



Lifting the smokescreen: 10 reasons for going smokefree The Irish case: a success story

The groundswell of public support in Europe for smoke free policies has been created from successes elsewhere, particularly in Ireland.

Ireland adopted its smoke free policy on 29 March 2004. All indoor workplaces, including restaurants, bars and pubs, became smoke free with no separate rooms for people to smoke.

Fifteen months of preparation included a national debate stimulated by a television and advertising campaign. The Office of Tobacco Control was established to support employers and managers and to coordinate enforcement. Guidelines, posters and signs were provided so that premises could indicate the name of the person responsible, a telephone number for the compliance line in case of problems, and the amount of the fine in case of failure to comply (3,000 Euros for both the smoker and the person in charge).

What has this meant for Ireland?

Cleaner air: 96% of all indoor workers report working in a smoke free environment. There is almost universal agreement that workplaces are healthier since the introduction of the law.

Better health: The level of carbon monoxide in the blood of non-smoking bar workers has dropped by 45%.

Productivity gains: The number of working days lost due to smoking-related health problems is expected to fall. (Chapter 2) No jobs have been lost nor has revenue fallen. (Chapter 3)

Over 90% of the public think that the introduction of the law was a good idea – including 80% of smokers. A poll by a public television station voted the smoke free policy as the most popular event of the year.

Other successes

Ireland, Norway, Italy, Malta, Sweden and Scotland in Europe and New York, several other US and Canadian states and New Zealand have all successfully introduced the smoke policies that ban smoking in public areas and work places, including bars and restaurants.

Where smoke free policies have been introduced, at least three out of every four people support them. Compliance rates are high. In Norway, 94% of respondents reported that they were seldom or never exposed to tobacco smoke in bars and restaurants following the legislation in December 2004 compared with 56% the previous year.



The policy has become more popular since its introduction in New York, Ireland, Norway and New Zealand. In Norway, popularity increased from 47% before the law was introduced to 58% afterwards. Support has also increased in Italy.

The Smoke Free Partnership is a new strategic, independent and flexible partnership between Cancer Research UK, the European Respiratory Society and the Institut National du Cancer.

It aims to promote tobacco control advocacy and policy research at EU and national levels in collaboration with other EU health organisations and EU tobacco control networks.

Smoke Free Partnership

c/o ERS Office Brussels – Rue d’Arlon 39-41 – BE – 1000 Brussels
Tel: +322 238 5360 – Fax: +322 238 5361 – smokefree.partnership@ersnet.org
www.cancerresearchuk.org – www.ersnet.org – www.e-cancer.fr