



Phil Batty
Chief Executive
Glasgow 2026 Commonwealth Games

15 April 2026

Dear Mr Batty

Open Letter: Coca-Cola Soft Drinks Sponsorship of the Glasgow 2026 Commonwealth Games

We are writing on behalf of the **Scottish Obesity Alliance (SOA)** – a coalition of public health organisations across Scotland – to express our disappointment with the recent announcement that the Glasgow 2026 Commonwealth Games has partnered with Coca-Cola as the official soft drinks sponsor, alongside Jubel Beer.

These partnerships are particularly concerning in light of your public emphasis on promoting active travel and free access to drinking water across Games venues, and your recent correspondence with the NCD Alliance Scotland, of which we are members. Aligning the Games with major alcohol and soft drinks brands risks undermining these ambitions and creates a conflicting public health narrative at a time when clarity and leadership are urgently needed.

Although we note that Coca-Cola Zero Sugar is positioned as the lead product, this does not address our fundamental concern about brand-level sponsorship. The Coca-Cola brand remains strongly associated with high fat, salt and sugar (HFSS) products, and its prominence within a family-focused, globally visible sporting event risks reinforcing unhealthy norms, particularly among children and young people. This is reflected in evidence from a recent survey of 1,046 young people aged 11–16, which found that 63% associate the brand with Coca-Cola Original, compared to just 15% with Coca-Cola Zero. This is especially concerning given commitments laid out in the Scottish Government’s Population Health Framework and the fact that Scotland is significantly off track in meeting its commitment to halve childhood obesity by 2030.

While marketed as a healthier alternative, Coca-Cola Zero Sugar is not without health implications. Even low- and zero-sugar soft drinks are harmful to oral health due to their high acidity, contributing to enamel erosion — an important consideration in Scotland, where dental decay remains a significant and preventable public health issue, and the leading cause of hospital admission requiring general anaesthetic among young children.



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More broadly, obesity shares common risk factors with a range of non-communicable diseases, and there is strong evidence that the marketing and visibility of such brands influences children's preferences and consumption patterns. These impacts are not felt equally and are most pronounced in Scotland's most deprived communities, where exposure to the marketing of unhealthy food and drink is greatest. In this context, the prominent association of a globally recognised HFSS brand with Glasgow 2026 risks reinforcing existing health inequalities, rather than supporting efforts to reduce them.

The announcement is particularly disappointing given the extensive and coordinated engagement undertaken last year by Obesity Action Scotland and the Scottish Obesity Alliance. As you are aware, this included a petition supported by over 170 signatories, as well as a formal letter from the President of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow, clearly articulating the expectation that Glasgow 2026 should be free from HFSS company sponsorship. That collective effort reflected a broad consensus across health, children and civic organisations that the Games should demonstrate leadership by creating a genuinely health-promoting sporting environment.

Against that backdrop, the decision to proceed with these partnerships raises serious questions about how those concerns by SOA members and partners were weighed and addressed. The Glasgow 2026 Commonwealth Games has a rare opportunity to set a progressive benchmark for major sporting events with public health, children's rights and sustainability at their core.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss this further and remain committed to working constructively with you and your colleagues to help ensure that Glasgow 2026 leaves a positive and health-focused legacy for the city and for Scotland.

Yours sincerely,

Julie Cameron

On behalf of the **Scottish Obesity Alliance**

Head of Obesity Action Scotland and Convenor of the Scottish Obesity Alliance



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