



Vapers and the Smoking Shed



First off let's look at the 'Smoking Shed'. The Smoking Shed came into existence in many workplaces in July 2007. It was the end result of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control [1], brought into UK law via the Health Act 2006 [2]: legislation which included the Smoking Ban. The aim was to protect people from involuntary exposure to second-hand tobacco smoke. [3] The convention reads:

Article 8
Protection from exposure to tobacco smoke

- 1. Parties recognise that scientific evidence has unequivocally established that exposure to tobacco smoke causes death, disease and disability.**
- 2. Each Party shall adopt and implement in areas of existing national jurisdiction as determined by national law and actively promote at other jurisdictional levels the adoption and implementation of effective legislative, executive, administrative and/or other measures, providing for protection from exposure to tobacco smoke in indoor workplaces, public transport, indoor public places and, as appropriate, other public places.**

The WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) also addresses the question of encouraging smoking cessation. [4]

Article 14
Demand reduction measures concerning tobacco dependence and cessation

- 1. Each Party shall develop and disseminate appropriate, comprehensive and integrated guidelines based on scientific evidence and best practices, taking into account national circumstances and priorities, and shall take effective measures to promote cessation of tobacco use and adequate treatment for tobacco dependence.**

So, two of the stated purposes of the WHO FCTC and the Health Act 2006 are to protect people from breathing in tobacco smoke, and to help people to stop smoking.

Now let's look at vapers. At the last count there were 2.1 million vapers in the UK. [5] A third of these people have stopped using tobacco altogether. . Many of the remaining two thirds are vaping in order to cut down or stop using tobacco. These are the people who many wish to see forced to share the smoking shed with tobacco users.

If we look at the 700,000 (at last count) who have successfully quit the use of tobacco, then we have only one choice in terms of the words we can use to describe them: they are NON-SMOKERS.[6] By insisting that they can only use their equipment in the confines of the Smoking Shed, employers are forcing them to undergo involuntary exposure to tobacco smoke - in complete contravention of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. How about the other 1.4 million? These are people that are still using tobacco at least some of the time. By insisting that these people spend their rest breaks in the Smoking Shed employers are hardly taking effective measures to promote cessation of tobacco use.

The UK Government is clear about the position of e-cigarettes with regards to the law on smoking at work:

The law doesn't apply to e-cigarettes. Employers can decide if they can be used on their premises. [5]

Employers may not wish their employees to use their vaping equipment in the workplace, but the Smoking Shed is not the answer.

1. WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control.
<http://www.who.int/tobacco/framework/download/en/>
2. Health Act 2006
http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/28/pdfs/ukpga_20060028_en.pdf
3. WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. Article 8
<http://www.who.int/tobacco/framework/download/en/>
4. WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. Article 14
<http://www.who.int/tobacco/framework/download/en/>
5. ASH Factsheet on Use of Electronic Cigarettes in Great Britain
http://www.ash.org.uk/files/documents/ASH_891.pdf
6. Dictionary definition of Non-Smoker
<http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/non-smoker>
7. Smoking at work: The Law
<https://www.gov.uk/smoking-at-work-the-law>