external steering group:**

Dr Julie Armstrong, Glasgow Caledonian University;

Dr Tim Lobstein, International Obesity Task Force, London;

Members of the Obesity Working Group of the Scottish School of Public Health Research.

**The work of the programme team and external steering group was informed by a large and diverse group of stakeholders, listed at the end of this document (Appendix 1)**

## **Context and Main Objectives of the Programme**

### **Context**

Most Scottish children fail to meet recommendations for physical activity and diet, and the prevalence of obesity is three times as high as in 1990. This is a public health crisis, but with adverse effects beyond health, for educational attainment, the economy, and the environment.

Tackling the public health crisis created by low physical activity and poor diet requires the engagement of many sectors of society, which in turn requires synthesis and dissemination of knowledge from research and public health surveillance beyond academia. An excellent model of knowledge exchange of the kind required in Scotland exists in Canada, the Active Healthy Kids Canada Report Card ([www.activehealthykids.ca](http://www.activehealthykids.ca)), published as an annual 'state of the nation' report since 2005. The AHKC focuses exclusively on physical activity, is aimed at the general public, health policymakers and practitioners, and has been pioneered by Prof Mark Tremblay. The Report Card has had a dramatic impact in Canada, and other nations have recently begun to develop Report Cards following the Canadian model.

### **Objectives**

The main objectives of this programme were to develop and launch the first Active Healthy Kids Report Card for Scotland. The Active Healthy Kids Scotland Report Card 2013 (Appendix 1; [www.activehealthykidsscotland.co.uk](http://www.activehealthykidsscotland.co.uk)) was developed based on the Canadian model, with input from Prof Tremblay, in the period March-September 2013. The Scottish card was launched in October 2013.

Development of the Scottish card required the identification and synthesis of relevant Scottish data to populate the Active Healthy Kids Scotland Report Card 2013, the establishment of a group of individuals/organisations to help produce and disseminate the card, and the formation of a

network of individuals and organisations to help sustain the Active Healthy Kids Scotland Report Card beyond 2013.

Additional aims of the programme were: to extend the 2013 Scottish card beyond the Canadian model by including diet, and overweight and obesity, and to link Scotland to the emerging international Active Healthy Kids Network ([www.activehealthykids.ca/globalsummit](http://www.activehealthykids.ca/globalsummit)). The Active Healthy Kids Scotland Report Card 2013 will be part of a global matrix of Active Healthy Kids Report Cards launched at the Global Summit on the Physical Activity of Children in Toronto in May 2014.

## **Knowledge/Understanding Arising from the Programme**

### **Methods**

During the period March-September 2013 the programme team applied the Active Healthy Kids Canada Report Card process and methodology to Scotland, adapted to Scottish circumstances and availability of data. This work consisted of the following stages: identification of relevant Scottish data; synthesis and critical assessment of Scottish data to identify best evidence for 10 different health indicators (listed below), including incorporating feedback on the process from the programme steering group and wider group of stakeholders; summarising the evidence synthesis as a short form Active Healthy Kids Scotland Report Card 2013 accessible to the public, the media, and stakeholder groups; summarising the evidence synthesis both as a long-form Active Healthy Kids Scotland Report Card and as a scientific manuscript aimed at a more specialist audience (academics, policymakers).

Feedback on the process of card development was obtained from the stakeholders at an open meeting at the SUll in June 2013, at which a draft of the first Scottish report card was discussed.

This open meeting was attended by the programme team, the steering group, and the stakeholders. Additional stakeholder feedback was obtained using a formal online consultation on the process and draft grades over a 6-week period during June and July 2013. In the consultation stakeholders were asked to address the following questions: were any relevant Scottish data missed in the process of card development?; were any data misinterpreted (e.g. were the draft grades justified?); were any relevant stakeholder groups or individuals omitted?; which indicators not included in the 2013 card should be included in future cards?. This consultation process informed the final grades in the short form and long form (more detailed) report card published in October 2013.

“The Active Healthy Kids Scotland Report Card 2013 is a ‘state of the nation’ report which provides a critical, up to date, and evidence-based summary of the scale of the problems of physical activity and health of Scottish Children and adolescents”.

