



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

INTIMATE PIERCING

Public Health (Wales) Act 2017

Information for children and young people under 18, and their parents/guardians, on the new law on intimate piercing

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There is a new law...

It is now **illegal** to perform an intimate piercing on anyone **under 18** years of age **in Wales**. This includes the **tongue, nipples, breast, buttocks and genitals**.

Ask your piercer for more details.

1. **New law on the intimate piercing of persons under the age of 18 years in Wales**

From **1 February 2018**, it is against the law for anyone to perform an intimate piercing on a child or young person under the age of 18 in Wales. It is also against the law to 'make arrangements' to perform an intimate piercing on a child or young person under the age of 18 in Wales. The new law applies to everybody in Wales, not just piercing businesses. The aim of this information sheet is to help children, young people and their parents/guardians understand the new law.

An intimate piercing is a body piercing performed on an intimate body part, including the breasts, nipples, buttocks, genitals and **tongue**.

The purpose of the new law is to protect children and young people under the age of 18 from the possible health harms which can be caused by an intimate piercing, and to stop children and young people under 18 possibly being placed in a vulnerable situation.

I'm under 18 – so what does this mean for me?

No-one can give you an intimate piercing if you are under 18, even if you have the permission of someone over 18. They can't make plans, or book an appointment to give you an intimate piercing if you are under 18.

I am 18 or over – so what does it this mean for me?

If you are 18 or over and from 1 February 2018 you want an intimate piercing, you can expect to be asked to prove your age by the piercer before they make an appointment with you, and then provide proof of your age again before the piercing is done. You will be able to prove you are over 18 by showing the piercer your passport, or your European Union photo card driving licence, or photographic identity card bearing the national Proof of Age Standards Scheme (PASS) hologram

www.validateuk.co.uk/PASS-scheme-proof-of-age.

2. **Questions and Answers to help you, and parents and guardians, understand the new law**

What is an intimate piercing? – An intimate piercing is a body piercing performed on the anus, breast (including the nipple and areola), buttock, natal cleft (the cleft between the buttocks), penis (including the foreskin), perineum, pubic mound, scrotum, **tongue** or vulva and applies to all genders.

What does the new law mean? – The new law means that no-one can intimately pierce a child or young person under the age of 18 in Wales. Also no-one can **make arrangements** (make plans or book an appointment) to perform an intimate piercing on a child or young person under the age of 18 in Wales.

Can an intimate piercing be removed from a child or young person under the age of 18? – If a child or young person under 18 already has an intimate piercing that was done before 1 February 2018 and is unable to remove the piercing safely themselves without cutting the skin, or needs advice on its care, they should see their doctor.

Does the new law apply to everyone in Wales? – Yes – it applies to anyone performing or ‘making arrangements’ to perform an intimate piercing on a person under 18 in Wales. It does not matter if the child or young person under 18 does not live in Wales, or are just visiting, they will still not be able to have anyone perform an intimate piercing on them whilst they are in Wales.

Does the new law apply if a child or young person under 18 does not have to pay for an intimate piercing? – Yes – it does not matter whether payment is made or not, the new law still applies.

What if a teenager, or a parent or guardian of that teenager, gives their permission for the teenager to have an intimate piercing? – It does not matter if the child or young person under 18, or their parent(s) or guardian(s), give their permission for the intimate piercing to take place, the new law means that no-one is allowed to perform an intimate piercing on someone under 18 in Wales.

Does the new law apply to the whole of the UK? – No, the new law only applies in Wales.

Does the new law apply to intimate piercings done previously? – If a child or young person under 18 already has an intimate piercing that was done before 1 February 2018 then the person who did the piercing will not be in trouble because of this new law. However, if a piercing that was done before 1 February 2018 needs medical treatment, or needs to be removed because the person under 18 is unable to remove it safely themselves, then they will need to make an appointment to see their doctor about it. They will not be able to go back to the person who did the piercing for them and ask them to remove it or treat it.

What happens if someone does not take any notice of the Act and intimately pierces a child or young person under the age of 18? – It will be seen as a criminal offence if someone does not take any notice of the Act and intimately pierces a child or young person under 18 in Wales. If the person who did the intimate piercing is found guilty then they will have to pay a fine.

How will a piercer confirm someone’s age? – This is not set out in the new law but a piercer could ask to see the following documents: a passport; a European Union photo card driving licence; a photographic identity card bearing the national Proof of Age Standards Scheme (PASS) hologram; or any other document that can prove the person is 18 or over. It is not enough for the piercer to decide that the young person looks to be over 18 – they must take careful steps and check documents to make sure they are certain the person is 18 or over to avoid breaking the law.

Who is responsible for making sure body piercing businesses follow the new law? – Local authorities in Wales will be responsible for this, and they can also call upon the police to help them.

Where can I get more information? – Your local authority can give you information and advice, and information can also be found on the Welsh Government website – www.gov.wales/publichealthact