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Cigarette vending machines now illegal

30th September 2011



New legislation is set to reduce under age smoking as the sale of tobacco products from vending machines in England is banned from 1 October 2011.

The sale of tobacco products from vending machines will become illegal in England from 1 October 2011 making it harder for young people to obtain cigarettes.

It is estimated that around one in six (17%) of 11 to 15 year olds in the UK use vending machines as their usual source of cigarettes.

The ban is also set to be enforced in Northern Ireland on 1 February 2012.

Plans are underway to introduce similar legislation in Wales and Scotland.

The legislation in England is being implemented despite extensive lobbying and legal challenges by the tobacco industry over the summer.

A recent survey, commissioned by the British Dental Health Foundation, in the run up to Mouth Cancer Action Month in November, identified that around one in seven (13%) 12-16 year olds currently smoke.

Smoking is the major cause of mouth cancer in the UK. Drinking alcohol to excess, poor diet and some sexually transmitted infections (Human Papilloma Virus or HPV) are also known risk factors for mouth cancer which is likely to affect 60,000 people in the UK over the next decade.

Chief executive of the British Dental Health Foundation, Dr Nigel Carter, said: 'The ban on the sale of tobacco from vending machines is great news. Its importance is reflected by the vigorous attempts made by the tobacco lobby to challenge the legislation in the courts.

'We hope the ban will make it harder for children to experiment with smoking and also cut off a readily available supply of cigarettes for nearly 50,000 under age smokers.

'This ban will also play an important role in helping many young people to avoid a life long addiction and poor health in later life, including mouth cancer. At current rates we forecast that the incidence of mouth cancer is likely to double within a single generation.'