

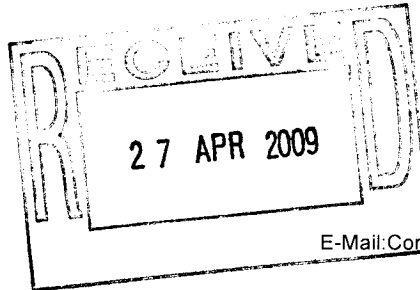
Edwina Hart AM MBE

Y Gweinidog dros Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Minister for Health and Social Services

Our ref: EH/01295/09

Your ref: PET-03-153

Val Lloyd AM
National Assembly For Wales
Cardiff Bay
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CF99 1NA



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Val

27th April 2009

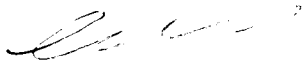
Thank you for your letter of 2 April to Brian Gibbons AM regarding Petition P-03-153 on body piercing. I am replying because the issues raised are primarily ones of public health. There are a number of pieces of legislation relating to cosmetic piercing, however as you are aware, there is currently no statutory age of consent for cosmetic piercing (body piercing and ear piercing). Cosmetic piercing of a minor is lawful provided a valid consent is given. Minors are able to give valid consent themselves if they are capable of understanding the nature of the act to be done.

In 2004, the Local Government Act 2003 amended the Local Government (Miscellaneous) Provisions Act 1982 to include cosmetic piercing and semipermanent skin-colouring businesses in the list of those which local authorities have powers to regulate. This legislation gives local authorities in England and Wales specific powers to require persons carrying out cosmetic piercing businesses to register themselves and their premises and to observe byelaws relating to the cleanliness and hygiene of premises, practitioners and equipment. However, this legislation is reserved and I understand that the Department of Health have no current plans to introduce legislation to make the cosmetic piercing of minors a criminal offence. The Department of Health are of the opinion that introducing a minimum age of consent might result in children piercing themselves or each other in an unsafe and unhygienic way or going to disreputable businesses. In addition, the UK Government prefers that businesses carrying out cosmetic piercing should be subject to local authority control so that these activities can be carried out in a safe and hygienic manner.

Edwina Hart
27/4/09
GR7

The Health and Safety Executive has produced guidelines for local authorities on the enforcement of skin piercing activities. These contain useful advice for local authorities in working with businesses to promote a reasonable approach to age of consent issues.

Powers are available to Welsh Ministers to regulate certain types of independent healthcare services in Wales under the Care Standards Act 2000. Although body piercing (as well as tattooing) is currently exempt from regulation under the Care Standards Act, my officials are currently assessing the regulatory options in relation to non-surgical cosmetic treatments, including body piercing and tattooing. The issues raised by the Committee will be taken into account in this work. Once this work has been completed, I will write to you to inform the Committee of the outcome.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'D. Jones', is located below the main text.

Letter from Minister for Health and Social Services # 2

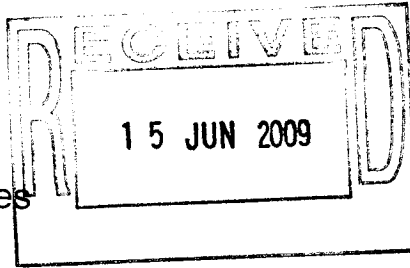
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Minister for Health and Social Services

Our ref: EH/02047/09

Your ref: PET-03-153

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Dear Val

15 June 2009

Thank you for your further letter of 5 June regarding Petition P-03-153 on body piercing.

My officials are currently assessing the regulatory options in relation to non-surgical cosmetic treatments provided by the private sector, including body piercing and tattooing.

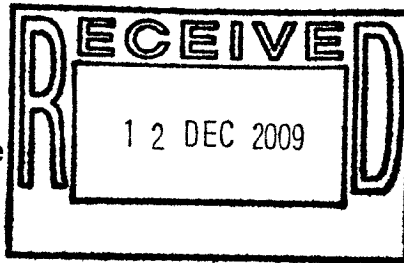
Once this work has been completed I will write to you to inform the Committee of the outcome.

