

Dear Sir/Madam,

Being a smoker myself, I disagree with a complete ban on smoking in all enclosed and public spaces. I believe that such a ban will be an infringement of many peoples' human rights.

I am also a health professional and fully well understand the reasoning behind any antismoking campaign. I fully support every such campaign with a view that young people must be discouraged from starting smoking, people who wish to stop smoking must be supported and the rights of non-smokers must be upheld.

However, I believe that since the sale of cigarettes is legal and smoking as a recreational activity is also legal, the proposed full restrictions – such as were already imposed in Scotland and Ireland, are an infringement of the rights of those who have chosen to smoke or can not stop doing so.

A blanket ban on smoking in all enclosed public spaces creates an atmosphere of exclusion and discrimination against smokers. Smokers are penalised for an activity which is legal all over the world.

In Scotland, where the ban of smoking was imposed in March 2006 a number of problems arose. A lot of people were virtually barred from visiting public places such as bars or restaurants because they were unwilling or unable to stand on the street, where smoking is not prohibited. Smokers, lined on the pavement outside catering and other places pose a problem to pedestrian and motor traffic, are an annoyance to neighbourhoods in terms of noise and litter, etc. Banning of smoking in hospitals has lead to staff and patients leaving the hospital grounds which can also be seen as a hazard.

It would seem to me that for as long as cigarettes are legally sold there must be a provision for the people who use them in terms of room and places where they can do that. Such an approach will protect the rights of both smokers and non-smokers.

Yours sincerely,

Sani Thomas

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