



Rt Hon Andrew Lansley CBE MP
Secretary of State for Health
Richmond House
79 Whitehall
London SW1A 2NS

8th December 2010

Dear Andrew

Point of sale display and plain packaging

The Smokefree Action Coalition (SFAC) is writing to outline its views on the proposals in the Public Health White Paper to protect children through tobacco legislation and enforcement.

We were pleased to hear you say in your interview with Andrew Marr that you will be launching a consultation on the introduction of plain packaging of tobacco products in the UK. The SFAC has been campaigning for this measure for a number of years.

However, the SFAC is very concerned that the Government might be considering plain packaging as an alternative to the point of sale display legislation due to be implemented next year. The evidence for the impact of point of sale display bans is clear and continues to grow. It has been backed up most recently by the evaluation of the impact of the legislation in Ireland which shows, as expected, that it has changed social norms in young people so that healthier choices are easier to make, without leading to an immediate and significant decline in retail cigarette sales, and that retailers were 97% compliant.

We know that you are well aware how committed the health community is to the timely implementation of the point of sale display ban. The Smokefree Action Coalition represents over 150 health and social welfare organisations including ASH; the British Medical Association; the majority of the royal medical colleges including the Royal College of Physicians, the Royal College of General Practitioners and the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health; a wide range of charities including the British Heart Foundation, Cancer Research UK and the National Children's Bureau; and public health organisations such as the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health, the Faculty of Public Health and the Trading Standards Institute.¹

To pursue plain packaging in addition to the prohibition of tobacco displays will demonstrate your commitment to public health and willingness to stand up to lobbying by those who manufacture and sell tobacco products. In doing so you will secure the UK's reputation as a world leader in tobacco control. To pursue plain

¹ For full list of members see Smokefree Action Coalition website at www.smokefreeaction.org.uk

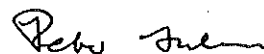
packaging at the expense of the display ban risks the appearance of caving in to tobacco industry lobbying tactics, which would seriously undermine your Government's reputation on public health. It would send a message to the general public that tobacco industry and retailers' profits are more important than children's health.

The signatories to this letter on behalf of the Smokefree Action Coalition would welcome the opportunity to meet you at the earliest opportunity to discuss these matters further. We are copying this letter to the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister as we understand that they are taking a keen interest in this issue.

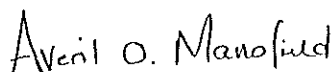
Yours sincerely,




Deborah Arnott
Chief Executive
ASH



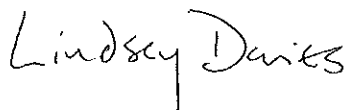
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Chief Executive
British Heart Foundation



Professor Averil Mansfield
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Harpal Kumar
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