

Public Health (Wales) Bill: Consultation questions

Tobacco and Nicotine Products

The Bill includes proposals to ban the use of nicotine inhaling devices, such as e-cigarettes, in enclosed spaces like restaurants, pubs and at work. Shops will also have to join a register for retailers of tobacco and nicotine products, and it will become an offence to “hand over” tobacco and e-cigarettes to anyone under the age of 18.

Question 1

Do you agree that the use of e-cigarettes should be banned in enclosed public and work places in Wales, as is currently the case for smoking tobacco?

No, I do not. There is no substantive research, or evidence that they pose a threat to the individual or those within their surroundings. There are too many ‘could’ and ‘may’ in the evidence put forward by the Minister of Health. Even the BMA is equivocal about their use. Against the evidence backing this claim are highly credible bodies and organisations.

Question 2

Do you believe the provisions in the Bill will achieve a balance between the potential benefits to smokers wishing to quit with any potential dis-benefits related to the use of e-cigarettes?

No. There is evidence from many bodies such as Tenovus, Cancer Research Uk, and the body responsible for research into Tobacco Addiction that these are a very strong weapon in the armoury to assist people stop smoking cigarettes.

Question 3

Do you have any views on whether the use of e-cigarettes re-normalises smoking behaviours in smoke-free areas, and whether, given their appearance in replicating cigarettes, inadvertently promote smoking?

No of course it does not normalise the smoking of cigarettes. The early e-cigarettes looked like an actual cigarette. However, the cigarette used by the majority of vapers look more like pens or even torches. It is a massive leap to suggest they inadvertently promote smoking. I am proof of that.

Question 4

Do you have any views on whether e-cigarettes are particularly appealing to young people and could lead to a greater uptake of their use among this age group, and which may ultimately lead to smoking tobacco products?

Young people will experiment with all kind of illegal substances. Sadly, as I witness daily, cigarette smoking is still attracting some young people. These devices are hardly 'cool' and do not present as cigarettes. The only young person I have discussed this with told me that he was using an e-cigarette to get over his addiction to real cigarettes.

Question 5

Do you agree with the proposal to establish a national register of retailers of tobacco and nicotine products?

Yes, I think ensuring that particular products are safe and not potentially dangerous might be a wise development, however, what you would not want is a restriction on choice and a monopoly of businesses that may be backed by persons of dubious motivation – i.e. cigarette manufacturers.

Question 6

What are your views on creating a new offence for knowingly handing over tobacco and nicotine products to a person under 18, which is the legal age of sale in Wales?

I am not sure. If it helped youngster give up cigarettes, it might be helpful to make them available perhaps under some form of supervision.

Special Procedures

The Bill includes a proposal to create a compulsory licensing system for people who carry out special procedures in Wales. These special procedures are tattooing, body piercing, acupuncture and electrolysis. The places where these special procedures are carried out will also need to be approved.

Question 7

What are your views on creating a compulsory, national licensing system for practitioners of specified special procedures in Wales, and that the premises or vehicle from which the practitioners operate must be approved?

No views

Question 8

Do you agree with the types of special procedures defined in the Bill?

No views

Question 9

What are your views on the provision which gives Welsh Ministers the power to amend the list of special procedures through secondary legislation?

I am not sure what this would be mean for true democracy.

Intimate piercings

The Bill includes a proposal to ban intimate body piercings for anyone under the age of 16 in Wales.

Question 11

Do you believe an age restriction is required for intimate body piercing? What are your views on prohibiting the intimate piercing of anyone under the age of 16 in Wales?

Yes

Question 12

Do you agree with the list of intimate body parts defined in the Bill? Whether any other types of piercings (for example naval piercing, tongue piercing) should be prohibited on young people under the age of 16.

Yes

Community pharmacies

The Bill will require local health boards in Wales to review the need for pharmaceutical services in its area, and that any decisions relating to community pharmacies are based on the needs of local communities.

Question 13

Do you believe the proposals in the Bill will achieve the aim of improving the planning and delivery of pharmaceutical services in Wales?

Yes

Question 14

What are your views on whether the proposals will encourage existing pharmacies to adapt and expand their services in response to local needs?

Yes

Public toilets

The Bill includes a proposal that will require local authorities to prepare a local strategy to plan how they will meet the needs of their communities for accessing public toilet facilities. However, the Bill does not require local authorities to actually provide toilet facilities.

Question 15

What are your views on the proposal that each local authority in Wales will be under a duty to prepare and publish a local toilets strategy for its area?

Yes

Question 16

Do you believe that preparing a local toilet strategy will ultimately lead to improved provision of public toilets?

Yes

Question 17

Do you believe the provision in the Bill to ensure appropriate engagement with communities is sufficient to guarantee the views of local people are taken into account in the development of local toilet strategies?

Yes

Question 18

What are your views on considering toilet facilities within settings in receipt of public funding when developing local strategies?

Yes

Other comments

Question 19

Do you believe that the issues included in this Bill reflect the priorities for improving public health in Wales?

I am totally opposed to the proposals for e-cigarettes. Following the cigarette ban the effect, pub closures followed. ~The consequence was that customers disappeared, did not consume less alcohol but more! I recently spoke to an elderly gentleman who told me that since going on to e-cigarettes he was able to go to his local pub. The affect on his ability to socialise again was marked. Yes he was addicted to nicotine but he felt better mentally and ironically was drinking less.

Question 20

Are there any other areas of public health which you believe require legislation to help improve the health of people in Wales?

Access to facilities to help people tackle obesity. Slimming clubs are money makers and food like tobacco and alcohol can be considered addictive. Obesity is a real problem in Wales. The NHS are unable to provide for those people not yet in need of acute/chronic disease and to initiative have so far failed.

Question 21

Are there any other comments you would like to make on any aspect of the Bill?

I speak as someone who believes e-cigarettes saved my life. I am evangelical about seeking to divert people from smoking. I attended at least 6 courses of the anti-smoking clinics run by my health board. The drop off rate is high and success is low. Don't believe the statistics produced as I know how the follow up telephone calls were manipulated, that if, for example, you had actually avoided cigarettes for 6 months, that was taken as some indicator of success. I smoked for over 40 years, gave up several times but always lapsed. I have not smoked for over 4 years and will never go back. These products could e used as a force for good - ASH supports their use. Nicotine may be an addiction but you are not the moral police and it should be a matter of do no harm. Your reference from the WHO stance makes very dubious reading and I am afraid that you have drawn on bodies that support your premise rather than looked at the objective data, who have no special interest in the promotion of these product rather have seen clear positive outcomes from their use.