

SMOKING IN PUBLIC PLACES

- The Greater London Authority has set up a Committee of Inquiry to review the question of smoking in public places. Its terms of reference are to review existing scientific work on passive smoking and health and safety regulations regarding smoking in public places, and consider whether there is any scope for improvement in London.
- Whilst the Committee may publish comments and make recommendations, it has no formal power to change legislation or impose specific requirements on London based businesses. Its report will be presented to the full GLA in due course, which may vote to ask the Mayor to ask Parliament to introduce legislation in this area. The Mayor has indicated that he is against a blanket ban on smoking in public places.
- Nevertheless, the Committee's work is part of an ongoing debate at all political levels on the question of smoking in public places and the risk to customer and staff health. The Health and Safety Executive, for example, is keen to introduce new legislation requiring all businesses to adopt a smoking policy and provide smoke-free areas for staff as part of their h&s risk assessments.
- The Government has so far resisted campaigns to impose an absolute ban, and instead encouraged industry self-regulation to improve the provision of no-smoking facilities within the hospitality industry. *ALMR* has been at the forefront of developing and promoting the Public Places Charter spearheading voluntary self-regulation. Adoption of the Charter at outlet level is the best form of protection against legislation.
- The Committee has already heard evidence from Professor Glantz, credited with engineering the introduction of the California ban, and will shortly take evidence both written and oral evidence from members of the industry, including *ALMR*.
- **ALMR Position:**
 - to draw attention to the work of the industry group promoting the Public Places Charter and current progress towards compliance with the voluntary targets set by industry in agreement with Department of Health i.e. 50% of pubs and restaurants by 2002.
 - To explain the Charter itself – its objective of promoting customer awareness and encouraging pubs/restaurants to provide non-smoking facilities
 - To highlight the difficulties small and community outlets may face if forced to invest in ventilation equipment or restrict smoking to protect workers and to draw attention to customer surveys indicating the proportion of users smoking
 - To reinforce the need for voluntary self-regulation and a light legislative touch to be applied to the hospitality industry.

NB - A survey is presently being undertaken to assess the level of compliance with the Charter and take up amongst the industry. This is principally being undertaken via existing trade associations, in particular ALMR and the RAGB. Preliminary results may be available by 8 October. An assessment may also be made of compliance within the Capital. It may prove helpful to assess the level of compliance amongst WLA membership to feed into this, particularly as many members will not be members of other trade groupings or chains.