



Young People accessing cigarettes

Young people are easily able to access tobacco products in Wales either through vending machines or by purchasing them over the counter. Cigarette vending machines are used by underage smokers and are an easy way for children to buy their cigarettes¹. The Health Act 2009 includes measures to ban the sales of tobacco products from point of sales displays by October 2011 (for larger retailers) and October 2013 (for smaller retailers). By October 2011 sales of tobacco products will be banned from Vending Machines in Wales.

- ✓ The British Heart Foundation (BHF) has estimated that vending machines are the source of cigarettes for around 46,000 children in England and Wales – that's around 45 million cigarettes².
- ✓ Young people are often not challenged when buying from vending machines. Recent Wales Trading Standards test purchasing in Wales show that out of 125 attempts were made by child volunteers to purchase cigarettes from vending machines. 59% of attempts resulted in a sale, 81% of machines judged to be in areas of the premises capable of supervision by staff, and only 9% were in areas felt to be incapable of supervision³.

Ffaith survey

Young people from the ASH Wales Ffaith programme conducted a survey across the South Wales Valleys. Ffaith advocates surveyed 109 young smokers aged 11-17 years in Caerphilly, Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil, Rhondda Cynon Taff and Blaenau Gwent between 1 June and 30 June 2008⁴.

- ✓ The respondents comprised of 28 males and 81 females
- ✓ The average age they started to smoke is 11.2 years with some children indicating a starting age of as young as 7 years
- ✓ The average number of cigarettes smoked each week is 45 and in some cases up to 200 cigarettes per week
- ✓ 78% of those surveyed can buy cigarettes in local shops
- ✓ 20% of those surveyed can buy cigarettes from supermarkets
- ✓ 80% can buy cigarettes off friends and family
- ✓ 1 in 5 can get cigarettes from vending machines
- ✓ 8% can buy cigarettes from ice cream vans and burger vans and private dwellings
- ✓ 81% can access single cigarettes through friends, family and in the school setting

¹ Young people and smoking. Fact sheet 3. ASH <http://old.ash.org.uk/html/factsheets/html/fact03.html>

² Briefing note on EDM 2502 on tobacco vending machines. Accessed at: <http://www.smokefreeaction.org.uk/vending-machines.html#5>

³ Trading standards at your council. LACORS 2009. accessed at:

<http://www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk/Documents/CorporateServices/LegalProtective/TradingStandards/LACORS.pdf>

⁴ Ffaith Youth Survey of young smokers aged 11-17 years in Caerphilly, Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil, Rhondda Cynon Taff and Blaenau Gwent between 1 June and 30 June 2008



- ✓ 7% can buy single cigarettes from shops or mobile vans – the sale of single cigarettes was outlawed in the UK in 1991.

Vending Machine Survey results

ASH Wales surveyed 95 Young people (49 female, 44 male, 1 unknown) from Wales (predominantly from Monmouthshire and the South Wales valleys) between the ages of 12-18 in November 2009⁵.

The survey asked young people:

- ✓ If they thought it was easy for a young person under the age of 18 to buy cigarettes from vending machines,
- ✓ If they personally bought cigarettes from vending machines,
- ✓ Their smoking status.

Results

- ✓ 48 were smokers, 46 non-smokers, 1 unknown
- ✓ 74% of all participants thought it was easy for a young person under the age of 18 to buy cigarettes from vending machines
- ✓ 75% of young smokers said they bought cigarettes from vending machines

⁵ ASH Wales survey of young smokers from Wales between the ages of 12-18 in November 2009