

# **R N I B**

Cymru

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**Golwg gwahanol**

**See differently**

**Support for the petition to ban Advertising-Boards (A-Boards) in Wales – lived experiences**

## **Contents**

The following are a collection of case studies from six blind and partially sighted individuals regarding the presence of Advertising Boards (A-boards) on the streets of Wales.

In this report, these individuals give their own thoughts and opinions on the petition to ban A-Boards in Wales. This document was created to show the Petitions Committee the perspective from those in the Visually- impaired community and consequently the benefit of restricting Advertising-Boards in Wales.

## **Overview of the responses:**

- All the responders reported that they had collided with and/or hurt themselves with an A-board in the street.
  - All responses expressed a desire to see them banned in Wales or at least for A-boards to be more strictly regulated.
  - When asked about the difference an A-Board ban or limitation would make, all responses were overwhelmingly positive citing freedom of movement, reduced stress and increase in sense of safety and wellbeing.
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The order in which the case studies are presented:

1. [REDACTED] (Abertillery)
2. [REDACTED] (Ammanford)
3. [REDACTED] (Cardiff)
4. [REDACTED]
5. [REDACTED] (Bridgend)
6. [REDACTED] (Talbot Green)

### Case Study 1

Name: [REDACTED]

Age: 54

Town: Abertillery

Consent to share story: Yes Blind or Partially

Sighted: Blind Welsh Speaker: No

### Questions and answers

1. **Do you think A-Boards should be banned in Wales?** No
2. **Do you have A-Boards in your local area?** Yes
3. **Have you hurt or collided with any?** Yes
4. **Would you like to see A-Boards banned in Wales?** No
5. **If A-Boards were banned what difference would this make to your life?**  
It would make a limited difference generally
6. **Any Comments?** The reason why I say no to an outright ban in Wales is because I know how difficult

it is for small businesses in Wales to keep going. I have no objection to them advertising their products and services, etc. What I do object to is the way such A-boards are situated, causing unnecessary hinderance and obstructions to pedestrians in general, not just to blind and visually impaired pedestrians. Thoughtless positioning of A-boards also impacts on mums with pushchairs, the disabled in wheelchairs and on mobility scooters, and the elderly, all of whom are often forced off pavements into the road. As I know that most shop keepers who use A-boards don't give a second thought to these members of the community and the impact their thoughtless actions cause them, then the obvious way forward is to ban them outright. However, I'm conscious of the negative impact such a ban could have on small businesses who are struggling to make ends meet. So, if an educational programme could be instigated, whereby shopkeepers are taught to look at the available space outside their premises, so that they can make a sensible and caring decision as to whether an A- board would impact on pedestrians or not, and if it does, to find an alternative form of advertising their businesses. I would like to keep continuous offenders fined for causing obstructions, as I feel most owners of small businesses would be conscious of the effect a fine would have on their pocket. I'm not suggesting immediate fines, but a fine

should be issued on the third notification. If these avenues have already been pursued, with little or no improvement in the situation, then I would change my mind and say that an outright ban on A- boards in Wales would be the only way forward.

## Case Study 2

Name: [REDACTED]  
Age: 54  
Town: Ammanford  
Consent to share: Yes  
Blind or Partially Sighted: Blind Welsh  
Speaker: No

### Questions and answers

1. **Do you think A-Boards should be banned in Wales?** Yes
2. **Do you have A-Boards in your local area?** Yes.
3. **Have you hurt or collided with any?** Yes, I have trip or hurt my knee. Also, I have slipped on edge of kerb stepping sideways trying to avoid boards in the middle of the pavement.
4. **Would you like to see A-Boards banned in Wales?** Yes
5. **If A-Boards were banned what difference would this make to your life?** It would reduce the risk of tripping and potentially falling. It would also give more confidence when visiting locations where you know there to be a lot of boards and other obstacles
6. **Any Comments?** I find them a particular problem when a A-board arms race has broken out and you have to negotiate a slalom course. If a shop must have more than one you question their effectiveness to the owner. Also, it is made much worst if the other obstacles such as delivery vehicles or customer cars half parked on the pavement forcing you into the path of the A board.

