



Association of Directors of Public Health (UK)

The Association of Directors of Public Health

ADPH welcomes House of Commons support for legislation on standard packs & ending smoking in cars with children

The Association of Directors of Public Health has welcomed new legislation that will help to protect the health of children and young people by helping to prevent children from starting to smoke.

The House of Commons has today agreed House of Lords amendments to the Children & Families Bill, giving the Health Secretary the power to bring in Regulations:

- Requiring cigarettes and other tobacco products to be sold in standardised (“plain”) packaging
- Making it an offence to smoke in cars where children under 18 are present.
- Age of sale of 18 for e-cigarettes.

The Bill also includes an amendment prohibiting proxy purchasing of tobacco.

Dr Janet Atherton, President of the Association of Directors of Public Health (and Director of Public Health for Sefton) said:

“Directors of Public Health welcome these significant steps in protecting the future health of children. Over 200,000 children in the UK take up smoking each year – and standardised packaging is an important measure in helping to protect children from tobacco industry marketing. The Association of Directors of Public Health congratulates MPs on moving forward with plain packaging, banning smoking in cars where children are present and prohibiting proxy purchasing of tobacco. We hope that these important new provisions will be introduced as soon as is possible both in England and across the UK.”

Standardised packaging of cigarettes and other tobacco products is intended to make starting to smoke less attractive to children and young people. Among existing adult smokers, two thirds report that they began to smoke before the age of 18, and almost two fifths before the age of 16. Standard packs will have no tobacco branding apart from the name of the product in a simple typeface, and will be covered in written and graphic health warnings and advice on quitting.

In a 2010 survey about one child in five reported often being exposed to smoking in cars. Children are particularly vulnerable to secondhand smoke as they have smaller lungs and less developed immune systems. Smoke in cars is particularly dangerous, as children are confined and smoke concentration often reaches very high levels.

In July 2013, ADPH withdrew from any involvement with the Government’s Responsibility Deal in light of the Government’s announcements that it would not move forward with action on the introduction of a minimum unit price for alcohol and standardised packaging of tobacco products. At that time, ADPH President Dr Janet Atherton called on the UK Government to take action immediately to reduce health inequalities and the health and wider societal harm caused by tobacco and cheap alcohol across the UK, by moving ahead with minimum unit pricing for alcohol and standardised packaging for tobacco products. She also commended the approach being taken by the Scottish Government, which had listened to its advisors and intended to pursue measures – such as minimum unit pricing for alcohol and standardised packaging for tobacco products – to reduce alcohol and tobacco related harm and improve public health in Scotland.

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Further information

The Association of Directors of Public Health (ADPH) is the representative body for Directors of Public Health (DsPH) in the UK. It seeks to improve and protect the health of the population through DPH development, sharing good practice, and policy and advocacy programmes. www.adph.org.uk

ADPH has a strong track record of collaboration with other stakeholders in public health, including those working within the NHS, local authorities and other sectors.

ADPH is a member of the Smokefree Action Coalition – a group of more than 190 organisations - committed to promoting public health and reducing the harm caused by tobacco. <http://www.smokefreeaction.org.uk/>

The systematic review of the evidence for plain tobacco packaging, commissioned by the DH and carried out by the Public Health Research Consortium concludes that “there is strong evidence to support the propositions set out in the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control relating to the role of plain packaging in helping to reduce smoking rates; that is, that plain packaging would reduce the attractiveness and appeal of tobacco products, it would increase the noticeability and effectiveness of health warnings and messages, and it would reduce the use of design techniques that may mislead consumers about the harmfulness of tobacco products.” http://phrc.lshtm.ac.uk/project_2011-2016_006.html)

**Association of Directors of Public Health
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