

Together we will beat cancer

CANCER RESEARCH UK



Ms Anne Milton MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Cancer Research UK
Angel Building
407 St John Street
London EC1V 4AD
United Kingdom

T 020 7242 0200
www.cancerresearchuk.org

16th April 2012

Dear Ms Milton,

Give kids one less reason to start smoking: *The answer is plain*

As the Government publishes its consultation on tobacco packaging, Cancer Research UK, along with our partners in the Smokefree Action Coalition¹, is calling for the plain, standardised packaging of tobacco. People in Guildford have already taken action to support our campaign 'The answer is plain'.

Even before our campaign has officially launched, almost 10,000 people across the UK have told us they support plain packs. We will continue to update you on support in your constituency.

Q. Why are plain packs needed?

A. Peer-reviewed research shows that plain packaging makes tobacco much less attractive to young people.

I am pleased to enclose:

- > the executive summary of new research on tobacco packaging from the University of Stirling;
- > a one-page overview of some of the key myths you will encounter about plain packs;
- > an example of how a plain pack might look.

The key aim of plain packaging is to reduce the number of young people starting smoking. Eight out of 10 smokers begin their addiction in their teens. Every year around 157,000 children aged 11-15 start smoking – enough to fill 5,200 classrooms. Marketing is known to pull children into smoking² and the cigarette packet is now the most important marketing tool the tobacco industry has left.

Following a unanimous vote by its MPs, Australia is set to become the first country to have plain packs in December 2012 – with strong support from the Australian public. This is despite a multi-million dollar campaign from the tobacco industry that spread various myths and alarmed retailers about the potential impact on their businesses. These claims are not credible.

I hope you find the enclosed a helpful source of information about the evidence in favour of plain packs. The Cancer Research UK team would be pleased to discuss the evidence base and any concerns that might have been raised with you by the tobacco industry and associated bodies. Please contact [redacted] Public Affairs Manager on 020 3 [redacted] or at [redacted]@cancer.org.uk.

Yours sincerely,

Jean King

Jean King
Director of Tobacco Control

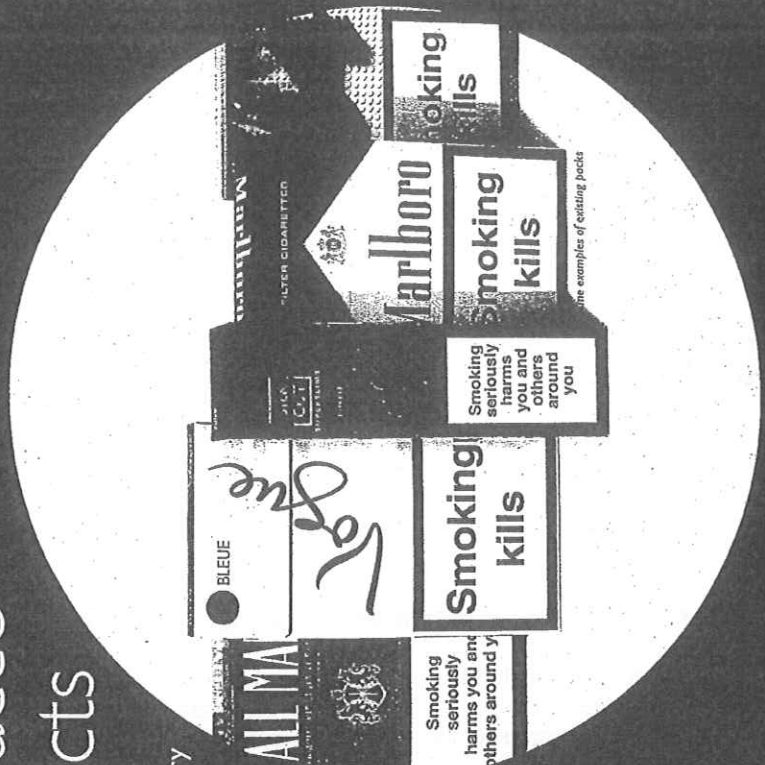
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CENTRE (RH)

¹ Partners include ASH, Association of Directors of Public Health, British Heart Foundation, British Medical Association, Royal College of Nursing and Royal College of Physicians www.smokefreeaction.org.uk.