## Case Study 3

Name: [REDACTED]  
Age: 26  
Town: Cardiff  
Consent to share: Yes  
Blind or Partially Sighted: Registered Blind – Some vision  
Welsh Speaker: No

### Questions and answers

1. **Do you think A-Boards should be banned in Wales?** I'm not sure; on one hand I can see that A boards are a real and present danger to visually impaired people, but I believe that street furniture is a problem, and one that is difficult to resolve.
2. **Do you have A-Boards in your local area?** No
3. **Have you hurt or collided with any?** Yes, I have collided with several.

Usually I just sort of fly over or around them and with some flapping of arms and legs usually stay on my feet. Neither me or the A board is hurt in this process, but with the crashing and occasional profanity involved it does draw attention and is rather embarrassing.

4. **Would you like to see A-Boards banned in Wales?** I'd like to see tighter restrictions in the short term and long term possibly a ban.

5. **If A-Boards were banned what difference would this make to your life?**

I would no longer be surprised, when on a casual stroll through the city centre, to receive a cuddle from an A board outside Ladbrokes telling me of their excellent odds, or a flying lesson from a national lottery A board with a finger helpfully indicating the direction of travel over said board. It would be a quiet world, but much easier to navigate and a lot more risk free as there is always the danger of falling in the road if the afore mentioned flapping fails to work.

6. **Any Comments?** I actually think A boards are reducing overall in City Centres (Cardiff resident) but are being replaced with interior advertising screens which for me a problematic too.

#### Case Study 4

Name: [REDACTED]

Age: N/A

Town: Cardiff

Consent to share: Yes

Blind or Partially Sighted: Blind Welsh

Speaker: No

#### Questions and answers

1. **Do you think A-Boards should be banned in Wales?** Yes

2. **Do you have A-Boards in your local area?** Yes

3. **Have you hurt or collided with any?** Yes

4. **Would you like to see A-Boards banned in Wales?** Yes

5. **If A-Boards were banned what difference would this make to your life?** I could walk without fear of accident. It improves my sense of wellbeing and safety.

6. **Any Comments?** N/A

#### Case Study 5

Name: [REDACTED]

Age: 33

Town: Bridgend Consent to share: yes.

Blind or Partially Sighted: yes Welsh

Speaker: no

## Questions and answers

### 1. Do you think A-Boards should be banned in Wales?

I do think that A boards should be banned. I struggle to see them as they often do not stand out. I do not see them until it is too late. Also, my seven year old son has the same difficulty. On busy days it is difficult enough to focus on all the people moving around without the extra issue of A boards and street furniture.

### 2. Do you have A-Boards in your local area?

Yes, many shops have them.

3. **Have you hurt or collided with any?** Yes, numerous times

4. **Would you like to see A-Boards banned in Wales?** Yes, I feel that they just cause clutter, danger and obstruction.

5. **If A-Boards were banned what difference would this make to your life?** It would make going out easier and a little less stressful not having an extra obstacle to deal with.

Any Comments? n/a.

## Case Study 6

Name: [REDACTED]

Age: 61

Town: Talbot Green Consent to

share: Yes

Blind or Partially Sighted: Blind Welsh

Speaker: No

## Questions and answers

1. **Do you think A-Boards should be banned in Wales?** Yes, or at least controlled where and how they are placed.

2. **Do you have A-Boards in your local area?** Yes.

3. **Have you hurt or collided with any?** Yes, I have collided with A-Boards most times that I make my way around my area, have had an A-Board collapse on my leg causing a cut and bruising on more than one occasion.

4. **Would you like to see A-Boards banned in Wales?** Yes or at least controlled where and how they are placed.

5. **If A-Boards were banned what difference would this make to your life?**

I would not have to worry about colliding or trying to avoid them every time I venture out & about my area or towns around Wales.

6. **Any Comments?** I would love to be able to travel about without the worry of A-Boards etc obstructing pavements and pathways, I can travel the same way every day and each time the same A-Board can be in a different place I don't think sighted people understand the problem a simple A-Board can cause being in a slightly different place each day, I understand business need to advertise but A- Boards need to be controlled to reduce problems to all pedestrians.

Ends.

Contact: [REDACTED], [REDACTED]