

P-05-898 Ban the use of A boards in Wales, Correspondence – Guide Dogs Cymru to Chair, 22.11.19



Guide Dogs Cymru
Building 3
Eastern Business Park
St Mellons
Cardiff
CF3 5EA

Petition P-05-898. Ban the use of A boards in Wales

Dear Mr Lewis,

Thank you for seeking our views on this Petition. Our policy is that the needs of pedestrians, and especially those with a vision impairment or limited mobility, must take precedent, and A-boards should be appropriately licensed by local authorities. They do present a danger to vulnerable pedestrians as there is no consistent approach to their location. They are moved around so that an individual with sight loss can encounter a clear walkway one day, only to find it obstructed by an A board on their next trip. Any unexpected hazards increase the risk of collision, dealing with obstacles can make getting out and about much more challenging, and, particularly if there is an injury, can impact on an individual's confidence.

Guide Dogs, Eastern Business Park, St Mellons, CARDIFF, CF3 5EA, Guide Dogs, Adeilad 3, Parc Busnes Dwyreiniol Llaneirwg, CAERDYDD, CF3 5EA

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In terms of tackling the problem, enforcement of licensing conditions is inconsistent, so that A boards pop up in random locations overnight, or are moved around to achieve maximum visibility. They can block footways and obstruct access to dropped kerbs, but reporting such issues is difficult and the process not well understood. We would recommend that A boards are only permitted where they do not present a danger to pedestrians, and that there is a cap on the number permitted for each retailer. We would also wish to see more stringent conditions and higher penalties for infringement, and an easier means for the public to report A boards which are causing an obstruction.

A Wales wide set of recommendations on the licensing and location of A boards, developed in partnership with local authorities and other interested parties, would contribute to the Active Travel agenda, making our streets a more inclusive and safer environment. These could specify the size and positioning of A boards, and ensure that they did not block the footway or put pedestrians at risk by having to step into the road to avoid them.

We would be very interested to discuss this matter further with the Committee as the design of our street scape is particularly relevant to blind and partially sighted people.

With kind regards,

Jonathan Mudd

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