

[Creating a smokefree generation and tackling youth vaping](#)

Closed 6th December 2023, 11.59pm

**This response is endorsed by members of the WTCA. Submitted on 05.12.23**

**Creating a smokefree generation**

1. Do you agree or disagree that the age of sale for tobacco products should be changed so that anyone born on or after 1 January 2009 will never be legally sold (and also in Scotland, never legally purchase) tobacco products?

- Agree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please explain your answer and provide evidence or your opinion to support further development of our approach. (maximum 300 words)

We welcome the proposal. Tobacco is a uniquely lethal product which kills up to 2 in 3 long term users when used as intended. Smoking costs the Welsh NHS more than £300m a year and places a significant burden on social care and the wider economy through early disease and death. Smoking is a key driver of health inequalities and causes 16 types of cancer, heart disease, COPD, strokes and a myriad of other health harms. Smoking is an addiction most start as teenagers rather than an adult choice, **with 77% in Wales saying they tried their first cigarette in childhood** (ASH YouGov2022). Among those who try smoking, 70% will go on to be daily smokers. Raising the age of sale is likely to both delay smoking uptake and reduce the number of young people who start smoking in the first place. After bold policy moves in the 2000s, when the age of sale was raised from 16 to 18, and smoking in enclosed public places was banned, smoking rates declined. There is already significant levels of public support for this measure. Polling in Wales in November 2023 showed **62% of adults in Wales support these measures to raise the age of sale** (ASH Wales / YouGov), **with 59% supporting a goal to make Wales a country where no-one smokes**. A comprehensive communication strategy in the run up to implementation, as was carried out for the smoking ban to ensure public awareness, is

essential to promote compliance and make enforcement easier for retailers. Mandatory age verification for tobacco sales would also aid enforcement (264 words)

2. Do you think that proxy sales should also be prohibited?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Please explain your answer and provide evidence or your opinion to support further development of our approach. (maximum 300 words)

Yes, it will be important for proxy sales laws to be in line with age of sale laws to ensure consistency.

We strongly advocate that the UK Government and all devolved governments work together with a unified approach on this, to ensure cross-border consistency and avoid consumer confusion.

(48 words)

3. Do you agree or disagree that all tobacco products, cigarette papers and herbal smoking products should be covered in the new legislation?

- Agree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please explain your answer and provide evidence or your opinion to support further development of our approach. (maximum 300 words)

We believe that all tobacco containing products, as well as cigarette papers and heated tobacco products, should be covered by the new legislation, mirroring current age of sale laws. The tobacco industry has been shown to find ways to subvert laws which are not comprehensive. If tobacco products are not all included it will make enforcement more challenging and create opportunities for the industry to find loopholes.

(63 words)

4. Do you agree or disagree that warning notices in retail premises will need to be changed to read 'it is illegal to sell tobacco products to anyone born on or after 1 January 2009' when the law comes into effect?

- Agree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please explain your answer and provide evidence or your opinion to support further development of our approach. (maximum 300 words)

It would make sense for the warning notices in retail premises to be changed to reflect the new legislation and the proposal is simple and easily understood. However, we would recommend this is discussed with Trading Standards colleagues who will be responsible for enforcing the legislation as well as with retail groups that are not affiliated to tobacco manufacturers.

We welcome the commitment from UK Government to increase funding for tobacco enforcement, recognising how crucial our regulatory partners are in the journey towards creating a smokefree generation. However, to reflect the regulatory enforcement framework, any funding allocation to support enforcement should include a devolved distribution mechanism to ensure all nations receive funding to support implementation of regulations. The recent joint working of HMRC and trading standards under operation CeCe is an excellent example of national funding supporting local enforcement. (139 words)