The Active Healthy Kids Scotland Report Card 2013 was based on 10 health indicators:

- a. Seven Health Behaviours and Outcomes (Sedentary Behaviour, i.e. recreational screen time; Physical Activity; Active Transport; Active and Outdoor Play; Organised Sport Participation; Diet; Obesity);
- b. Three Influences on Health Behaviours and Outcomes (Family and Peer Influence; Community and the Built Environment; National Policy, Strategy, and Investment).

The 10 health indicators were graded based on the percentage of Scottish children meeting an evidence-based recommendation or benchmark for each indicator, ranging from A (we are succeeding with a large majority of children and adolescents, >80% of the population) to F (we are succeeding with very few Scottish children and adolescents, <20% of the population). Grades were

assigned a '+' if trends in the health indicator were improving and/or if there were no marked inequalities in the indicator (e.g. by age, gender, socio-economic status, ethnicity), and a '-' if trends were getting worse and/or if there was evidence of marked inequalities.

## **Results**

### **Health Behaviours and Outcomes**

Three Health Behaviours and Outcomes received the lowest possible grades, F or F- (Physical Activity; Sedentary Behaviour; Obesity).

One indicator received a C grade (Active Transportation) and one a D- grade (Diet). Two indicators could not be graded (Active and Outdoor Play; Organised Sport Participation) due to lack of evidence and lack of an evidence-based recommendation.

### **Influences on Health Behaviours and Outcomes**

Family and Peer Influence was graded as D, but Perceived Safety, Access, and Availability of Spaces for Physical Activity and the National Policy Environment were more favourable (B Grades).

## **Conclusions**

The programme 'Development and launch of the first Active Healthy Kids Scotland Report Card' in 2013 showed that:

1. The Active Healthy Kids Canada Report Card process and methodology is an example of knowledge exchange in public health which is readily generalisable to Scotland.
2. A large and diverse group of Scottish stakeholders both valued the report card and expressed a willingness to help sustain the production of future Active Healthy Kids Scotland Report Cards.

3. Scottish children and adolescents have extremely high levels of sedentary behaviour (recreational screen time), low levels of physical activity, and they develop in an adult environment where poor diet, low physical activity and overweight/obesity are the norms.
4. Despite the generally negative assessments of child and adolescent health behaviours and outcomes, many of the environmental factors believed to influence physical activity and sedentary behaviour (perceived access to space and facilities for physical activity, perceived safety of such spaces, national policies and targets) are favourable.
5. Future issues of the Scottish card will be useful in assessing whether this favourable policy environment and favourable community/built environment is having the desired impact on important health behaviours and health outcomes.
6. Scotland can now join the emerging international network of Active Healthy Kids Report Cards, beginning with the launch of an international report card at the Global Summit on the Physical Activity of Children in Toronto in May 2014.

### **Key Recommendations for End Users/Policy Communities**

The Active Healthy Kids Scotland Report Card 2013 is a 'state of the nation' report which provides a critical, up to date, and evidence-based summary of the scale of the problems of physical activity and health of Scottish Children and adolescents. The main specific concerns identified were: the extremely high exposure to recreational screen time, well above the levels recommended as being compatible with health and wellbeing; extremely low levels of physical activity; extremely high prevalence of obesity; high degree of socio-economic inequality for some of the indicators.

It is intended that a wide range of end-users, including policy makers, should see the report card as the 'go to' resource for evidence on the major problems relating to physical activity and health in Scottish children and adolescents, and that such exposure may provoke structural, policy, or behavioural changes that may result in improved healthy active living for Scottish children.

