

For immediate Release

GASP IS INVITED TO SPEAK AT A KEY TOBACCO CONTROL CONFERENCE IN BRUSSELS AS GUERNSEY CELEBRATES ONE OF THE THE LOWEST TEENAGE SMOKING RATES IN EUROPE

Latest figures show that Guernsey's teenage smoking rates are now the lowest in Europe alongside Iceland and Armenia.

The statistics were published by the European School Survey Project on Alcohol and other Drugs (ESPAD) and have been interpreted by Dr David Regis, Director of the Schools Health Education Unit in Exeter.

Dr Regis explains:

Guernsey has been monitoring tobacco use amongst young people in Guernsey for the past 17 years and there has been a significant decline over that time. In the most recent survey in 2007, approximately 19% of young people aged 15 years old smoked at least occasionally. This can be compared to the ESPAD survey that sees most countries' teenage smoking rates at 25-35% among 15-16 year-olds. There are some differences in the approaches to each study, but it seems that Guernsey can pride itself on being one of the leading European countries in tobacco reduction.

As a result of the findings GASP has been invited to speak at a key conference in Brussels next week. The conference, being held by the Association of Cancer Leagues, will focus on how best to promote smokefree messages and GASP will have the opportunity to promote Guernsey's community approach to protecting young people from the dangers of Smoking.

GASP's political patron Depuy Mahy is especially pleased to see the role that GASP can play in promoting Guernsey in a positive light:

It is very important the Guernsey's presents itself in a positive light whenever it can and that it reminds the wider world that we are a vibrant community. It is a real achievement for Guernsey that it has one of the lowest smoking rates in Europe and we are pleased to be able to share our experiences with other countries.

Alun Williams, Chairperson of GASP comments:

When we talk about the Guernsey experience we will be emphasising that we could not have been successful without the support of everyone in Guernsey. The island's young people in particular should take pride in seeing through the lies and deceit of the tobacco industry and turning away from the lure of cigarettes. There is, however, no room for complacency as some young people do smoke and we will use these results as a base for even more success in the future.

Please contact Alun Williams on tel 710821 or awilliams@education.gov.gg for more information