

6 Months Since Historic Smoking Ban

Embargoed until 2nd October 2007

Wales is Smoke free but now is the time to reduce smoking amongst adolescents in Wales.

Wales has been enjoying six months of fresh air since the Smoking Ban on 2 April 2007. Around 27% of all adults smoke in Wales and the ban is just one step in reducing that harmful figure. We now need to focus efforts upon the youth of Wales and ensure that their future is a smoke free one. Around 19% of young men aged 15-16 smoke and this figure is even higher for girls of that age at 27.5%. These figures are compelling and need to be urgently reduced. Studies show that most young people think that smoking is a normal adult activity and grossly over estimate the number of adults who smoke. Indeed, the average age at which young people in Wales start smoking is twelve and half years. The younger a smoker starts smoking the more likely they will suffer an early death from a smoking related disease.

ASH Wales Director, Tanya Buchanan said:

“Adolescent smoking is often not perceived as a substance abuse issue at all. However, tobacco is a legal drug. Nicotine addiction is very real and studies have indicated that the addiction to nicotine is as difficult to break as the addiction to illicit drugs such as cocaine and heroin. So whilst no one doubts that action must be taken to protect young people from addiction to cocaine or heroin it is unfortunate that the same can not often be said about affording young people the same protection from addiction to nicotine.

Many young people tell us they get their cigarettes from older siblings, friends and sometimes parents. Occasionally they are able to purchase them directly from retailers. It is time that we not only talk to our children about the health dangers associated with smoking but also tell them of how cigarette companies market their deadly product to young people in order to replace older customers who have died as a result of their addiction.

In Wales we need to do more to demand that our young people are protected from the damage caused by cigarette smoking.”

Contact Information

Tanya Buchanan

Director

tanya@ashwales.co.uk

T: 029 2064 1101

Daniel Clayton

Communications Officer

daniel@ashwales.co.uk

T: 029 2064 1101

Notes

ASH Wales is hosting a groundbreaking Tobacco Control conference in April 2008. Please visit our Conference Website <http://www.smoking-conference-wales.org.uk/>