

ANNUAL REVIEW 2003

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It was also a time of great change for ASH. Our Director of the past 5 years, Clive Bates, left to take up a position at the heart of government policy-making, and Deborah Arnott, joined the organisation as our new Director in May.

In the Annual Review we give you a brief overview of some of the ASH campaigns, reports and press briefings. If you have a special interest in any of the articles or would like to read ASH government submissions or political analysis on tobacco-related issues, we would encourage you to access our website at: www.ash.org.uk

NEW ASH DIRECTOR

The new ASH Director, Deborah Arnott, took up her position in May. Deborah was formerly Head of Consumer Education for the Financial Services Authority where she set up its innovative consumer education programme. She has worked extensively in consumer rights and public education, as well as having a broad range of media experience – both in print and television.

Donald Reid, Chair of ASH's Board of Trustees welcomed Deborah to ASH: "Deborah's experience in campaigning, the media and communications will prove invaluable. Her dynamism and drive to deliver will ensure that ASH continues to play a key role in the fight against Big Tobacco."

CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER RECOMMENDS BAN ON SMOKING IN PUBLIC PLACES

At the launch of his Annual Report in July, the Chief Medical Officer said that "very serious consideration should be given to introducing a ban on smoking in public places soon". ASH welcomed the news, calling it "a major step forward in the campaign to protect people from secondhand smoke". As the voluntary restrictions outlined in the Public Places Charter are simply not working, ASH is urging the Government to follow the CMO's recommendation.

Deborah Arnott, Director of ASH, issued a press statement calling on the Government to act immediately: "Smokefree laws are needed to protect both the general public and employees. Ventilation and partial smoking bans are not effective in protecting people from the toxic and carcinogenic effects of tobacco smoke."

Although the CMO's call for action is timely and welcome, a great deal remains to be done to persuade the UK Government of the need for action. News stories apparently from sources close to 10 Downing Street have ruled out national legislation on smoke free workplaces at the present time, and the draft Approved Code of Practice produced by the Health and Safety Executive in 2000 has been stifled by opposition from the Department of Trade and Industry and others. The Labour Party's draft health policy for the next General Election also currently contains no clear commitments to action. It will remain a priority for ASH to push for legislation in the UK Parliament and for action by the European Commission and European Parliament, and we will be seeking to develop and work with our Parliamentary Group to that end.

However, many local authorities, with their partners in the NHS and elsewhere, are looking to pursue Smoke Free City status. ASH will be developing campaign and information materials designed to help local decision-makers who wish to pursue smoke-free initiatives, and will also be supporting campaigns directed at major employers in the hospitality trade to persuade them to follow the smoke-free decisions taken by Pizza Hut and others.

CLEAR THE AIR COALITION

In April, ASH, the TUC and Chartered Institute of Environmental Health hosted a joint conference on smoking in the workplace. The purpose was to call on the government to implement the long-awaited Approved Code of Practice to tackle smoking at work. However, following the day's discussion and debate, it became apparent that the ACoP, as it is currently drafted, would not be sufficient to give the protection from tobacco smoke that should be everyone's right, and so the Clear the Air Coalition was born. This new campaign calls for legislation to give every worker the right

to work in a smoke-free environment. To date, more than thirty organisations have joined the coalition.

SMOKE-FREE ENVIRONMENTS – GOOD FOR BUSINESS!

In February, the BMJ specialist journal Tobacco Control published hard hitting evidence which poured scorn on any predictions that smoke-free environments will cause economic doom and gloom. The research revealed that the vast majority of independent, peer-reviewed studies found that smoke-free policies were good for business while those studies finding a negative effect were either poorly conducted and/or funded by the tobacco industry. ASH believes that Ministers have been led a merry dance by industry opponents of smoke-free measures. This evidence clearly shows that any claims of smoke-free areas driving customers away are simply myths perpetuated by the tobacco industry.

To demonstrate tobacco industry involvement in campaigns to oppose smoke-free laws, ASH produced a report drawing on previously secret internal tobacco industry documents. These show how the tobacco barons built alliances with the hospitality trade to promote self-regulation and stave off smoke-free laws. The report "The tobacco industry, ETS and the hospitality sector" is available on the ASH website at: http://www.ash.org.uk/html/workplace/html/hospitality_ets.html

NEW WHO GLOBAL TOBACCO CONTROL TREATY

The World Health Organisation's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control is the first-ever global health treaty. ASH played a major role in the negotiations, particularly by building NGO support and by recommending changes to the draft text. The Convention is a major step forward in the worldwide battle against the death and disease caused by the tobacco epidemic. It provides the basic tools for countries to enact comprehensive tobacco



ASH representatives, Remi Parmentier and Deborah Arnott, meeting WHO Director General, Gro Harlem Brundtland, at the final meeting of the FCTC negotiating body.

control legislation and take on the powerful tobacco industry. The draft treaty commits nations to ban all tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship (with an exception for nations with constitutional constraints) and requires large warning labels covering at least 30 percent of the display areas of the cigarette pack.

