

The Generational Tobacco Ban: Explained



What it is and what it means for you

In October 2023 the UK Government proposed new legislation that would ban future generations of adults from ever legally being sold tobacco products. The 'Generational Ban' proposal is an experimental policy not supported by evidence. The Government of New Zealand, which passed, but has not yet implemented, similar legislation earlier in 2023, acknowledged as much in the corresponding Departmental Disclosure Statement, stating that the policy has not been "tested or assessed in any way to ensure [the policy is] workable and complete"¹.

If passed into law, the legal smoking age would rise by one year every year, with the aim of eventually banning smoking altogether.

This legislation will affect all retailers that sell tobacco products, so it is imperative to take the time now to understand the proposed changes, what this means for your business and how you can have your say.

1 What is the proposed legislation?

The proposed legislation would see the minimum age at which a person can legally be sold tobacco products, including cigarettes, cigars and heated tobacco, increase each year, starting from 2027. This means that the minimum smoking age in 2027 would be 19, rising to 20 in 2028, with one year added each subsequent year that passes. Therefore, anyone born on or after 1st January 2009 will never legally be allowed to be sold tobacco products.

2 What does this actually mean?

By 2037, 28-year-olds won't be able to buy tobacco products, but 29-year-olds will. Retailers will be expected to distinguish this difference when deciding whom to sell tobacco products to.

It will also be an offence for anyone at or over the legal age to purchase tobacco products on behalf of someone born on or after 1 January 2009 ('proxy purchasing').

3 What are the key dates?

The Government's 'Smokefree Consultation' began on 12th October and runs for eight weeks

12th October 2023
Smokefree Consultation opened

6th December 2023
Consultation closes

Early 2024
Legislation could be published in Parliament

4 How can I take action?

Retailers are listed as one of the groups from whom the Government wants to hear from in the consultation - "the retail sector and the independent vaping industry".

The time to act is now
BEFORE 6th DECEMBER

Contact your local MP to raise your concerns directly



Find your MP
CLICK HERE

Respond directly to the consultation



CLICK HERE

1. <https://legislation.govt.nz/bill/government/2022/0143/latest/LMS708154.html>