The Active Healthy Kids Scotland Report Card 2013 (Appendix 2 and 3, short-form and long-form cards respectively) identified a large number of gaps in the evidence on physical activity and health in Scottish children and adolescents. These gaps are health behaviours and outcomes and/or factors influencing health behaviours and outcomes which are either not measured, or not measured adequately in current Scottish 'public health surveillance', or indicators which are measured in some age-groups but not others. Full details of the gaps in the evidence are listed in the long-form version of the report card (Appendix 3), but in summary the main gaps identified during the process were:

- a. the lack of evidence on recreational screen-time from toddlers, pre-school children, and primary-school age children; on types of sedentary behaviour now considered important to health (sitting time and breaks in sitting time);
- b. the absence of objective measures of physical activity in Scottish surveys;
- c. the lack of adequate surveillance for many of the indicators among toddlers and pre-schoolers;
- d. the absence of policies on reduction of sedentary behaviour (recreational screen time, sitting behaviour).
- e. the lack of evidence on policy evaluation and implementation.

End- users responsible for public health surveillance in Scotland, such as those who plan and carry out national surveys, and policymakers can use these findings as the basis of

future policies, programmes and surveys. Others can use the report card to advocate for appropriate research, policies, policy implementation, and programmes which will address the problems identified and gaps in the evidence identified in the card.

## **Main Outputs and Impact**

### **Outputs**

The main outputs from the programme to date are as follows:

- a. **National Dissemination.** The short-form version of the Active Healthy Kids Scotland Report Card 2013 (Appendix 2) was launched on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2013, aimed at the widest possible audience, and freely downloadable from the Active Healthy Kids Scotland Website ([www.activehealthykidsscotland.co.uk](http://www.activehealthykidsscotland.co.uk)).
- b. **National Dissemination to stakeholders** (not just those involved in the development of the card, but a wider range of organisations) across Scotland at the end of October 2013. Four hundred hard copies of the short form card were posted to relevant stakeholders in Scotland and overseas. Additional hard copies are available free on request. In nine years of producing the Active Healthy Kids Canada Report Cards end-users in Canada have emphasised the importance of hard copies to dissemination and use of the card.
- c. **National Dissemination.** The long-form version of the Active Healthy Kids Scotland Report Card 2013 (Appendix 3) was also launched on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2013. The long-form card provides more detail on process and methodology than the short-form card, and it is aimed at a more specialist audience (e.g. health and education practitioners and policymakers, researchers). It is also freely downloadable from the Active Healthy Kids Scotland Website ([www.activehealthykidsscotland.co.uk](http://www.activehealthykidsscotland.co.uk)). One hundred hard copies of

the long-form card were posted to relevant stakeholders (not just those involved in the development of the card, but a wider range of organisations) across Scotland at the end of October 2013. Additional hard copies of the card are available free on request.

- d. **International Dissemination via publication.** An academic publication describing the process of development of the Scottish card and the main findings and implications was prepared. This manuscript is currently under review with Journal of Physical Activity and Health (submitted 1<sup>st</sup> November 2013), and will be considered as part of a special issue on Active Healthy Kids Report cards from around the world for publication in May 2014.
- e. **International Dissemination via the international report card.** An academic publication in Journal of Physical Activity and Health in May 2014 which focuses on comparisons of grades between the 14-16 nations which will have produced Active Healthy Kids Report Cards by that time (the emerging International Active Healthy Kids Network; [www.activehealthykids.ca/globalsummit](http://www.activehealthykids.ca/globalsummit)).
- f. **International Dissemination.** The content of the international report card will be publicly released at the opening of the 2014 Global Summit on the Physical Activity of Children in Toronto, with participation by all participating countries (including Scotland), through a presentation of the “global matrix of grades” and related media strategy.
- g. **International Dissemination via submission of an Abstract** on the development of the Scottish card to the International Congress on Obesity in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in March 2014.
- h. **National and International Dissemination.** The development of a programme website ([www.activehealthykidsscotland.co.uk](http://www.activehealthykidsscotland.co.uk)) was important, and it will be maintained

beyond the end of the programme. The website will host and disseminate the Scottish card 2013 and continue to do so for subsequent cards. The website will also be used to highlight/publicise future activities, notably the launch of the international report card at the Toronto Global Summit on the Physical Activity of Children in May 2014.