In addition it provides nations with a roadmap for enacting strong, science-based policies in other areas such as tobacco taxation, tobacco product regulation, combating cigarette smuggling, public education, and tobacco cessation treatment. While the measures in the FCTC represent a minimum set of tobacco control policies, the treaty explicitly encourages countries to go above and beyond these measures. Strong action on the part of countries will give them the opportunity to reduce the human suffering caused by tobacco and curb runaway costs of health care.

The treaty must be signed and ratified by 40 countries. As soon as 40 countries ratify the Convention, it becomes law for those countries and thereafter for other countries that ratify it. So far 75 countries have signed the Convention and three – Norway, Fiji and Malta – have ratified it.

The latest information about signatories and ratification of the treaty can be found at: http://www.who.int/tobacco/fctc/signing_ceremony/countrylist/en/

TOBACCO ADVERTISING BAN – A GREAT MOMENT FOR PUBLIC HEALTH

In February, ASH celebrated the beginning of the end of tobacco advertising in the UK, as the first stage of the Tobacco Advertising and Promotion Act 2002 came into force. ASH has been campaigning for this important and vital public health measure to be implemented for over 30 years, and we were among the first to congratulate the Government on finally pushing it through Parliament. The first stage

of legislation banned most tobacco advertising, including newspapers, billboards, direct mail and internet advertising.

Amanda Sandford, ASH Research Manager, said:

"This ban will save tens of thousands of lives as the attractiveness of cigarettes begins to decline, and the tobacco industry struggles to recruit new smokers to replace the customers that are dying off. Without the work of the image-makers to mask the reality, smoking will start to feel banal and ultimately ridiculous."

However, the Act will not be fully implemented for at least another two years when the ban on tobacco sponsorship of Formula One motor racing comes into effect. There will also be further restrictions on point of sale advertising but until that time we can expect the tobacco companies to make full use of this interim loophole. ASH has already submitted one complaint to trading standards officials regarding a breach of the Act and will be carefully monitoring the situation to try to stop other direct or indirect breaches of the law.

ASH ACTION FORCES BAT TO WITHDRAW ART SPONSORSHIP

British American Tobacco attempted to sponsor an art exhibition in London in September. One of the artists involved in the exhibition showed his disgust at the sponsorship by displaying a video of anti-tobacco messages. However, the company mysteriously withdrew its support once its intentions were highlighted by the artist and ASH!

The artist, Simon Tyszkowski, said: "It's disgusting that BAT tried to use this exhibition as a front to peddle its deadly products. They even tried to place their cigarette dispensers at the no-smoking venue! A company that is responsible for so many deaths should have no place in the art world."

BAT AND TOBACCO SMUGGLING – REPORT FINDINGS MUST BE PUBLISHED

In October, David Hinchliffe MP, Labour Chair of the House of Commons Health Select Committee, joined ASH in calling on the Government to publish the findings of a Department of Trade and Industry investigation into British American Tobacco, which stands accused of involvement in tobacco smuggling. ASH believes that it's

wrong for the Government to say that the findings of the DTI report are not for public consumption. In the interest of openness, transparency and not least public health, ASH calls on the government to make the findings of the investigation public.

Health Select Committee Chairman, David Hinchliffe MP said:

"I am concerned at the length of time the DTI inquiry has taken. The committee always has the option of revisiting its investigations, and this is certainly an issue I would not wish to abandon. The publication of the DTI inquiry remains an important issue."

THE ASH WEBSITE AND ELECTRONIC MEDIA

The ASH website continues to improve and grow and is now widely acknowledged as one of the best tobacco control sites in the world. To give an example of the number of people using the site, we averaged just over 300,000 hits during the period between 1 March and 31 May. Keeping the site accessible, up to date and accurate is central to our campaigns, and a key factor in our ability to provide information and to network with others both nationally and internationally. We welcome feedback on the site or any aspect of ASH's work. Contact Naj Dehlavi by e-mail: enquiries@ash.org.uk

ASH INFORMATION AND PUBLICATIONS

ASH Daily News continues to be an invaluable tool that provides up-to-date information on all of the UK tobacco news stories to campaigners around the world. Daily circulation now stands at 2,104. We also produce a wide range of fact sheets and reports that can be downloaded from our website. Hard copies can also be purchased from ASH. Check the website for details.



ACCOUNTS 2002-3

A full copy of the audited accounts for the financial year ended 31st March 2003 is available from the ASH office upon receipt of a large stamped addressed envelope. These can also be found on the ASH web site at www.ash.org.uk/?accounts

ASH would like to thank the British Heart Foundation, Cancer Research UK, the Department of Health, the Health Development Agency and our individual members for supporting our work during the year.

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