

# Smoking in private vehicles and nicotine inhaling products regulations campaigns

## Evaluation summary



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## Purpose

Smoking in private vehicles and nicotine inhaling products (NIPs) regulations were introduced on 1 February 2022 to protect children and young people.

The new legislation makes it illegal to smoke in a private vehicle where children and young people aged under 18 are present, when there is more than one person in the vehicle, and the vehicle is enclosed. It is an offence to smoke in such a vehicle and it is also an offence for a driver not to prevent smoking.

In addition, from 1 February, it is an offence to sell NIPs to anyone who is under 18 and to purchase, or attempt to purchase, such products on behalf of a child (a proxy purchasing offence).

This document provides an evaluation summary of the Public Health Agency's campaigns aimed at increasing awareness and encouraging support for the new regulations.

## Background

### Second-hand smoke

Smoking is the single greatest cause of preventable illness and premature death in Northern Ireland, killing thousands of people every year. Exposure to second-hand smoke damages the health of others, particularly children, who breathe more rapidly and inhale more pollutants per pound of body weight than adults.

The Royal College of Physicians has reported that children exposed to second-hand smoke have an increased risk of asthma, lower respiratory infections, middle ear disease, bronchitis, bacterial meningitis and sudden infant death syndrome, as well as reduced respiratory function.

### Nicotine inhaling products

Nicotine is highly addictive and, according to the World Health Organization, exposure to nicotine whilst still in adolescence can lead to long-term consequences for brain development.

In addition to the potential long-term health implications of e-cigarette use by teenagers, there are also concerns that they may act as a gateway into smoking.

## Campaigns' objectives

- To raise awareness and encourage public support for and adherence to the new regulations.
- To communicate that the new regulations are being introduced to protect children and young people from the harmful effects of smoking/vaping. The smoking in private vehicles regulations campaign highlighted that there is no safe level of exposure to second-hand smoke and that children are particularly vulnerable. The NIPs regulations campaign highlighted that nicotine can damage the developing brain.

## Target audience

Primary audience of adults, particularly adult smokers/vapers and adult smokers/vapers with children. For the NIPs regulations campaign, a secondary audience of retailers selling NIPs.

## Campaign advertising

### Smoking in private vehicles regulations

The mass media advertising campaign ran from 10 January – 27 February 2022 across TV, radio, outdoor and digital channels, including social media advertising.

The campaign was exposed 22 million times.

### NIPs regulations

The mass media advertising campaign ran from 17 January – 20 February 2022 on a lesser scale across radio, outdoor and digital channels, including social media advertising.

The campaign was exposed over 8.7 million times.

Both campaigns were supported by PR and engagement with partners and stakeholders. A range of printed materials was sent to maternity units in hospitals to promote the smoking in private vehicles regulations and to retailers selling NIPs to promote the NIP regulations.

Printed materials were distributed to 1,900 retailers selling NIPs via Tobacco Control Officers as part of a programme of work between the councils and retailers to promote the law change.

## Evaluation summary

### Evaluation methodology

To evaluate the campaigns, questions were developed by the Health Intelligence Unit within the PHA for submission in an omnibus survey. The survey was conducted online with a representative sample of the Northern Ireland population of adults aged 18+. A sample of 1,000 adults was considered sufficient to provide an overview of the views of the population overall. Fieldwork for the survey was conducted online in March 2022. Following completion of fieldwork, data was analysed by the Health Intelligence Unit.

### Smoking in private vehicles regulations

- Almost two in three (64.5%) said they were aware of any changes to the law on smoking in private vehicles with children and young people under 18 in Northern Ireland.
- When asked if they recalled seeing any recent advertising or publicity promoting the change in legislation, almost two in three (64.2%) said they recalled seeing something.
- Respondents were deemed to be aware of the smoking in private vehicles campaign if they indicated they recalled at least one of the following when prompted: the TV ad, the radio ad or the campaign images (OOH and digital advertisements). Overall, almost two in three (64.3%) recalled seeing/hearing at least one method.
- Over four in five (82.4%) said the advertising encourages them to support the new legislation making it illegal to smoke in a private vehicle where children and young people aged under 18 are present.

- Over four in five (86.2%) said the advertising was very or somewhat thought provoking.

### NIPs regulations

- When asked how old do you have to be to buy e-cigarettes/vaping device in Northern Ireland, almost three in five (58.3%) said 18 and over.
- Almost one in five (19.9%) said they were aware of changes to the law regarding the sale of nicotine inhaling products to anyone who's under 18.
- Respondents were told that legislation has recently been introduced making it an offence to sell NIPs (e-cigarettes) to anyone who's under 18 and to purchase, or attempt to purchase, such products on behalf of under 18s. Over one in five (22.3%) said they did recall recent advertising.
- Respondents were deemed to be aware of the NIPs campaign if they indicated they recalled at least one of the following when prompted: the radio ad or the campaign images. Overall, over one in five (22%) recalled seeing/hearing at least one method.
- Respondents were asked if this advertising encourages them to support the new legislation which makes it an offence to sell NIPs (e-cigarettes) to anyone who's under 18 and to purchase, or attempt to purchase, such products on behalf of someone under 18. Over seven in ten (71.7%) said it did.
- Over four in five (83.1%) said the advertising was very or somewhat thought provoking.

### Evaluation summary

It should be noted pre-campaign research was also conducted and indicated support for the incoming legislation. The majority of respondents were supportive of banning smoking in cars carrying children younger than 18. For NIPs, knowledge of the age of sale was low, approximately one in two (47.5%) said 18 and over, and when told there are no current age restrictions to purchase these, most respondents were supportive of a ban on their sale to those under 18.

In the post-campaign evaluation, there were good levels of recall of the creative elements for the smoking in private vehicles regulations campaign. Recall was lower for the NIPs regulations campaign, but it should be noted that this campaign was much smaller in scale and more targeted in nature. Councils worked directly with retailers selling NIPs to promote the law change.

Based on the post-campaign survey responses, there is evidence that the campaigns have been effective in eliciting support for the regulations.