Edwina Hart

15 JUN 2009
GDZ

Our ref: EH/07331/09
Your ref: P-03-153

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8 December 2009

Dear Val

Thank you for your letter of the 26 November regarding restricting access to body piercing for those under 16 years old.

As you are aware, my officials are currently assessing the regulatory arrangements and regulatory options in relation to non-surgical cosmetic treatments provided by the private sector. A Task and Finish Group has been established to undertake this review. The group are considering the following non-surgical cosmetic treatments:

- Botulinum toxin injections.
- Dermal filler injections.
- Tattooing, body and skin piercing and tongue splitting.
- Semi-permanent skin colouring and chemical peels.
- The use of intense pulsed lights and electrolysis for non-health related treatments.
- Cosmetic dentistry, including tooth whitening.

In considering these treatments, the review will take into account:

- The risk of harm to the person receiving this service.
- Existing regulations and legislation.
- Industry self-regulation (currently being considered in England).
- The costs and benefits of regulation through the Care Standards Act 2000.
- Existing consumer guidance.

There is currently no legislation available to restrict the age at which a person can have body piercings. The Task and Finish Group will, however, be considering age when making recommendations about future regulatory options.

The Task and Finish Group anticipate completing their work in early 2010, at which point I will inform the Committee.

The Committee may also be interested to note that Welsh model byelaws on acupuncture, tattooing, semi-permanent skin-colouring, cosmetic piercing and electrolysis have been published on the Welsh Assembly Government website: <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/health/protection/communicabledisease/acupuncture/?lang=en>. These model byelaws provide local authorities with a model which they may use to develop their own byelaws to control businesses offering these treatments in their area.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of fluid, connected strokes that form a cursive name.

Edwina Hart MBE OStJ AM

Y Gweinidog dros Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Minister for Health and Social Services

Our ref: EH/00326/10

Your ref: P-03-153

Christine Chapman AM
Chair Petitions Committee
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8 February 2010

Dear Chris.

Thank you for your letter of 29 January regarding the Task and Finish Group's report on the regulatory options for restricting access to body piercing for those under 16 years old.

The Non-Surgical Cosmetic Task and Finish Group have, in their meeting on the 23 February will focus on issues regarding age and consent. I will write to you further with their considered view.

Edwina Hart

Letter from Minister for Health and Social Services #5

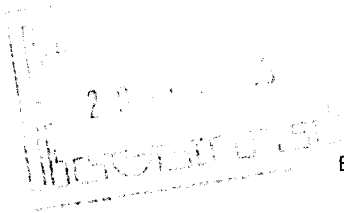
Edwina Hart MBE OStJ AM

Y Gweinidog dros Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Minister for Health and Social Services

Our ref: EH/01153/10

Your ref: P-03-153

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19 April 2010

Dear Chr.

Thank you for your letter of 30 March 2010 requesting an update of the work of the Non Surgical Cosmetic Treatment Task and Finish Group in relation to age of consent for body piercing.

The Group considered the risks, age of consent and current regulatory controls in Wales applying to body piercing at their meeting on 23 February.

The Group is due to provide their report on the regulatory arrangements in relation to non-surgical cosmetic treatments provided by the Independent Healthcare Sector, in May. I will make my decision on whether I wish to pursue legislative competence to introduce age restrictions for body piercing once I have received and considered the final report and the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group. I will write to you to inform the Committee of my decision.

Edwina Hart

Response from Minister for Health and Social Services

Edwina Hart MBE OStJ AM

Y Gweinidog dros Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Minister for Health and Social Services

Our ref: LF/EH/0046/10

Your ref: P-03-153

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26 November 2010

Dear Christine

Petition P-03-153: Body Piercing

Thank you for your letters regarding petition P-03-153 which called upon the National Assembly for Wales to: "place restrictions on the age at which a minor can have body piercing. The age for body piercings, other than the ears and nose, should be regulated up to the age of 16 years". I have considered this issue carefully and have received information from the Scottish Government on the position in Scotland with regards to age restrictions for skin piercings.

I have decided to seek stakeholders' views on the introduction of an age restriction for cosmetic piercings via a consultation exercise to be issued in the new year. I will ensure that the Committee is informed when the consultation exercise is launched.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Edwina Hart', written in a cursive style.