Plain packaging of tobacco: Evidence and policy
Moving towards plain packaging: the UK example

Many countries have introduced legislation to restrict or remove tobacco advertising and promotion. As this has occurred, increased attention has been paid to packaging as a marketing and communications tool.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Scope</th>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 2003</td>
<td>Ban on billboard, cinema and press advertising</td>
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<td>May 2003</td>
<td>Ban on direct mail and on-pack promotion</td>
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<td>July 2003</td>
<td>Ban on domestic sponsorship</td>
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<td>Dec 2004</td>
<td>Restrictions on point-of-sale advertising</td>
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<td>July 2005</td>
<td>Ban on brand sharing and international sponsorship</td>
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<td>April 2012</td>
<td>Ban on POS displays, advertising and price display in supermarkets; 2015 for other outlets</td>
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National strategy (England)

- A five year plan for England, published on 9 March 2011
- Promoted a ‘comprehensive’ approach to tobacco control
- Aimed to builds on the successes of the past
- The Plan sets out Government action to support action at all levels to achieve three national ‘ambitions’ for reduced smoking rates by 2015
- Included commitment to: Look at whether plain packaging of tobacco might have additional benefits
Importance of NGOs

- Alongside government action, the NGO community plays a key role in supporting tobacco control in the UK.
- This includes on the issue of introducing plain packaging.
- An umbrella organisation exists, the Smokefree Action Coalition, with leadership from ASH.
- Key charities in particular Cancer Research UK play a role.
- Work is sometimes UK wide and sometimes for particular parts (i.e. Scotland).
• In 2011 the UK governments announced a joint public consultation on the plain packaging of tobacco products

• To inform this, a systematic literature review was commissioned and published
Responding to public consultation

• The government published the consultation responses, over 2,000 received including many from the tobacco industry

• Some political factors delayed a commitment to implementation in England

• However, the Scottish government committed to proceeding with the policy even if the UK did not

• This (temporary) internal disagreement may eventually have helped progress
Updating the evidence & independent review

• Sept 2013: An update on new studies published since original systematic review was conducted

• Nov 2013: The UK government commissioned a senior clinical (Sir Cyril Chantler) to conduct a further review. He met with a range of stakeholders including our research team and visited Australia to learn from their implementation.
Analysis of tobacco industry responses to public consultation

• Researchers examined tobacco companies’ submissions to the UK consultation.
• They compared the relevance & quality of evidence cited by tobacco companies with evidence in our original systematic review.
• Evidence cited by global tobacco companies was either ‘low quality’ or ‘off-topic’. Researchers concluded: “By paying for evidence which created doubts about the impact of standardised tobacco packaging the industry successfully delayed the policy.”
Chantler Review published

April 2014

Standardised packaging of tobacco

Report of the independent review undertaken by Sir Cyril Chantler
...and throughout: Media Advocacy

‘The answer is plain’ video (2012)

Advert in The Times (October 2013)

‘The world back home’ video 2013
Advocacy aimed at politicians

Email your MP campaign

Parliament Day (June 2012)

Mailing MPs a real pack of cigarettes, sealed in glossy packaging

Standard Packs petition
Steps towards legislation

• Draft regulations published with final consultation for any new evidence (June 2014)
• EU notified of draft regulations
• Commitment to legislation announced (January 2015)

• Impact assessment on illicit trade published (February 2015) – makes clear “Standardised packaging would not introduce any new risks to the UK illicit market”
• Regulations will now be voted on before the end of parliamentary session (by March 30th 2015)
Looking forwards…

• Smokefree Action Coalition working hard to engage with individual parliamentarians before the final vote
• A legal briefing has been commissioned and prepared (for CRUK and ASH) to help inform the response to future legal challenges from the tobacco industry
• The UK continues to learn from Australia as it moves towards implementation.
Key points in the UK’s experience

- Importance of reviewing, presenting and updating the research evidence
- Public consultation
- Coordinated advocacy with clear leadership
- Assessing public opinion
- Using media advocacy
- Careful impact assessment (including impact on illicit trade)
- Learning from other countries (Australia)
- Preparing for next steps
Thank you

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