



EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

A. Proposal

1. Title of proposal

The Tobacco and Vapes Act 2026 (Age of Sale Notices and Consequential Amendments) (Wales) Regulations 2026

2. What is your proposal aiming to achieve?

These Regulations support the implementation of the Smokefree Generation ('SFG') policy in Wales which will prevent anyone born on or after 1 January 2009 from ever being sold tobacco products. The aims of the SFG policy are to promote public health, prevent disease and protect health and the wellbeing of the people of Wales by reducing tobacco use over time.

These Regulations set the minimum size requirements for age of sale notices that retailers selling tobacco products in Wales must display on their premises from 1 January 2027, following the introduction of a new age of sale for these products as part of the Tobacco and Vapes Act 2026 ("the 2026 Act"). It also amends the requirements for age of sale notices that bulk tobacconists, which display tobacco products, must display at the entrance to tobacco areas on their premises. Finally, it makes consequential amendments to legislation that restricts the display of tobacco products and price lists on premises in Wales, to reflect the new age of sale for tobacco products.

The requirement to display an age of sale notice aims to support awareness of the age of sale restrictions for tobacco products and encourage compliance. The Regulations will ensure 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.

3. When did work start on the proposal?

April 26

4. Which organisations, groups or communities are likely to be affected?

Retailers of tobacco and bulk tobacconists

The public

Local authorities

Trading standards officers

Third sector

B. Impact on, and engagement with, people in protected groups

AGE

1. What evidence is available and what is its source? Include the findings from any engagement.

The Regulations will support the smokefree generation (SFG) policy established in the 2026 Act by providing new signage requirements for tobacco and bulk tobacco retailers in Wales. The Regulations will affect anyone born on or after 1 January 2009 and make it clear that it is illegal to sell tobacco products to anyone born on or after this date.

Over the last 30 years, governments have taken decisive action to reduce smoking rates, saving thousands of lives as a result. However tobacco remains a leading cause of preventable ill health, disability and death, responsible for [over 3,800 deaths a year](#) in Wales. This means that on average 10.7% of all deaths in Wales amongst those aged 35 and over in these years were attributable to smoking. [No other consumer product kills up to two-thirds of its users](#). The [independent review in 2022](#) found that, if we do not act, nearly half a million more people will die from smoking by 2030.

... when used exactly as recommended by the manufacturer, cigarettes are the one legal consumer product that will kill most users...

The Khan review: making smoking obsolete (2022)

Smoking causes harm throughout people's lives. It is a [major risk factor for poor maternal and infant outcomes](#), significantly increasing the chance of stillbirth and can trigger asthma in children. It leads to people needing care and support on average [a decade earlier than they would have otherwise](#), often while still of working age. [Smokers lose an average of ten years of life expectancy](#), or around one year for every 4 smoking years.

Smoking causes around 1 in 4 of all UK cancer deaths and is responsible for the [great majority of lung cancer cases](#). Smoking is also a major cause of [premature heart disease, stroke and heart failure](#) and [increases the risk of dementia in the elderly](#). Non-smokers are exposed to second-hand smoke (passive smoking) which means that through no choice of their own many come to harm - in particular children, pregnant women, and their babies.

The tobacco epidemic is one of the biggest public health threats the world has ever faced... All forms of tobacco use are harmful, and there is no safe level of exposure to tobacco.

World Health Organization (2020)

As a result, smoking puts significant pressure on the NHS. Over the period 2020-22, an estimated [17,195](#) hospital admissions per year in Wales were due to smoking. This means that on average 3.4% of all hospital admissions in Wales amongst those aged 35 and over in these years were attributable to smoking.

It is estimated that the total costs of smoking in Wales are [£1.56 billion every year](#). The annual cost of smoking amounts to £499 per person, £622 per adult, and £4,661 for every adult who smokes in Wales. This includes an annual £670 million in loss to productivity, through smoking related lost earnings, unemployment, and early death. The [£650 million cost](#) of treating and supporting smokers who experience long-term illness and disability represents 5% of Wales's health and social care budget.

Smoking and the harms it causes are also closely linked to deprivation with those who are [unemployed, on low incomes or living in areas of deprivation are far more likely to smoke than the general population](#). Smoking attributable mortality rates are [2.1 times higher](#) in the most deprived local authorities than in the least deprived.

Most smokers know about these risks and, because of them, want to quit - but the addictive nature of cigarettes means they cannot. The majority of smokers start in their youth with [more than 4 in 5 smokers start before the age of 20](#) and are then addicted for life. [Three-quarters of current smokers would never have started if they had the choice again](#). In short, it is much easier to prevent people from starting smoking in the first place. The SFG policy, supported by these Regulations therefore aims to protect children from the many health problems smoking causes, including cancer and cardiovascular disease, and to help future generations live longer, healthier lives. The policy makes it illegal to sell tobacco to anyone born on or after 1 January 2009, so that as this group gets older they can never legally be sold tobacco, saving them from a lifetime of addiction and health harms caused by tobacco. This will prevent future generations from ever taking up smoking, as there is no safe age to smoke.