² cf. Chapter 2, Hastings, G et al. (2008) Point of Sale Display of Tobacco Products. The Centre for Tobacco Control Research, University of Stirling. http://info.cancerresearchuk.org/images/pdfs/tobcon_pointofsalereport1

The packaging of tobacco products

Executive Summary
March 2012



Allison Ford
University of Stirling & The Open University
Centre for Tobacco Control Research
Stirling FK9 4LA Scotland

Telephone: +44 (0)1786 46 7390
Facsimile: +44 (0)1786 46 7745
www.ctcrstir.ac.uk

The full report can be downloaded from
www.cancerresearchuk.org/tobacco



Together we will beat cancer

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The Centre for Tobacco Control Research
Core funded by Cancer Research UK

Registered charity in England and Wales (1089464)
and Scotland (SC041666)



CANCER RESEARCH UK

The packaging of tobacco products

This new report from the Cancer Research UK Centre for Tobacco Control Research at the University of Stirling considers packaging from a broad marketing perspective, and how it is perceived and used by the tobacco industry. New UK research exploring young people's perceptions of both branded and plain packaging is also presented. The report provides:

1. A summary of the marketing function of packaging for consumer goods, including tobacco products
2. A review of research on tobacco industry documents in respect of tobacco packaging
3. A summary of developments in tobacco packaging in the retail press 2009 – 2011
4. Focus group research exploring young people's perceptions of packaging for consumer products, including tobacco packaging and also plain packaging

Key findings:

Packaging: The multifunctional marketing tool

Packaging is an effective marketing medium that helps to build consumer relationships through possession and usage. Packaging innovation, design and value packaging are used to promote the product, distinguish products from competitors, communicate brand values and target specific consumer groups. These packaging strategies, together with the visual and structural aspects of packaging design, such as colour size and shape, influence consumer perceptions and purchase and usage behaviour. They give packaging an important role both at point-of-purchase and post-purchase.

Packaging also has a close relationship with the product. For example both smokers and non-smokers erroneously associate lightly coloured packs with weaker product strength and reduced harm.

Packaging: A tobacco industry and retail perspective

Tobacco packaging has multiple functions for tobacco companies, beyond that of brand identification, navigation and selection. It is used to promote the product using the same strategies employed by other consumer goods manufacturers, specifically packaging innovation, design and value packaging. Packaging is viewed as a key marketing tool for tobacco companies, according to both their own internal documents and also the retail press. Packaging has a wider reach than advertising and is the most explicit link between the company and the consumer.

Perceptions of packaging and plain packaging: A focus group study

Research exploring young people's perceptions of tobacco packaging found that youth appear to be attracted to tobacco packaging design. Branded packaging presented positive user imagery and functional and emotional benefits to young people. Conversely plain cigarette packaging was perceived as unattractive, reduced emotional attachment to the packaging and enforced negative smoking attitudes among young people. Plain packs with different shapes were also found to influence young people's perceptions, suggesting that a standard shaped plain pack is the most effective approach to reducing the ability of packaging to communicate with young smokers and potential smokers.

The full report is available at www.cancerresearchuk.org/tobacco

For more information, please contact Robin Hewings, Policy Manager:
e: robin.hewings@cruc.org.uk t: 020 3469 8152

Extracts from research exploring young people's perceptions of plain packaging

About packaging generally:

I think the package is a big part of the product... Probably just as important as the product
(GIRLS, CDEB)

(GIRLS, CDEB)

...something you would use in public. You don't want to have to bring out something ugly

If it's too big as well, so you can't carry it around with you

(GIRLS, ABC1)

About superslims:

They'd be easy to hide
(GIRLS, CDEB)

