

## Legislation and the Tattoo and Piercing Industry. A few words from the Tattoo & Piercing Industry Union

- 1- We feel that at present we have become a 'soft target' for legislation compared to what we see as the real problem, which is the underground of tattoo and piercing, the 'scratchers' working from home, the illegal face of our trade.
- 2- Every day our members and the local A&E see examples of shoddy and often dangerous work by underground tattooists and piercers. Unfortunately not much is being done about this, instead more legislation, rules, and regulations are laid at the door of established studios instead of these resources being directed at this illegal trade. There seems to be little desire to grasp this nettle, and so to show something is being done, more and more (and regionally different) red tape is being applied to the established licensed studios. This drives up our costs and has no effect on theirs.
- 3- With all the changes that we have helped implement in the past 10 years, we know that the general standard in the legitimate established studios is the best it has ever been. The inks are safer, the sterilization is safer, the needles are safer, the cleaning products are safer, and the tattooists and piercers are better trained.
- 4- We draw your attention to the 'Tattoo Toolkit' that we helped produce with Dartford Borough Council, the CIEH England, the HPA, and the HSA, as an example of what can be produced by us all working together.
- 5- When a tattoo or piercing goes wrong it will usually be presented at a local A&E department. We were recently surprised to learn that little if any information was requested or retained by A&E about the problems, and also that no distinction was made about if it was performed by a legitimate studio or by an illegal home scratcher or whatever. The recording of a few questions and answers could give us all a raft of information about the nature of the problems. If a simple form was completed before any treatment was administered, some degree of traceability would follow.
- 6- Historically it was impossible to get supplies of inks, needles, machines etc. unless you were a tattooist known to the other tattooists. The advent of Ebay etc. and Tattoo shows have changed all that, now anyone can obtain their requirements to be able to open an illegal tattoo or piercing studio from these sources. Try it yourself; type in 'Tattoo Kits' into any search engine online and see what comes up! Also we regularly see our local scratchers walking around tattoo shows with bags of supplies. In our opinion the 'Trade Supplies' should be restricted to certified photo ID checked tattooists only. The TPIU did approach Ebay to try to stop sales of tattoo equipment that was being used to scar and infect hundreds of people, but Ebay refused. We would like to see more control put in place by local and central government to ensure that supplies are only sold to established licensed studios, and commercial tattoo shows and conventions are not supplying the illegal trade.
- 7- The TPIU only recognizes an 'old style' in house apprenticeship at an established licensed studio, supported by relevant training modules such as 'First Aid in the studio environment', 'Cross Contamination' and 'Studio Record Keeping' etc. In the past few years we have helped to train tattooists, piercers, studio staff and EHO's at our training days and various seminars organized by local councils and the CIEH England. And as there is now a Tattoo & Piercing Industry Training company, we intend to make more modules available soon.
- 8- We look forward to working with the various organizations in Wales in the future, and request that you keep us informed of any new relevant information. Thank you.