There is strong public support for action: [77% of adults support government action to limit smoking](#) or think the government should do more.

2. Is any evidence unavailable or uncertain?

No. The policy intention is clear and based on robust evidence.

3. Who have you engaged with, why and how?

In depth and detailed consultation on policy proposals has taken place. From October 2023 to December 2023, the then UK government held an open [UK wide consultation](#) on policy proposals for inclusion in the Tobacco and Vapes Bill. There were 27,921 responses, including 896 from organisations and 27,025 from individuals in both personal and professional capacities. This consultation included the changes to the age of sale for tobacco products; 63.2% of respondents agreed with the proposal, 32.2% disagreed and 4.6% said they didn't know. It also included a question on whether respondents agreed that age of sale notices in retail premises would need to be updated to reflect the new age of sale, to which 71.8% of respondents agreed, 22.6% disagreed and 5.6% said they did not know. While the consultation did not ask specifically about the size or appearance of the notices, a small number of respondents provided comments that were relevant to these issues. These included responses suggesting that we should seek to replicate previous size requirements and that the signs should be in large font and easily visible, as well as others suggesting that A3 is too large.

[The Tobacco and Vapes Bill](#) progressed through the UK Parliament and received detailed and in-depth scrutiny by MPs, Peers and Stakeholders. The Bill received Royal Assent on 29 April 2026.

We have not considered it necessary to run a further consultation in relation to the specifications of the notices or the requirements for bulk tobaccoists, given the consultations already taken place. Similarly, this was not considered necessary for the provisions in relation to display of products and prices, which make consequential amendments as a result of the new age of sale, which was already consulted on. The additional impact of these will be minimal. A separate consultation, which includes proposals on the display of products in scope of the 2026 Act, was launched on [10 July](#)

2026. As part of this, questions on removing exemptions from display restrictions for bulk tobaccoists are included. Should these proposals be implemented, further amendments to the [Tobacco Advertising and Promotion \(Display of Prices\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2012](#) may be required.

4. How has evidence affected your proposal?

There is very strong evidence on the harms smoking causes and of the benefits of legislation to prevent tobacco sales. The evidence developed during the consultation and the progress of the Bill through the UK Parliament have informed the SI and its contents.

5. What are the likely impacts of the proposal?

The Regulations support the implementation of the SFG in Wales which will prevent anyone born on or after 1 January 2009 from ever being sold tobacco products.

The 2026 Act introduced a requirement for tobacco retailers in Wales to display a notice containing both the following statements—

“It is illegal to sell tobacco products to anyone born on or after 1 January 2009”

“Mae’n anghyfreithlon gwerthu cynhyrchion tybaco i unrhyw un a anwyd ar neu ar ôl 1 Ionawr 2009”.

in a prominent position visible at points of sale.

This comes into force at the same time as the new age of sale and replaces the previous age of sale notice requirement, which reflected the old offence of selling to anyone under the age of 18. The requirement to display an age of sale notice aims to support awareness of the age of sale restrictions and encourage compliance. The Regulations set out the minimum size for these notices, and the minimum size of the statement on the notice, for premises in Wales, to support the effective implementation of the policy from 1 January 2027. It aims to ensure 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.

The Regulations will ensure the public can see the notice and be made aware of the new age of sale requirements.

The Regulations will promote public health, prevent disease and protect the health and the wellbeing of children and young people. The health benefits of fewer people taking up smoking would lead to:

- Reduced costs to the NHS and social care
- Higher productivity/earnings, reduced costs, and reduced ill-health for those that otherwise might have started smoking and developed health conditions
- Reduced adult and child ill-health caused by second hand smoke including avoidable treatment costs
- Reduction in health inequalities
- Higher spending and total profits in other sectors of the economy as would-be smokers divert spending.

6. What steps will you take to enhance positive or reduce negative impacts?

The implementation of the 2026 Act is underway and is being supported by detailed [guidance](#) documents including a [template sign](#) and a communications campaign to ensure all stakeholders are aware of the smokefree generation provisions coming into force on 1 January 2026. These activities will maximise the beneficial effects of the policy.

DISABILITY

7. What evidence is available and what is its source? Include the findings from any engagement.

In developing the signage requirements, guidance from the [RNIB](#) on creating accessible resources was considered and conformed with.

8. Is any evidence unavailable or uncertain?

None

9. Who have you engaged with, why and how?

In depth stakeholder engagement as set out in section 3 has taken place to inform the smokefree generation policy and the Regulations which supports the policy.

