

18 October 2012

*Tobacco Programme  
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London SE1 8UG*

Mr Simon Clark  
Director  
Forest  
Sheraton House  
Castle Park  
Cambridge CB3 0AX

Dear Mr Clark,

Thank you for your letter dated 7 September 2012 regarding the consultation on standardised packaging of tobacco products. I apologise for the delay in responding.

You may be interested to know that the Department of Health has received a vast number of responses to the consultation, including postcards and petitions. We are currently in the process of collating and undertaking initial analysis of the responses received.

We will give all responses and petitions the appropriate consideration. We have accepted responses to the consultation, including petitions, postcards and emails, in good faith. We do not intend to conduct general investigations into the way in which particular campaigns were conducted (including those involving collecting signatures on petitions, encouraging people to complete postcards or send emails).

However, when our attention has been drawn to concerns about a particular campaign, we have raised that issue with the relevant organisation and invited them to clarify the position. Nevertheless, I would want to be clear that it is not practicable or necessary for the Department of Health to seek to verify each and every person that has signed a petition, sent a postcard or sent an email to us.

You set out a number of questions in your letter. I will turn to each question now.

You have expressed concern that a number of local councils and NHS bodies have, as you suggest, “actively engaged in wholesale support for the introduction of plain

packaging". You further suggest that these activities contravene the *Code of recommended practice on local authority publicity* ("the code").

The Department of Health does not have responsibility for monitoring adherence with the code. I suggest that if you believe that a local council has contravened the code, you make a complaint directly to that organisation. Similarly, concerns about the activities of any NHS body should be raised directly with them.

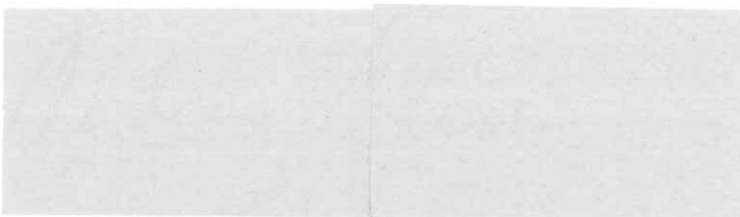
You complain that an agent of the "Plain Packs Protect" campaign was suggesting to members of the public that she was working for the government. This is the first complaint we have received of this nature. Although the "Plain Packs Protect" campaign has pro-actively volunteered information about the way they conducted their campaign, I have written to the organisers to seek further information about the specific questions raised in your letter.

Regarding the direct lobbying of politicians, this is not a matter for the Department of Health. The consultation asked for anyone with an interest to respond directly to the Department of Health via any of the ways set out in the consultation document. We have not suggested that anyone send consultation responses directly to any politician. I suggest that, if you are concerned about any lobbying that has taken place, that you complain directly to the organisations and politicians concerned.

You are concerned about the Avaaz web-based petition. As we are still in the process of collating responses, I am not able to confirm how many responses were received to any particular campaign. This information will be made available in the future. As I set out above, we have accepted responses to the consultation received before the closing date in good faith.

Finally, thank you for your letter of 30 August with your answers to my earlier questions.

Yours sincerely,



Tobacco Programme Manager