If any of them are attractive, it's that one just because it's kind of perfume shaped
(GIRLS, ABC1)

They (limited edition packs) look too colourful to be harmful...
(GIRLS, CDEB)

About packs of 14:

I don't know, if they are deliberately trying to sell to fourteen year olds, but I think it sort of appeals, because they'll look at it... They are sort of saying it without actually saying it, like subliminally saying you know, fourteen year olds
(BOYS, ABC1)

About lighter pack colour:

They look cool, not friendlier, but they don't look as harmful

You wouldn't want to get into the strong stuff at the start
(GIRLS, ABC1)

(GIRLS, ABC1)

See the packages with the white they look a lot less harmful...

Gas it's white, it just looks cleaner
(BOYS, ABC1)

(BOYS, ABC1)

The pink just looks really like it would attract teenage girls
(GIRLS, ABC1)

Emotional responses to packaging:

It (a particular brand) looks as if you're like more mature. Better and more popular
(BOYS, CDEB)

(BOYS, CDEB)

It (a different brand) makes me feel quite cool... it makes you feel stylish and that kind of upper class

(BOYS, CDEB)

About plain packs:

Looks dead cheap... No one would buy it
(GIRLS, ABC1)

(GIRLS, ABC1)

You'd feel better about it (smoking) than carrying that brown thing (plain pack)

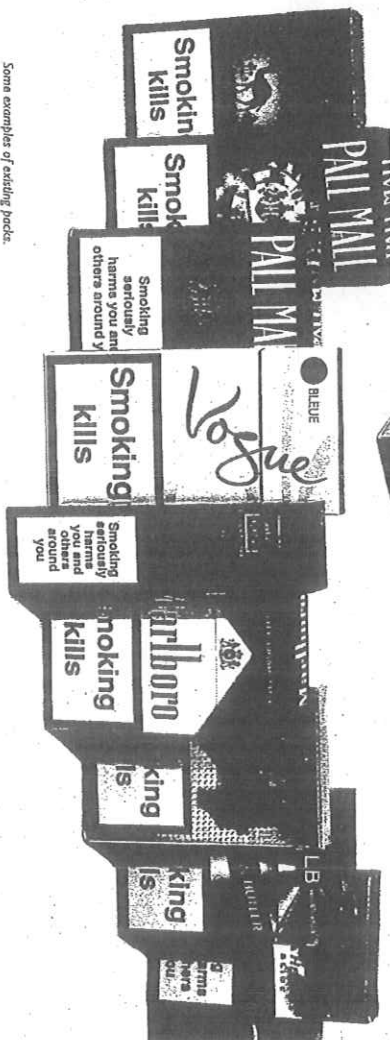
...to see that (plain pack) you'd think, what am I doing, carrying this about?

...Aye, in front of all your pals if you brought it out you wouldn't feel embarrassed, but if you brought that (plain pack) out you'd be pure embarrassed, people who don't smoke would look at you like they were ashamed of you
(BOYS, CDEB)

(BOYS, CDEB)

I think that one (plain pack) looks like you'd be more ill if you kept smoking them but they ones (superslims) look like you wouldn't be so unwell if you smoked them for ages
(GIRLS, CDEB)

(GIRLS, CDEB)



Some examples of existing packs

**PROTECT CHILDREN
DON'T MAKE THEM
BREATHE YOUR SMOKE**



You can do it. We can help.

For information on how to quit call
0800 169 0 169

Mon to Fri 9am to 8pm,
Sat and Sun 11am to 5pm
or visit smokefree.nhs.uk

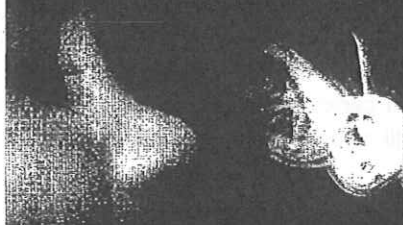
The toxic chemicals in tobacco smoke
damage your blood vessels, damage your
body's cells and attack your immune system.