10. How has evidence affected your proposal?

The RNIB evidence was used in the design of the signage to ensure it is accessible for those affected by sight loss.

The evidence developed during the consultation and the progress of the Bill through the UK Parliament have informed the Regulations and its contents.

11. What are the likely impacts of the proposal?

Details in Section 5. The Regulations provides details on the requirements of the age of sale notice which has been designed to ensure the notice and the text displayed on them are large enough to be clearly visible to all customers and retailers, while still being practical for retailers to display. The Regulations will therefore ensure the public can see the notice and be made aware of the new age of sale requirements.

12. What steps will you take to enhance positive or reduce negative impacts?

As set out Section 6.

RACE

13. What evidence is available and what is its source? Include the findings from any engagement.

Strong evidence as set out in Section 1. No impact on race – the Regulations apply equally to all.

14. Is any evidence unavailable or uncertain?

No

15. Who have you engaged with, why and how?

In depth stakeholder engagement as set out in section 3 has taken place to inform the SFG policy and these Regulations which support the policy.

16. How has evidence affected your proposal?

The evidence developed during the consultation and the progress of the Bill through the UK Parliament have informed the content of the Regulations.

17. What are the likely impacts of the proposal?

Details in Section 5. The Regulations provide details on the requirements of the age of sale notice which has been designed to ensure the notice and the text displayed on them are large enough to be clearly visible to all customers and retailers, while still being practical for retailers to display. The Regulations will therefore ensure the public can see the notice and be made aware of the new age of sale requirements.

18. What steps will you take to enhance positive or reduce negative impacts?

As set out in section 6.

RELIGION, BELIEF OR NON-BELIEF

19. What evidence is available and what is its source? Include the findings from any engagement.

Strong evidence as set out in Section 1. No impact on religion, belief or non-belief – the Regulations apply equally to all.

20. Is any evidence unavailable or uncertain?

No

21. Who have you engaged with, why and how?

In depth stakeholder engagement as set out in Section 3 has taken place to inform the SFG policy and content of the Regulations which supports the policy.

22. How has evidence affected your proposal?

The evidence developed during the consultation and the progress of the Bill through the UK Parliament have informed the content of the Regulations.

23. What are the likely impacts of the proposal?

Details in Section 5. The Regulations provide details on the requirements of the age of sale notice which has been designed to ensure the notice and the text displayed on them are large enough to be clearly visible to all customers and retailers, while still being practical for retailers to display. The Regulations will therefore ensure the public can see the notice and be made aware of the new age of sale requirements.

24. What steps will you take to enhance positive or reduce negative impacts?

As set out in Section 6.

SEX

25. What evidence is available and what is its source? Include the findings from any engagement.

Strong evidence as set out in Section 1. No impact on sex – the Regulations apply equally to all

26. Is any evidence unavailable or uncertain?

No

27. Who have you engaged with, why and how?

In depth stakeholder engagement as set out in section 3 has taken place to inform the SFG policy and these Regulations which supports the policy.

28. How has evidence affected your proposal?

The evidence developed during the consultation and the progress of the Bill through the UK Parliament have informed the Regulations and their contents.

29. What are the likely impacts of the proposal?

Details in Section 5. The Regulations provide details on the requirements of the age of sale notice which has been designed to ensure the notice and the text displayed on them are large enough to be clearly visible to all customers and retailers, while still being practical for retailers to display. These Regulations will therefore ensure the public can see the notice and be made aware of the new age of sale requirements.

30. What steps will you take to enhance positive or reduce negative impacts

As set out in Section 6

GENDER REASSIGNMENT

31. What evidence is available and what is its source? Include the findings from any engagement.

Strong evidence as set out in Section 1. No impact on gender reassignment – the Regulations apply equally to all.

32. Is any evidence unavailable or uncertain?

No.

33. Who have you engaged with, why and how?

In depth stakeholder engagement as set out in section 3 has taken place to inform the SFG policy and content of these Regulations which supports the policy.

34. How has evidence affected your proposal?

The evidence developed during the consultation and the progress of the Bill through the UK Parliament have informed the content of the Regulations.

35. What are the likely impacts of the proposal?

Details in Section 5. The Regulations provide details on the requirements of the age of sale notice which has been designed to ensure the notice and the text displayed on

them are large enough to be clearly visible to all customers and retailers, while still being practical for retailers to display. The Regulations will therefore ensure the public can see the notice and be made aware of the new age of sale requirements.

36. What steps will you take to enhance positive or reduce negative impacts?

As set out in Section 6

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

37. What evidence is available and what is its source? Include the findings from any engagement.

Strong evidence as set out in Section 1. No impact on sexual orientation – the Regulations apply equally to all.

