



Guernsey Adolescent Smoke-free Project
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MEDIA RELEASE

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GASP LOOKS FORWARD TO AN EXCITING FUTURE

GASP has responded to some of the comments that have recently been made by a minority of pub-owners who claim that pub sales have been hit by the ban on smoking in enclosed public places.

GASP is concerned that the real reason for the ban – improving the health of the island, especially of its youngsters – has been lost in the anecdotal evidence of bar sales as reported by a few pub-owners.

Alun Williams, Chairperson of GASP, explains:

We always knew that there would be a period of adjustment when the smoking ban came into force. We have heard the complaints of some pub-owners about poor takings as a direct result of the ban, and we note that it is those same pub-owners who always opposed the ban who are most vocal now. The reality is that smoking bans will shortly be in place in both our neighbours, England and to a lesser extent France, and we must now all move forward and adapt to the new reality of smoking being unacceptable in public.

Let's not forget that Guernsey's smoke-free legislation was brought in on the grounds of health. By changing the law, the States have taken decisive action to remove a known carcinogenic substance from enclosed public places and workplaces. In this we have taken on board the best available international knowledge about the effects of second-hand smoke and followed the lead of countries like Ireland, Scotland and Norway where the health of bar workers has measurably improved and predictions of economic disaster have been shown to be unfounded in the long term.

Di Lawrence, Manager of GASP, is looking forward to the impact that the ban will have on the work in schools:

We restart our work in schools next week and we are really excited as we will be working with young people who are living in an island which has taken such a bold move to show that smoking is not a normal activity.

But we are worried that people are misusing statistics and that this will lead to confusion in the classroom. Whenever we talk about issues surrounding smoking we always tell people to check and double-check statistics. That has not been the case with recent pronouncements about the impact of the ban in Ireland and Scotland. The key point about Ireland is that one year after the legislation came in, the Central Statistics Office figures reported a 5.3% decline in bar trade. This was in line with the 4% decline in the previous three years and contrary to the claims of some bar trade representatives that trade had declined between 15% and 25%. Other factors such as changing demographics and increased off-sales have contributed to the decline of traditional pubs.

Both Alun and Di ask that smokers and non-smokers alike remember the long-term beneficiaries of the ban, young people:

Guernsey is a very generous society with a real concern for its young people. Supporting the ban will help us help young people to turn away from the dangers of smoking.

Notes for Editors

1. The most recent release of the Retail Sales Index for Ireland, which has final seasonally adjusted figures for April 2006, shows that the volume of bar sales in April 2006 are up 4.7% compared to April 2005. In the 3 month period Feb-April 2006 the volume of sale has increased by 1.5% compared to the same period in 2005. The seasonally adjusted value of bar sales in April 2006 was up 6.5% compared to April 2005, and up 3.2% in the three month period Feb-April 2006 compared to the same period in 2005.

Source:

<http://www.cso.ie/releasespublications/documents/services/current/rsi.pdf#search=%22Retail%20Sales%20Index%20Ireland%22>

2. The most recent MRUK omnibus survey on attitudes to the ban showed that 61% of about 1,000 respondents supported the ban, 73% thought the ban had been successful, and more than a third of smokers surveyed said the ban had helped them to reduce the amount they smoke.
3. A Cancer Research UK opinion poll taken in April 2006 asked 1,000 respondents if they would visit bars more often, less often or about the same under new legislation.
 - o 24% said more often
 - o 45% said about the same
 - o 10% said they would visit less often
 - o 20% said they don't visit pubs
 - o 1% said unsure

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