

Raising the age of sale of tobacco

Campaign Information

From **Monday, October 1st 2007**, the law for selling tobacco will change. It will be illegal to sell tobacco products to anyone under the age of 18 (an increase from 16) in England and Wales. It is expected that the change in law will also come into effect in Scotland from the same date.

Most addicted adult smokers began as teenagers. This change in the law is to help prevent children and young people from starting in the first place, therefore avoiding the serious health dangers of smoking.

What's happening?

- To support the new legislation, the Department of Health is carrying out a communications campaign to raise awareness of the age change and encourage compliance amongst retailers and consumers.
- The four-stage campaign will explain how the new legislation will affect both audiences, and what consumers and retailers need to do to be compliant with the legislation on October 1st.
- The legislation will mean that it is illegal for retailers to sell any tobacco product to anyone aged under 18. The campaign will provide businesses with information about what they need to do to comply with the new law, such as the need to put up signage stating the new age restriction. This will complement communication they receive from the trade organisations.
- The consumer campaign will focus on making teenagers aware of the change, and will also signpost the NHS support available for those who want to stop smoking.

How will the communications campaign be carried out?

Stage 1 (May/June 2007)

We have been working with stakeholders to share information and provide resources to help them communicate the details of the change in the law, and the communications campaign, to their members.

The stakeholders include:

- retail organisations (e.g. British Retail Consortium, Association of Convenience Stores)
- proof of age card schemes (e.g. PASS Board, Citizencard)
- compliance bodies (e.g. LACORS, Trading Standards)
- health organisations (e.g. ASH, Cancer Research UK)
- youth organisations (e.g. Healthy Schools, Youth Clubs UK)

Stage 2 (July 2007)

In late July a 'warm up' mailing is being sent to those retailers identified as having the highest volumes of 16-17 year old customers. The mailing includes basic information for shop owners and staff, and can be used as a notice to alert customers to the upcoming change.

A dedicated website has been set up for retailers and stakeholders, to provide a one-stop-shop for information: tobaccoagechange.co.uk.

Media relations around the change in the age of sale also commences in stage two, including contact with national, regional consumer and retail trade media.

Stage 3 (July - September 2007)

A second direct mailing will be sent in out in August to over 100,000 retailers in England and Wales, including those who were initially sent information in July. This will consist of a 'toolkit' and will include a statutory notice that retailers will have to display from October 1st. The notice and all information contained in the toolkit will also be available through the website.

With a particular focus on 16-17 year olds, the third stage of the communications campaign will also seek to engage teenagers through a series of media relations and digital activity - this will include a dedicated website, online advertising, tie-ups with target online and broadcast media and continued work with teenage and consumer magazines.

Stage 4 (September/October 2007)

The fourth stage of the campaign will focus on reminding retailers and consumers of the change.

An outdoor poster advertising campaign will launch in September at targeted locations, including local convenience stores where teenagers buy cigarettes.

Media relations to target consumers will continue in the final weeks, to ensure that no one is caught by surprise when the change in the law comes into effect on October 1st.

For more information on the change in legislation or the communications campaign, or to access additional resources, visit www.tobaccoagechange.co.uk or call **020 7492 0980**.