38. Is any evidence unavailable or uncertain?

No

39. Who have you engaged with, why and how?

In depth stakeholder engagement as set out in section 3 has taken place to inform the SFG policy and these Regulations which support the policy.

40. How has evidence affected your proposal?

The evidence developed during the consultation and the progress of the Bill through the UK Parliament have informed the content of the Regulations.

41. What are the likely impacts of the proposal?

Details in Section 5. The Regulations provide details on the requirements of the age of sale notice which has been designed to ensure the notice and the text displayed on them are large enough to be clearly visible to all customers and retailers, while still being practical for retailers to display. These Regulations will therefore ensure the public can see the notice and be made aware of the new age of sale requirements.

42. What steps will you take to enhance positive or reduce negative impacts?

As set out in Section 6

PREGNANCY AND MATERNITY

43. What evidence is available and what is its source? Include the findings from any engagement.

Strong evidence as set out in Section 1. No impact on pregnancy – the Regulations apply equally to all.

44. Is any evidence unavailable or uncertain?

No

45. Who have you engaged with, why and how?

In depth stakeholder engagement as set out in section 3 has taken place to inform the SFG policy and content of these Regulations which supports the policy.

46. How has evidence affected your proposal?

The evidence developed during the consultation and the progress of the Bill through the UK Parliament have informed the content of the Regulations.

47. What are the likely impacts of the proposal?

Details in Section 5. In relation to smoking during pregnancy, smoking is a significant risk for poor pregnancy-associated health outcomes. [12% of pregnant women were recorded as smokers at their initial assessment in 2025 in Wales](#), 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 also highest among younger mothers and mothers from White and Mixed ethnic backgrounds. Reducing uptake of smoking through the SFG policy is likely to have a positive impact on smoking in pregnancy rates in Wales and the health of babies and children.

The Regulations provide details on the requirements of the age of sale notice which has been designed to ensure the notice and the text displayed on them are large enough to be clearly visible to all customers and retailers, while still being practical for retailers to display. The Regulations will therefore ensure the public can see the notice and be made aware of the new age of sale requirements.

48. What steps will you take to enhance positive or reduce negative impacts?

As set out in Section 6.

MARRIAGE AND CIVIL PARTNERSHIP

49. What evidence is available and what is its source? Include the findings from any engagement.

Strong evidence as set out in Section 1. No impact on marriage and civil partnership – the Regulations apply equally to all.

50. Is any evidence unavailable or uncertain?

No

51. Who have you engaged with, why and how?

In depth stakeholder engagement as set out in section 3 has taken place to inform the SFG policy and these Regulations which support the policy.

52. How has evidence affected your proposal?

The evidence developed during the consultation and the progress of the Bill through the UK Parliament have informed the content of the Regulations.

53. What are the likely impacts of the proposal?

Details in Section 5. The Regulations provide details on the requirements of the age of sale notice which has been designed to ensure the notice and the text displayed on them are large enough to be clearly visible to all customers and retailers, while still being practical for retailers to display. The Regulations will therefore ensure the public can see the notice and be made aware of the new age of sale requirements.

54. What steps will you take to enhance positive or reduce negative impacts?

As set out Section 6.

C. Publication and Monitoring

1. Is this EqIA ready for publication on the Welsh Government website?

Yes

2. If you cannot publish the EqIA please explain why.

N/A.

3. Is this EqIA an update on a version previously published?

No

4. How will you monitor and evaluate progress on the equality issues identified in this EqIA?

The Welsh Government will engage closely with retail organisations and enforcement teams to ensure the requirements in the Regulations are being effective. The Welsh Government continues to work with stakeholders to support the wider Act's implementation and SFG policy in Wales and has established an advisory group to support these Regulations and the Act's provisions more generally.

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 SFG policy and these Regulations, particularly on smoking uptake amongst children and smoking as it relates to the factors assessed above.

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 in pregnancy rates will continue to be monitored to demonstrate the impact of the SFG policy and these Regulations.

The approach to monitoring these Regulations is also expected to be through wider evaluation of the Act, given that these Regulations makes consequential amendments as a result of that Act. Section 165 of that 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.

[Guidance](#) has been published on the new age of sale provisions for tobacco products, herbal smoking products and cigarette papers. This includes guidance on the proposed requirements for age of sale notices and the proposed change to requested display, with references to these still being subject to Senedd approval. The guidance will be updated to reflect the final position following Senedd scrutiny of these Regulations.

D. Authorisation

Declaration by the Deputy Director / Senior Responsible Officer (SRO):

I am satisfied that the impact of the proposal has been properly assessed and recorded in accordance with guidance, and that the requirement for publication has been duly considered.

Signature: Ed Wilson

Department: Health, Care and Prevention Group

Date: 8 October 2026