

Our ref: TO00000739280

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Ms Angela Harbutt
Sheraton House
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Dear Ms Harbutt,

Thank you for your letter of 8 November to Jeremy Hunt and Norman Lamb about plain packaging for tobacco products. I have been asked to reply.

I note your concerns about material published in the Bulletin circulated by the All Party Parliamentary Group on Smoking and Health and also about how Stephen Williams MP has carried his role as Chair of the APPG. It would be most appropriate to raise these issues directly with Mr Williams, who can explain his position and take any action may be appropriate in the circumstances.

I can assure you that ministers will only make decisions on this policy issue after full consideration has been given to the consultation responses, evidence and other relevant information, and the arguments raised on both sides of the debate.

I can also assure you that ministers are aware of the need to ensure that decisions are made in a fair, even-handed and transparent way, and I have passed your concerns to officials working in tobacco policy. Officials have informed me that the Department is aware of the approach to plain packaging initially taken by the UK Centre for Tobacco Control Studies, as well as the remedial action taken. As you will know, to demonstrate the Department's commitment to fairness and transparency, and because of the degree of public interest in the tobacco packaging consultation, the responses to two recent freedom of information requests were published on the DH website. You can access these responses on the Department's website, transparency.dh.gov.uk/category/foi/.

Officials have also confirmed that Mr Simon Clark's letter of 7 September was received by _____ Tobacco Programme Manager, and that _____ replied on 18 October. If Mr Clark did not receive _____ reply, he may

wish to contact directly. The Department cannot provide you with a copy of this reply for data protection reasons.

Finally, you may be interested to know that the Department received several hundred thousand responses to the plain packaging consultation, including postcards and petitions from across a range of interested parties. The Department's tobacco policy team are currently in the process of carefully collating and analysing all the responses received. The Department will publish a summary report of the consultation responses in due course.

I hope this reply is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

Ministerial Correspondence and Public Enquiries