

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. Vapour has been shown to be 95–99% safer than tobacco smoke, and the decision should be left with property owners to decide on whether vaping is allowed on their premises.

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 I do not. There needs to be more encouragement and incentive to help current smokers to switch to vaping, and forcing them outside to smoking areas with lots of tobacco smoke will not achieve this at all, especially in the early days of them trying to switch. I have been tobacco-free for almost 3 years due to vaping and have felt the health and financial benefits for myself – the more people I can encourage to do the same, the better. There are no down-sides to vaping.

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?

The use of personal vapourisers absolutely does not re-normalise smoking in any way – it normalises NOT smoking. As to the comment about their appearance replicating tobacco cigarettes just shows how out of touch with reality the Minister is – hardly any vapers use 1st generation cig-a-likes, they are much more likely to use 2nd and 3rd Generation devices which look NOTHING LIKE tobacco cigarettes, are effective at helping smokers quit tobacco, and do not promote smoking AT ALL.

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?

No, e-cigs are not particularly appealing to young people – they are to some, but this is almost exclusively in young people who are already tobacco-smokers. The Gateway theory has been disproved time and time again in studies in Europe and the USA, showing that e-cig use is a gateway AWAY FROM tobacco use, and not the other way round. The latest study of teenage use of e-cigs in the US shows a rise, but that is in conjunction with the lowest-ever recorded rates of tobacco smoking in that age group, more proof that e-cigs are a gateway AWAY FROM tobacco use for young people.

Question 5

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

No, for several reasons. 1. It would treat 2 products at either end of the scale of harm to health in the same way. 2. The administrative burden to compile, maintain and enforce this would be immense and costly. 3. It would serve no useful purpose.

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?

For tobacco only. If this was implemented for any nicotine-containing products, then I assume there would have to be an exemption for doctors prescribing and pharmacists dispensing things like nicotine patches, gums and inhalers to children of 12 years old and above to try and stop them smoking where they have been found to be doing so? If so, there should also be exemption for parents to give their children these and vapour products in the same circumstances, i.e. where they have found their child to be smoking and want to help them stop.

Other comments

Question 19

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

No I do not. This particular Bill seems to be either targeting things that could improve the health of large numbers (in the case of vaping/e-cigs), or trying to disproportionately regulate things which cause minimal quantities of harm (tattoo and piercing parlours) to very small numbers of people. The public toilet issue would require considerable funding to be effective, it is a provision that a lot of Local Authorities have had to cut back on over the last couple of decades as budgets have been cut – will there magically be a pot of money found by the Assembly to pay for this?

Question 20

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

Alcohol availability, excess consumption, pricing and access by under-18s is a far bigger problem in Wales than all the things in this proposed Bill put together, yet no action put forward to combat any aspect of this. The obvious question is Why not?

Question 21

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

In these austere times, I cannot understand why the Assembly government is proposing a Bill which will cost a lot to implement for very little if any gain in Public Health. Indeed, it has the potential to do more harm than good if the vaping/e-cig elements are passed. It's about time the Assembly government sorted it's priorities out.