



## Response: Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Bill

**ASH Wales agrees that improving the well-being of Wales should take into account the needs of future generations. As part of this we believe that reducing smoking levels should be at the heart of any attempt to ensure the goal of a healthier Wales. Tobacco use is unquestionably one of the major public health concerns in Wales, and taking action at a local and national level is vital to secure a smokefree Wales for future generations.**

The two key principles that ASH Wales proposes, which need to be embedded in the Bill and taken forward at a local level, are:

1. **Smokefree spaces:** smokefree outdoor spaces need to be integral to all future planning considerations
2. **The principle of a smokefree generation:** a local focus on reducing uptake amongst young people and de-normalising smoking in our communities

Approximately 21% of the adult population in Wales are smokers<sup>1</sup>. It is estimated that some 5450 people die in Wales each year as a result of smoking<sup>2</sup>. This is an average of 454 people every month, or around 15 people dying every day in Wales of a smoking-attributable illness, including malignant cancers, respiratory and circulatory problems. 80% of all deaths from lung cancer in Wales were considered to be attributable to smoking<sup>3</sup>. Smoking is also linked to a host of other cancers including cancer of the pancreas, stomach, liver, bladder, kidney, uterine, cervix and myeloid leukaemia.

Smoking is also strongly linked to socio-economic deprivation and increased health inequalities, and Wales follows this trend. The highest rates of smoking prevalence and smoking-attributable mortality can be found in the most deprived areas of Wales, including Rhondda Cynon Taf, Merthyr Tydfil and Blaenau Gwent. People in Wales who reside in areas with the highest smoking prevalence rates also have the highest rates of lung cancer, the shortest life expectancy and the greatest delays in diagnosis.

Tobacco control measures are crucial in reducing smoking prevalence and the rates of smoking-attributable diseases. Consequently, ASH Wales believes they should form an integral part of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Bill. Specifically, we recommend the Bill should aim to reduce smoking prevalence rates among young people and introduce smokefree outdoor spaces.

In terms of the establishment of smokefree spaces in Wales we consider this to be a vital component of ensuring the healthier Wales goal of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Bill. The evidence that exposure to other people's smoke is dangerous to health is incontrovertible. Children are particularly vulnerable to the effects of second-hand smoke exposure, which has been linked to an increased risk of a range of illnesses, including lower respiratory tract infections, asthma, wheezing, middle ear infections, sudden unexpected death in infancy and invasive meningococcal disease. Consequently ASH Wales is strongly in favour of smokefree legislation, such as the ban on smoking in

cars carrying children, and smokefree policies including smokefree playgrounds, homes and sports grounds.

ASH Wales has already shown that smokefree spaces can be the way forward to promote a tobacco-free Wales for future generations. Our children are vital in the campaign towards a tobacco-free Wales and successful campaigns, like ASH Wales' 2013 Smokefree Playgrounds project, will help us move towards this goal. As a result of our campaigning, 18 out of 22 local authorities in Wales have implemented a smokefree playgrounds policy.

In Wales, 14% of 15 year old girls and 9% of 15 year old boys report smoking regularly<sup>3</sup>. Given the impact of smoking on health, therefore, tobacco control measures targeted at young people are essential. To this end ASH Wales favours the introduction of tobacco control programs in schools and youth clubs in Wales as a means to ensure all children in Wales are fully aware of the dangers associated with smoking.

Together with the above, ASH Wales additionally recommends that the Bill should be consistent across all Local Authorities and Health Boards in Wales, and should coincide with the Tobacco Control Action Plan and local service plans set out by the Welsh Government. This will ensure a joined up approach to tackling tobacco use in Wales.

### **About ASH Wales**

ASH Wales is the only public health charity in Wales whose work is exclusively dedicated to tackling the harm that tobacco causes in Welsh communities.

The organisation is involved in activities including:

- Advocating for tobacco control public health policy
- Undertaking tobacco control research projects
- Training young people and those who work with young people to provide factual information about the health, economic and environmental effects of smoking
- Engaging young people and professionals working with young people through the ASH Wales Filter project
- Bringing health information and advice to the heart of the community

We also oversee the Wales Tobacco or Health Network (a network of over 300 individual members) and the Wales Tobacco Control Alliance (an alliance of 35 voluntary and professional bodies in Wales), providing forums for sharing knowledge and best practice. Further information about our work can be found at <http://www.ashwales.org.uk>

<sup>1</sup> Welsh Health Survey

<sup>2</sup> Public Health Wales Observatory (2010). Lifestyle and Health: Wales and its Health Boards. Available online at: [http://www2.nphs.wales.nhs.uk:8080/PubHObservatoryProjDocs.nsf/85c50756737f79ac80256f2700534ea3/a1e8a36c3d05ab5c802576f5005054eb/\\$FILE/Lifestyle\\_Wales\\_Final\\_E.pdf](http://www2.nphs.wales.nhs.uk:8080/PubHObservatoryProjDocs.nsf/85c50756737f79ac80256f2700534ea3/a1e8a36c3d05ab5c802576f5005054eb/$FILE/Lifestyle_Wales_Final_E.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> HBSC International Team (2010)