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30 AUG 2012

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for copying to Iain Duncan Smith, Eric Pickles, George Osborne, Theresa May and Vince Cable your letter of 8 August to the Department of Health enclosing British American Tobacco's response to the cigarette packaging consultation. As the matter you raise concerns public health, your letters have been passed to the Department of Health. I have been asked to reply.

The UK-wide *Consultation on the standardised packaging of tobacco products* ran from 16 April to 10 August. The consultation has now closed and the Department is carefully considering all the responses that have been received.

The Department wants to make it easier for people to make healthy choices. To do this, it needs to understand whether there is evidence to demonstrate that the plain packaging of tobacco products would have an additional health benefit, over and above existing tobacco control initiatives. The consultation asked whether standardised packaging could improve public health by:

- reducing the appeal of tobacco products to consumers;
- increasing the effectiveness of health warnings on the packaging of tobacco products;
- reducing the ability of tobacco packaging to mislead consumers about the harmful effects of smoking; and
- having a positive effect on smoking-related attitudes, beliefs, intentions and behaviours, particularly among children and young people.

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To inform responses to this consultation and any subsequent policy-making, the Department commissioned *Plain tobacco packaging: A systematic review*. The review was supported through the Public Health Research Consortium (PHRC), a network of researchers funded by the Department's Policy Research Programme. The review was undertaken by academics at the University of Stirling, the University of Nottingham and the Institute of Education, London. The resulting report has been peer-reviewed in accordance with the Department's Research Governance Framework and is available on the PHRC's website at <http://phrc.lshtm.ac.uk> (click on the 'Projects' tab, followed by the 'By theme' tab and then the 'Smoking' tab and follow the link to the publication).

The Government has not made any proposals to change cigarette packaging. The Government has an open mind on this issue and any decisions to take further policy action on tobacco packaging will only be taken after consideration has been given to the consultation responses, evidence and other relevant information.

I hope this reply is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

Ministerial Correspondence and Public Enquiries

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