

# ALL PARTY PARLIAMENTARY GROUP ON SMOKING AND HEALTH

c/o Action on Smoking and Health 6th floor, Suites 59-63, New House, 67-68 Hatton Garden, London EC1N 8JY

Rt Hon David Cameron MP  
Prime Minister  
10 Downing Street  
London SW1A 2AA

Chair: Rt Hon Paul Burstow MP  
Secretary: Bob Blackman MP  
Treasurer: Ian Mearns MP  
Vice-Chairs:  
Rt Hon Kevin Barron MP  
Baroness Finlay  
Baroness O'Cathain  
Lord Rennard  
John Robertson MP

29 May 2014

Dear Prime Minister,

## Consultation on Draft Regulations on Standardised Packaging: Tobacco Industry Involvement

We are writing to you as officers of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Smoking and Health about the forthcoming public consultation on draft Regulations under the Children and Families Act 2014, concerning the standardised packaging of cigarettes and other tobacco products. We have received reports of the tobacco industry's intention to try to influence this consultation.

First, the "smokers' rights group" FOREST, which receives funding from British American Tobacco (BAT), Japan Tobacco International (JTI) and Imperial Tobacco Ltd (ITL), has hired the marketing agency Kreate to collect "digital signatures" for the "Hands off Our Packs" petition to No 10. Kreate describes itself as "*an experiential agency that specialises in the delivery and staffing of face-to-face experiences*". The All Party Group has been sent an internal agency document setting out how the nationwide campaign is being run. Agency staff were recruited at £85 a day, and issued with a "petition app". According to Kreate "*when a consumer agrees to have a letter sent to David Cameron, they will receive an email for them to approve the letter to be sent*". Although Kreate make it clear that they want "clean/correct" data, the targets being set for their agents are an ambitious 100 signatures per person per day, a total that promotion industry insiders have said could be difficult if not impossible to achieve.

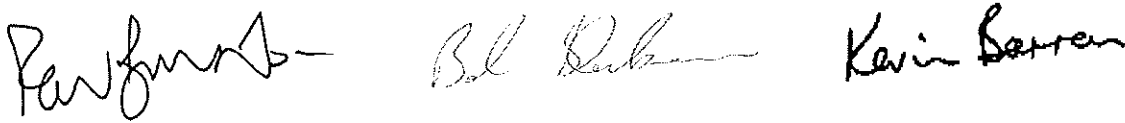
Agencies have apparently also been commissioned directly by BAT to run a six week, "*anti-plain packs roadshow*", aiming to sign up 100,000 people to oppose plain packs. The company is reported to have allocated £500,000 to the activity. Over 100 people a day will be working on this campaign, tasked to find 4 sign-ups an hour.

We are confident that the resulting communications to you and other Ministers purporting to come from members of the public concerned about standardised packaging will be treated with the scepticism they deserve. As you know, the UK has a treaty obligation under Article 5.3 of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control "*to protect these [public health] policies from commercial and other vested interests of the tobacco industry in accordance with national law*". The tobacco industry has therefore tried to find disguised methods of

lobbying to prevent tobacco control policy from being developed, of which the actions described in this letter are a clear example.

There was overwhelming support in both Houses of Parliament for Section 94 of the Children and Families Act, which gives the Secretary of State the power to introduce standardised packaging regulations. It is also clear that the policy is popular with the public: the latest YouGov poll on standardised packaging, published on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2014, showed that almost two thirds of adults in Great Britain support standardised packaging with only 11% opposed.<sup>1</sup> We look forward to the publication of the draft Regulations, and to an early opportunity for Parliament to vote on the Regulations in their final form.

Yours sincerely

Three handwritten signatures in black ink are arranged horizontally. From left to right: Paul Burstow, Bob Blackman, and Kevin Barron. The signatures are fluid and cursive.

Rt Hon Paul Burstow MP, Bob Blackman MP and Rt Hon Kevin Barron MP  
Chair and Officers of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Smoking and Health  
cc Jane Ellison MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Public Health

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<sup>1</sup> The poll was commissioned by Action on Smoking and Health, The total sample size was 12,269 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken by YouGov between 5th and 14th March 2014. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all GB adults (aged 18+). Respondents were shown what a standard pack could look like, including larger health warnings as in Australia.