



Children's Rights Impact Assessment

1. Policy objectives

The Tobacco and Vapes Act 2026 ("the 2026") introduced a new age of sale for tobacco products across the UK. From 1 January 2027, it will be an offence to sell tobacco products (as well as herbal smoking products and cigarette papers) to anyone born on or after 1 January 2009. This replaces the previous age of sale of 18 years. In practice, this means that the age of sale will gradually rise. The policy aims to create a 'smoke-free generation' (SFG), reducing tobacco use in the UK population over prevent future generations from ever taking up smoking, as there is no safe age to smoke.

These Regulations support the SFG policy by setting out the details of the warning notices that must be displayed the point of sale for all tobacco products and, where bulk tobacconists display tobacco products, at the entrance to tobacco areas in bulk tobacconists premises.

The requirement to display age of sale notices aims to support awareness of the age of sale restrictions and encourage compliance. The Regulations support this by ensuring that the notices and the text displayed on them are large enough to be clearly visible to customers and retailers, while still being practical for retailers to display.

Whilst the notices themselves support the public health aim of ensuring children do not have access to tobacco products, the Regulations mainly amend the minimum size of the required font, and the dimensions of the notice, to ensure that the new text statements are bilingual and comfortably fit on the notice so that the wording is easily visible.

2. Gathering evidence and engaging with children and young people

Smoking causes harm throughout people's lives, being responsible for over [3800 deaths per year in Wales](#). It is a major risk factor for poor maternal and infant outcomes, significantly increasing the chance of stillbirth and can trigger asthma in children.

There is very significant amount of evidence on the harms caused to children by smoking and inhalation of second-hand smoke as well as the impact that starting smoking at a young age has on the likelihood of continuing to smoke. The [views of children and young people in Wales](#), particularly concerns around vapes use were considered during the consultation on the Tobacco and Vapes Bill and the full impact of the SFG policy, including its beneficial impact on children was appraised in an [Impact Assessment](#) during the Bill process. These Regulations support the SFG policy by clearly communicating the age of sale requirements to prevent children having access to tobacco products.

To support the implementation of the SFG policy and these Regulations, the Welsh Government will be undertaking communication activities, some of which will be targeted at children and young people, to ensure there is a broad awareness of the age of sale requirements and the aim of the policy in protecting the health of children and young people.

3. Analysing the evidence and assessing the impact

Over time, the SFG policy aims to reduce tobacco use in Wales. This will improve public health by continuing the downward trajectory of tobacco use and support the aim of a [smoking prevalence in Wales of 5% by 2030](#), thereby reducing the harms associated with tobacco use. A key theme of the Smokefree Wales Strategy is '[Future Generations](#)' and preventing uptake of smoking amongst children and young people. These Regulations and the SFG policy they support will support the ambition by preventing future generations of children and young people from ever taking up smoking as well as narrowing health inequalities and a reduction in the levels of exposure to second hand smoke, which is particularly harmful to the health of children.

The Welsh Government collects data on tobacco use amongst children and adults via the [National Survey for Wales](#) and the [Schools Health Research](#) Network which will be reviewed annually to monitor the implementation of the policy and these Regulations, particularly on smoking uptake amongst children.

In relation to smoking during pregnancy, 12% of pregnant women were recorded as smokers at their [initial assessment in 2025](#), which is known to increase the risk of complications during pregnancy and beyond such as low birth weight, premature birth and stillbirth. Smoking rates were highest among younger mothers and mothers from White and Mixed ethnic backgrounds. Smoking in pregnancy will continue to be monitored to demonstrate the impact of the SFG policy and these Regulations.

4. Communicating with Children and Young People

To support the implementation of the SFG policy and these Regulations, the Welsh Government will be undertaking communication activities, many of which will be targeted at children and young people, to ensure there is a broad awareness of the age of sale requirements and the aim of the policy in protecting the health of children and young people.

The impact of this communications work and the wider legislation will be measured before and after the communications campaign to understand awareness amongst children and young people.

5. Monitoring and Review

As detailed above, monitoring of smoking rates amongst adults, children and during pregnancy will be undertaken to measure the impact over time of the SFG policy and these Regulations.

The approach to monitoring these Regulations is also expected to be through wider evaluation of the 2026 Act, given that these Regulations makes consequential amendments as a result of that Act. Section 165 of the 2026 Act creates a statutory requirement for the Secretary of State to carry out a review of its operation within 4-7 years of passage. We expect this review to capture any relevant findings as part of consideration of the operation of the age of sale provisions introduced by the Act.