



SHISHA - BUSTING THE MYTHS

1. Is smoking shisha harmful to health?

Yes, if the product contains tobacco it is harmful. As shisha tends to be smoked in long sessions users can inhale the smoke equivalent of 100 to 200 cigarettes in a single session.

2. Is smoking shisha tobacco addictive?

Yes, it contains nicotine so users can become addicted in the same way as they would if they were smoking cigarettes.

3. Does the water in the shisha pipe filter out the harmful substances in the smoke?

No, it may reduce the harsh flavour of the tobacco, but all the harmful substances still remain.

4. Do shisha pipes produce second hand smoke?

Yes, so smoking shisha will harm the health of those in the same room or nearby who are not smoking. Pregnant women and young children are especially sensitive to the adverse health effects of second hand smoke.

5. At what age is it legal to buy shisha tobacco?

The legal age of sale is 18, the same as all other tobacco products.

6. Why are shisha cafes treated differently than pubs and clubs?

They are not. Shisha cafes are like all other workplaces or public places and it is against the law to smoke in areas that are substantially enclosed.

7. If it is against the law to smoke inside a building, how can any shisha cafe be legal?

In the same way that pubs, clubs, restaurants or cafes can make outdoor areas available for smoking; shisha cafes can also follow the same rules. For example, a cafe that sold food and coffee could have an area for shisha smoking provided that the area was not substantially enclosed. **Shisha cafes that allow smoking indoors are illegal.**

8. What happens if a business does not comply with the law?

They commit a criminal offence and face enforcement action by the Council, including prosecution. This applies to shisha cafes as much as it does to any other business.

9. Does the person smoking shisha in an illegal cafe also break the law?

Yes, individuals who smoke in substantially enclosed workplaces or public places also commit a criminal offence and can face a fixed penalty fine or prosecution.

10. If it is illegal to smoke inside a building, why does the Council give planning permission for shisha cafes?

Not all premises need planning permission to operate as a shisha cafe; for example where there is no change of use as the premises is already a cafe. Sometimes there is not any change of use requiring planning permission, but permission may still be needed for things like changes to the structure of the building. These situations can be confusing to the public.

Any business that applies for planning permission will first be offered advice on how they can comply with the smokefree law. If it is not possible to comply with the law then they will be advised not to develop the premises for this use as it will lead to prosecution and closure.

11. Has the Council taken any prosecutions against shisha cafes?

Yes, several shisha cafes that were operating illegally have voluntarily closed following visits by officers from the Council's Environmental Health Department and one business has been prosecuted to date.

Further information on smokefree legislation is available on the Council's website:

<http://www.preston.gov.uk/businesses/health-and-safety/smoke-free-preston/>