



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Welsh Government Integrated Impact Assessment Record

Proposal summary

Smoking remains one of the leading causes of preventable illness and death in Wales, causing around **3800 deaths** and costing an estimated **£1.56 billion every year**. It causes cancer, heart disease and respiratory illness and places a burden on smokers, their families with around £650 million spent each year treating and supporting smokers who experience long-term illness and disability, representing about 5 per cent of Wales's health and social care budget. The broader economic costs of smoking are also significant through lost productivity (£670 million), as smoking related illness prevents people from working and contributing to the economy and environmental costs (£241 million) including the costs of fires, litter and air pollution. Smoking is also strongly linked to health inequalities with smoking prevalence in the most deprived areas of Wales (22.6%) is more than three times higher than in the least deprived areas (6.8%), reflecting broader socioeconomic inequalities.

Whilst the NHS smoking cessation service **Help Me Quit** provides free evidence-based support for smokers to help individuals quit smoking for good, around **10%** of people in Wales smoke and **1.8%** of young people in Years 7 to 11 reported smoking at least weekly. Whilst smoking rates are decreasing (13% of adults smoked in 2022-23), preventing smoking uptake, particularly amongst children and young people is a priority. 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 Tobacco and Vapes Act 2026 Act ("The 2026 Act") 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. This policy aims to create a 'smoke-free generation' (SFG), reducing tobacco use in the UK population over time.

The 2026 Act provides that regulations are required by the Welsh Ministers setting out the requirements as to size and appearance for the tobacco age of sale warning notices (the "age of sale notice") that must be displayed in Wales in a prominent position at the point of sale at every premises at which tobacco is sold by retail. The requirement to display an age of sale notice and wording that it must contain is included in Section 6 of the 2026 Act and states:

"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".

This requirement 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 Tobacco and Vapes Act 2026 (Age of Sale Notices and Consequential Amendments) (Wales) Regulations 2026 (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.

These Regulations therefore set out the minimum size for these notices, and the minimum size of the statement on the notice, for premises in Wales. The Regulations also amend the requirements for age of sale notices that bulk tobacconists, (defined in [The Tobacco Advertising and Promotion \(Display\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2012 regulation 2](#)), which display tobacco products, must display at the entrance to tobacco areas on their premises. Finally, the Regulations make 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.

Well-being of Future Generations Act questions

1. How have the five ways of working shaped the development and implementation of this policy or legislation?

The Regulations support the implementation of the SFG policy in Wales which will prevent anyone born on or after 1 January 2009 from ever being sold tobacco products. The Regulations and SFG policy will further the downward trajectory of smoking in Wales, reducing the societal impacts that smoking has in Wales and supporting the Welsh Government's ambition of achieving a [smoking prevalence in Wales of 5% by 2030](#).

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 will prevent future generations of children and young people from ever taking up smoking which will have a beneficial impact on their health and support the narrowing of health inequalities. Reducing smoking prevalence will also reduce children's exposure to second hand smoke, which is particularly harmful to their health.

The Regulations and the SFG policy will therefore promote public health, prevent disease and protect the health and the wellbeing of children and young people in Wales by reducing tobacco use over time.

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.

2. Who have you collaborated with and involved when developing the proposal, and to understand its impacts, including on people, households, public bodies, businesses and the third sector (e.g. through engagement with relevant stakeholders or public consultation?)

Other Governments and stakeholders, including enforcement teams, third sector and retail bodies have all been involved during the development of the SFG policy and these Regulations.

In depth and detailed consultation on the SFG 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. This 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 size A3 is too large.

As part of the Tobacco and Vapes Bill documents, detailed consideration of the impacts of the proposal was undertaken and [published](#). For stakeholders in Wales, throughout the Bill process and during the development of these Regulations and the wider SFG policy, sustained and detailed collaboration has taken place to ensure the impacts are understood and taken account of as part of the policy development process.

3. How does the policy contribute to sustainable development and long-term well-being outcomes?

The Regulations will promote public health, prevent disease and protect the health and the wellbeing of the people of Wales, particularly children and young people. The Strategy [A smoke-free Wales](#) establishes the long-term ambition of Wales becoming smoke-free by 2030. These Regulations and the SFG policy support the long-term ambition to improve public health in Wales by reducing tobacco use in Wales

4. What are the key impacts (positive, negative, and opportunities) across each of the seven well-being goals?

The Regulations will positively support all seven well-being goals by reducing smoking uptake which has very significant health, economic and societal impacts in Wales.

5. What evidence, including reports under the Act, has informed the policy, and how will it support ongoing decision-making?

The Well-being of Future Generations Act was considered at all stages during development of the Tobacco and Vapes Bill and now as part of its implementation. The Regulations and the SFG policy strongly support the Well-being of Future Generations Act by aiming to improve health and wellbeing.

Summary of Impact Assessments for this proposal

Mandatory publication (if the Impact Assessment is required)

Equality Impact Assessment

Completed: Yes

Children's Rights Impact Assessment

Completed: Yes

Health Impact Assessment

Completed: No- the decision is not strategic in nature.

Published: A summary of the decision is published

Impact Assessments that are mandatory and required for sign off

Welsh Language Impact Assessment

Completed: Yes

Data Protection Impact Assessment Screening

Completed: Yes

Other Impact Assessments

Biodiversity Impact Assessment

Completed: not required for this proposal

Rural Proofing Impact Assessment

Completed: not required for this proposal

Sustainable Land Management Impact Assessment

Completed: not required for this proposal

Carbon Impact Assessment

Completed: not required for this proposal

Duty of Quality (Health) Impact Assessment

Completed: not required for this proposal

Socio-economic Impact Assessment

Completed: not required for this proposal