

Radical Welsh law will improve the health of the nation

Assembly Members will vote for the final time on the Public Health (Wales) Bill this afternoon.

The Bill aims to protect young people's health through banning smoking in school grounds, public playgrounds, and the outdoor areas of registered childcare settings, as well as in hospital grounds. It prohibits tobacco and nicotine products from being handed over to under 18s by home delivery or collection services and creates a national register of retailers of tobacco and nicotine products.

It will also protect health and wellbeing through:

- Creating a mandatory licensing scheme for 'special procedures', namely acupuncture, body piercing, electrolysis and tattooing, and prohibiting the intimate piercing of anybody under the age of 18.
- Placing a duty on local authorities to prepare and publish a local toilets strategy, including an assessment of the need for toilets for public use and details of how that need will be met.
- Requiring public bodies in Wales to assess how their decisions will affect people's physical and mental health.
- Making the planning of pharmacy services more responsive to the needs of their local community.
- Placing a duty on the Welsh Government to produce a national strategy on preventing and reducing obesity.

Speaking ahead of the debate, Minister for Social Services and Public Health, Rebecca Evans said:

"The Public Health (Wales) Bill is the latest in a long line of measures the Welsh Government has introduced to improve the health and wellbeing of the people of Wales. If passed, it will create the conditions which enable people to live healthy lives and will protect them from preventable harm.

"It has a particular focus on promoting children and young people's health. Proposals such as the ban on smoking in school grounds, childcare settings, and playgrounds are intended to prevent children from being exposed to smoking behaviours, making it less likely that they'll take up smoking themselves.

"Today is an opportunity for us to pass a radical Welsh law that will meet the needs of people in Wales. I look forward to the vote later today."

Chief Medical Officer, Dr Frank Atherton said:

“This Bill will help to keep pace with emerging public health concerns. In recent years, body piercing and tattooing have become increasingly popular. This Bill will ensure that only those with safe working practices can carry out these procedures.

“As a result of scrutiny by the National Assembly, the Bill will also provide a legislative focus for our work to tackle the major public health challenge of obesity.”