

Developing a policy

A smoking policy is vital to make sure staff, customers, contractors and visitors understand your rules about smoking.

It is not about whether or not people smoke, but when and where they smoke and whether their smoke affects others.

The first step in developing a policy is setting up a working group which will make the major decisions. This could include representatives from occupational health and safety (if available), human resources, trade unions, smoking and non-smoking employees and the senior management team.

The group will need to decide how far your new policy will extend.

By law you will not be able to allow smoking inside the workplace from summer 2007. This means smoking rooms must be closed and staff must leave the building to have a cigarette.

However, it is up to each individual business to decide how far they would like the ban to be imposed.

You should do this with consultation with your staff and customers. There is a credit card sized questionnaire you can download which you could use as well as a staff survey.

You can decide to disallow smoking in all the surrounding grounds, or within a set distance of doors and windows to allow extra protection for your staff and customers.

You may decide to build a smoking shelter or set aside a specific area outside for smoking breaks. You may also want to keep a section of outside areas free from smoking to accommodate non-smokers and families who may wish to go outside, especially in summer months.

It may be important to the image of your business that there are not lots of smokers standing in doorways or around the building.

Once you have decided how far you would like your policy to extend you need to write a draft and send it out for consultation. This may extend beyond your working group.

When you have finalised your policy you will need to apply for planning permission for shelters, if you want them, and order building materials. You will also need to decide what you are going to do with any rooms currently used for smoking. They could be converted into further customer areas, a staff room, a training room or an office.

You should offer support for staff who want to quit smoking. You can get more advice about this from the Cornwall & Isles of Scilly Stop Smoking Service by calling 01209 215666. The team may be able to come to your business and talk with staff who smoke. This may help smokers to cope when the policy is implemented.

There is further information about how to introduce the policy in the 'How to implement a policy' section.