



Department of
**Health, Social Services
and Public Safety**

An Roinn

**Sláinte, Seirbhísí Sóisialta
agus Sábháilteachta Poiblí**

www.dhsspsni.gov.uk

CONSULTATION QUESTIONNAIRE ON

MINIMUM AGE OF SALE OF TOBACCO PRODUCTS

October 2007

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

1. This Questionnaire seeks views on whether the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety should use the power contained in the Smoking (Northern Ireland) Order 2006, to amend, by regulations, the age of sale of tobacco products.
2. The Department carried out an Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) screening exercise on the proposed legislation. The results, which include equality considerations and a Partial Regulatory Impact Assessment, are set out in Annexes 1 and 2 of the consultation package.

Background

3. In March 2006, the Department undertook a public consultation exercise on the content of the then draft Smoking (Northern Ireland) Order 2006. Article 14 of the draft Order included a power for the Department to amend, by regulations, the age limit for the sale of tobacco products – currently 16 years - and respondents were invited to comment on whether the Department should take this power. It was made clear that any proposal to raise the age of sale would be the subject of further consultation.
4. There was strong support for the Department taking the power, with 78% in favour of this action. The majority of those in favour felt that the Department should go further and raise the age limit immediately. The main reasons offered were that such action would enable the age of sale to be brought into line with that for alcohol sales (18 years); that it would also bring Northern Ireland into line with the Republic of Ireland; and that it might make enforcement easier, particularly in border areas.
5. The age of sale has been raised to 18 in England, Wales and Scotland with effect from 1 October 2007. The Smoking (Northern Ireland) Order 2006, the main provisions of which came into operation on 30 April 2007, contains the power for the Department to amend the age of sale of tobacco products.

Consultation - How to Respond

6. **The consultation will run from 29 October 2007 to 18 January 2008.** The Questionnaire sets out three options on the minimum age of sale of tobacco products about which the Department would welcome views. It also seeks views on the Integrated Impact Assessment Overview and Partial Regulatory Impact Assessment.

7. In order to facilitate analysis it is important that respondents use the Questionnaire. Completed Questionnaires **must be received by the Department by 5.00pm on Friday 18 January 2008**. Responses should be posted to:

**DHSSPS
Investing for Health Unit
Health Improvement Policy Branch (Tobacco Control)
Room C4.22
Castle Buildings
Belfast
BT4 3SQ
Tel: 028 90520534**

Alternatively responses can be submitted via the online response form using the following web link:

<http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/tobacco-age-of-sale.htm>

Alternative formats

8. If you require the consultation documents in an alternative format (such as in large print, in braille, on audio cassette, easy read or computer disc) and/or in another language please contact Heather Rainey on 028 90520525 or text phone 02890527668 to discuss your requirements.

QUESTIONNAIRE

Q1. Article 14 of the Smoking (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 provides the power for the Department to amend the age of sale of tobacco products, but this must not be lower than the present age of 16 years. Do you think the Department should:

continue with the present age limit of 16;

increase the age limit to 17; or

increase the age limit to 18?

Please tick the appropriate box to indicate which of the options you favour.

No Change

Increase to 17

Increase to 18

X

If you wish to comment on your preferred option, please do so here.

We welcome the proposal to increase the age of sales of tobacco products from 16 to 18. This would bring it inline with the rest of the UK and the ROI who introduced the law in October 2007 and 2001 respectively.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) and the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) recommends a minimum legal purchase age of 18 for tobacco products.

Increasing the age of tobacco sales to 18 would bring it inline with alcohol sales.

To be most effective the proposed change to legislation should not stand alone but should be part of a comprehensive tobacco control strategy.

General

Q2. Do you have any views on the conclusions reached by the Department to screen out from further assessment the implications of the proposals in respect of:

- (a) Social Impact Assessment (New TSN, Homelessness etc);
- (b) Rural ;
- (c) Environmental;
- (d) Human Rights;
- (e) Victims;
- (f) Community Safety & Other Areas?

Is there any other evidence which you consider should have been taken into account in these assessments?

No

The Department would particularly welcome comments on the following:

Q3. Do you agree with the decision that the proposals do not require a full equality impact assessment? (see Annex 1 of consultation package). If not, please explain why?

Yes

Q4. Is there any other qualitative or quantitative information which you consider should have been taken into account in performing this exercise?

No

Q5. Are you aware of any evidence - qualitative or quantitative - that the proposals may have an adverse impact on equality of opportunity or on good relations? If so, please provide details. Can you suggest any ways of avoiding or minimising such adverse impact?

No

Q6. Are you aware of any other equality implications likely to arise from the proposals?

No

Partial Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA)

(see Annex 2 of consultation package)

Health

Q7. Do you have any views on the assessment of health impacts?

We support the proposition that increasing the age of sales of tobacco products will not have any negative impact on health and well being and we welcome the anticipated positive impacts.

Q8. Are there any other potential health impacts that you consider should have been addressed?

Children who smoke are two to six times more susceptible to coughs, wheeziness and shortness of breath, compared to non smokers (BMA, 2007, NICE, 2007). Increasing the age of sale of tobacco products would reduce the number of young people affected by asthma and other respiratory illness and so reduce the burden on the NHS.

Q9. Is there any other material evidence which you consider should have been taken into account in this assessment of health impacts?

No

Economic

Q10. Do you have any general comments on the overall approach that was taken in completing the RIA?

No

Q11. Do you consider that there are other issues which need to be taken into account in the assessment of the impact on business?

Retailers will be required to display new signage stating that it is illegal to sell tobacco products to people under the age of 18. A cost of £22, 250 has been estimated to cover the new signage (point 6:17). Who will be responsible for paying for these new signs?

Q12. Do you agree with the analysis of the sectors and business/organisations which might be particularly affected by the proposals?

Yes

Q13. What are your views on the identification and assessment of the costs and benefits?

Although it is stated that the increase age of sales is likely to have the greatest impact on children who are in the 11-15 age group, it would have been worthwhile to extend this to include 16-17 year olds, particularly in terms of the effects this may have on both the short-term and long-term reductions in smoking prevalence in Northern Ireland.

The figure quoted for the loss to the tobacco industry from the reduction in consumption by the 11-15 age group is actually from illegal sales.

Public Expenditure and Public Service

Q14. Do you agree with the Department’s view that a separate Economic Appraisal is not required?

Yes

Impact on Small Businesses

Q15. Do you agree that the proposals will not have a disproportionate impact on small businesses?

Yes

Q16. Are there any impacts on small businesses that you consider should have been addressed?

No

Q17. Is there any other material evidence which you consider should have been taken into account in assessing the impact on small businesses?

No

Rural Proofing

Q18. Do you agree that the proposals will not have a disproportionate adverse impact on rural business?

Yes

Q19. Are there any rural impacts that you consider should have been addressed?

No

Q20. Is there any other material evidence which you consider should have been taken into account in this assessment of rural impacts?

No

Additional Comments

Q21. Do you have any other comments or suggestions on the Integrated Impact Assessment Overview? (Annex 1 of consultation package)

English survey data (ONS, 2007) reports that increasing the minimum age law in England from 16 to 18 will only be effective if it is properly enforced and part of a broader set of actions aimed at discouraging young people from smoking. This needs to also be the case in Northern Ireland. Consideration of banning the sales of packets of 10 cigarettes should also be considered.

Thank you for taking time to complete this Questionnaire.