WARNING

Brand
Variant

20

**PROTECT CHILDREN
DON'T MAKE THEM
BREATHE YOUR SMOKE**



UK DUTY PAID

Brand
Variant

20

20 CIGARETTES
BRAND VARIANT



A Cancer Research UK Briefing on Plain Packaging for Tobacco Tobacco Industry Myths

Eight out of ten smokers start by the age of 19¹, an addiction which kills one in two long-term users². Peer-reviewed evidence clearly demonstrates how marketing pulls children into smoking^{3, 4}. Plain packaging of tobacco is required to close this marketing loophole, and **to give millions of children one less reason to start smoking.**

The tobacco industry has opposed every effective proposal to cut smoking rates. This briefing covers three of the myths the tobacco industry is using to try and block or delay the introduction of plain packaging.

Smuggling

The tobacco industry has raised the common myth that "plain packs are easier to forge, so smuggling will rise" (we have already seen many groups funded by the industry use this argument). We dispute this statement for two main reasons.

First, existing tobacco packs are already very easy to forge – therefore packs are not a reliable way for the public to spot non-duty paid from duty paid tobacco. To combat this, genuine packs have covert markings that allow enforcement officials to distinguish them from illicit cigarettes. These covert markings will continue to be in place on plain packs. Second, plain packs will include large pictorial health warnings. We see no reason why these pictorial health warnings will be easier to forge than manufacturers' logos or designs.

UK jobs

The tobacco industry has regularly used the threat of job losses as a reason to oppose public health legislation to reduce smoking rates. The tobacco industry in the UK has been steadily reducing its workforce from around 40,000 in 1970⁵ to 5,000 in 2010⁶. However, this has largely been as a result of mechanisation and rationalisation⁷ – a deliberate move to make their business more efficient, rather than an enforced downsizing due to public health legislation.

Tobacco cartons amount to less than 5% of sales of folding cartons in the UK and very little tobacco packaging is produced in the UK. Industry experts estimate that manufacturing tobacco cartons accounts for 325 jobs in the UK. Cigarettes will still need to be packaged in the event of plain packs being introduced.

International comparisons

Opponents of plain packaging don't tend to acknowledge the wide-ranging international interest in the policy. Australia has already brought in plain packaging legislation, which will be implemented in December 2012. While the UK could be the first nation in Europe to benefit from plain packaging, France, Norway, Finland, Turkey, New Zealand, Hong Kong and Brunei are all reviewing tobacco packaging policy, which is in line with the World Health Organisation's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control.

**For more information please contact Chris West, Head of Public Affairs and Campaigning
020 3469 8435 chris.west@cancer.org.uk**

¹ Goddard E. (2008). 'Table 1.25' General Household Survey 2006: Smoking and drinking among adults 2006. Office for National Statistics, Newport.

² <http://info.cancerresearchuk.org/healthy/living/smokingandtobacco/howdoweknow/>

³ Wakefield, M. 'Plain packaging of tobacco products: a review of the evidence'. Quit Victoria, Cancer Council Victoria; 2011. Ford, A. et al 'The packaging of tobacco products'. The Centre for Tobacco Control Research, Cancer Research UK; 2012.

⁴ Chapter 2 Hastings, G et al. Point of Sale Display of Tobacco Products. The Centre for Tobacco Control Research, University of Stirling; 2008.

⁵ http://info.cancerresearchuk.org/prod_consump/groups/cr_common/@nre/@pol/documents/generalcontent/crukmg_1000ast-3338.pdf

⁶ Buck, D. et al. Tobacco and jobs - the impact of reducing consumption on employment in the UK. Centre for Health Economics, University of York, 1995

⁷ Annual Business Survey. ONS, 2010 <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/abs/>

⁸ Godfrey, C. & Hartley, K. Employment. In Maynard, A. & Tether, P. Preventing alcohol and tobacco problems, Vol. 1. Aldershot, Avebury Gower, 1990.

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An example of the plain packs
Australia plans to introduce

