



WJC/ys/W014

19 November 2007

DHSSPS

Investing for Health Unit
Health Improvement Policy Branch (Tobacco Control)
Room C4.22
Castel Buildings
Stormont Estate
Belfast BT4 3SQ

Dear Sir or Madam

MINIMUM AGE OF SALE OF TOBACCO PRODUCTS

We refer to the consultation on whether the minimum age of sale of tobacco products should be raised in Northern Ireland.

Of the three options proposed we support option 2 that the minimum age of sale should be increased to 18 which reflects the recommendation of the consultation. This would not only bring operational benefits for retailers by having an age in line with alcohol and other products, but would mean a uniform approach throughout the UK thereby giving a consistent message across all countries. This would also allow those that operate in all parts of the UK, like ourselves, to have one standard policy.

We would not support an increase to age 17 as this would be a completely new age for retailers to deal with given this age does not apply to any other product with an age restriction.

For retailers the crucial element is that the practicalities of implementation of any age change are fully considered. This will particularly be in relation to where 16 and 17 year olds who have been able to purchase cigarettes legally being no longer able to do so. Retailers will be at the sharp end and this could lead to abuse and intimidation of shop staff if not managed effectively.

This will require an effectively targeted Government funded public education and communications campaign to ensure that the public, in particular the 16 –17 year old grouping affected, as well as business, clearly understands the implications of the change. This must start early and be persistently repeated in the run-up to the changeover to ensure the message is assimilated and understood. Whilst the consultation recognises the need for a robust communications campaign, we are not convinced that the cost of £105,000 cited in the partial RIA would be a sufficient to ensure this.



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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Cullen, George

From: Cullen, George
Sent: 22 November 2007 14:13
To: 'duncan.bowdler@co-op.co.uk'
Subject: Consultation - Age of Sale of Tobacco Products

Dear Mr Bowdler,

thank you for your response to the consultation seeking views on whether the minimum age of sale of tobacco products should remain as is or be increased in Northern Ireland. You also raised the issue of retailer sanctions. At this point, I can only advise you that this will be a matter for the Northern Ireland Assembly to consider.

Regards.

George Cullen
Health Improvement Policy Branch (Tobacco Control)