

# A Wales Tobacco Control Plan

**Get it Right** - PUBLIC HEALTH PUBLIC SERVICE

**Tobacco use is a major Welsh public health concern. Around 600,000 adults or 24% of the adult population in Wales are smokers. The average age at which young people in Wales start smoking is between 11 and 12 years with 12% of boys and 23% of girls aged 15 reporting smoking at least weekly .**

The World Health Organisation's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, to which Wales is a party, requires the UK to "develop, implement and periodically review a comprehensive multi-sectoral national tobacco control strategy.

Internationally and domestically (in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland) comprehensive strategies have been shown to be the most effective means of reducing smoking prevalence. The steady fall in smoking prevalence since 1998 in England can be attributed to the series of interventions which resulted from the publication of Smoking Kills and the additional funding which accompanied it. Internationally in both Canada and California integrated, comprehensive strategies preceded significant drops in smoking prevalence. Canada in particular has seen its smoking prevalence fall from over 30% in 1990 to 19% in 2006 with predictions that it could be as low as 12% by 2011.

Despite this Wales unlike England, Scotland and Northern Ireland does not currently have any documented Government produced or Government endorsed strategy for dealing with tobacco use.

RCN Wales is calling on the Welsh Assembly Government to implement a fully-funded, comprehensive tobacco control plan for Wales that seeks to:

- Prevent the uptake of tobacco use, especially amongst children and young people;
- Reduce the number of users of tobacco products;
- Reduce exposure to tobacco smoke;
- Decrease the harm caused by tobacco use

A tobacco control strategy in Wales should have a broad vision necessary to address the enduring problems of health inequalities, youth uptake of smoking, exposure to secondhand smoke and levels to which some groups are addicted to nicotine.

RCN Wales is a member of the Welsh Tobacco Control Alliance - an alliance of 21 key voluntary sector and professional bodies in Wales that aims to improve the health of all people in Wales by lobbying for the introduction, maintenance and evaluation of a comprehensive tobacco control plan for Wales.

## KEY POLICY ACTIONS

- The Welsh Assembly Government to implement a fully-funded, comprehensive tobacco control plan for Wales which would include the following areas:
  - Strengthening community action for tobacco control
  - Ensuring access for all smokers to effective and equitable cessation services and products
  - Controlling access to tobacco products, especially access by young people
  - Creating access to smoke free living
  - Investing in training
  - Investing in research and monitoring