## **Impact**

**National Impact.** The range of possible impacts of the programme is difficult to gauge with confidence so soon after the end of the programme and the October launch of the first Active Healthy Kids Scotland Report Card 2013. However, a media launch of the card on 22<sup>nd</sup> October in Glasgow meant that the Active Healthy Kids Scotland Report Card was brought to the attention of a wide audience, with apparently high impact within Scotland. Media impressions in national and local media on the day of the launch and the day after were substantial. Distribution of the printed copies, and hosting freely downloadable cards on the website, as noted above, are also designed to maximise dissemination and, in turn, impact.

**International impact** should occur via the integration of the Active Healthy Kids Scotland Report Card 2013 into the International Active Healthy Kids Network as noted above, with the two academic publications in the Journal of Physical Activity and Health, and with the launch of the International Active Healthy Kids Report Card in May 2014. Other follow-up activities described below should also increase future impact of the programme.

## **Main Follow-Up Activities**

**1. Future Active Healthy Kids Scotland Report Cards.** The launch of the first Active Healthy Kids Scotland Report Card in 2013 should provide the impetus for future Scottish cards, and the aim of

the programme team is to produce the next Active Healthy Kids Scotland Report Card in May 2015. An important application of the card is to examine changes in the 'state of the nation' over time, to answer the question are the public health problems described in the first Scottish card improving or getting worse?, so it is essential that the first Scottish card is not the last.

A combination of the networks formed during the programme, the template provided by the first card, and the favourable publicity for the first Scottish card, should facilitate the sustainability of future Active Healthy Kids Scotland Report Cards.

**2. Integration of the Active Healthy Kids Scotland Report Card into the International Network.** As noted above, the Active Healthy Kids Scotland Report Card 2013 joins an international network of Active Healthy Kids Report Cards, and the Scottish card will be integrated into an international card in May 2014. It is too early to know what the international card will demonstrate, but it seems likely that public health policy lessons from other nations which can be applied in Scotland will be identified in due course, after a period of reflection on the international card and the international comparisons it will facilitate.

Prof Tremblay of the programme team is involved heavily in advising on the development of all of the cards from other nations during 2013-2014, and during the 2013 programme Prof Reilly advised on the development of report cards which are in progress from Wales, England, and Ireland.

**3. Other International Activities.** The meeting which launched the Active Healthy Kids Scotland Report Card 2013 in October 2013 was attended by academic representatives from three Asian nations (Malaysia, Hong Kong, Japan) which do not currently have Active Healthy Kids Report Cards (in fact there are currently no cards from any Asian nations). Those international representatives intend to develop report cards for their own jurisdictions, with the support of the programme team. Plans for the first Active Healthy Kids Report Cards from Hong Kong and Japan

are advanced, so it is hoped that by 2015 both jurisdictions will have produced cards and will have joined the international network of Active Healthy Kids Report Cards.

## Appendix 1

### *List of Stakeholders*

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Julie Armstrong	Glasgow Caledonian University
Emma Broadhurst	Fife Council
Kate Campbell	Sustrans Scotland
Michael Craig	NHS Health Scotland
Stuart Forsyth	University of Strathclyde
Jillian Galloway	NHS
Andrew Gasiorowski	NHS ISD
Mary Goad	British Heart Foundation National Centre for Physical Activity and Health
Adrienne Hughes	University of Strathclyde
Jo Inchley	University of St Andrews
Flora Jackson	NHS Health Scotland
Ann-Marie Knowles	University of Strathclyde
Benny Lawrie	Youth Sport Trust
Judith Mabelis	ScotCen Social Research
Donald MacLeod	Education Scotland
Diane McGrath	British Heart Foundation
Ruth McQuillan	University of Edinburgh
Victoria Milne	Scottish Government
Gillian Purdon	Food Standards Agency in Scotland
Julie Ramsay	Scottish Government
David Rowe	University of Strathclyde
Naveed Sattar	University of Glasgow
Alistair Seaman	Grounds for Learning
Kathryn Sharp	NHS GGC
Laura Stewart	NHS Tayside
Bruce Whyte	Glasgow Centre for Population Health
Debbie Willett	Play Scotland
Simon Williams	University of Glamorgan
David Williamson	sportscotland
Rachael Wood	NHS ISD

Appendices 2 and 3 attached- as pdfs- Short-Form and Long-Form Active Healthy Kids Scotland Report Cards.