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action on smoking and health

Annual Review 2010



## Annual Review – 2010

Action on Smoking and Health (ASH) is a campaigning public health charity that works to eliminate the harm caused by tobacco. ASH is a registered charity, founded in 1971 by the Royal College of Physicians.

### Chair's Introduction

It is with great pleasure that I present this year's annual review of ASH activities. This is a particular pleasure for me in my new role as Chair of ASH, a role in which I will seek to emulate the leadership, wisdom, and good humour of my predecessor Donald Reid. This has been another strongly positive year for ASH which has played a leading role in the campaign to keep the tobacco point of sale legislation on track as well as continuing to provide resources and support for others working to reduce the harm caused by tobacco.

It is very encouraging that recent surveys show that public recognition of ASH's role in providing effective leadership in tobacco control continues to increase

I am also pleased to report that following a review of its activities ASH will be launching a new strategic plan for the next 3-5 years. The economic crisis will greatly challenge our healthcare system. Never has improving public health been more important. We must remind ourselves, and those we seek to influence, that smoking remains the largest single avoidable cause of ill health and death, that smokers die 10 years younger than non smokers, and that smoking is responsible for half the difference in life expectancy between the richest and poorest in society. There remains much for us to do.

I would like to sincerely thank the staff of ASH for their dedication and professionalism and I look forward to working with them and my fellow trustees in the years ahead.



Professor John Moxham

### Overview of 2010

This has been another important year for ASH and the wider tobacco control community. Following the passage of the Health Act last year, regulations were passed early in 2010 to put tobacco products out of sight in shops and to prohibit the sale of cigarettes from vending machines. These measures are due to take effect from October 2011. Predictably, following the General Election, the tobacco industry and its allies stepped up pressure on politicians to overturn these regulations. ASH and members of the Smokefree Action Coalition (SFAC) have continued to engage with politicians and other stakeholders to counter the industry propaganda on point of sale and vending machines. At the time of writing, the debate continues.

Our annual Budget submission this year, which was endorsed by 49 health and welfare organisations, called for an above inflation increase in tobacco tax. For the first time in nine years, the Government reintroduced the tax escalator, with an initial increase of 1% above inflation and a commitment to raising duty by 2% above inflation for each of the next four years.

Following the General Election, the All Party Parliamentary Group on Smoking and Health (APPG) was re-established under the chairmanship of Stephen Williams MP. ASH continues to provide the secretariat for the Group and assisted with the setting up of the APPG Inquiry into the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of tobacco control. We were encouraged by the enthusiasm and dedication of the parliamentarians who wished to provide evidence to the new Government on the importance of maintaining funding for tobacco control.

In October, a joint meeting of ASH staff and trustees was held to review the present strategy for the organisation. To assist this process, we commissioned a survey of stakeholders from the public, health community, Parliament and the media to help measure ASH's strengths and weaknesses. It was heartening to find that ASH is held in high regard, with over 96% of respondents describing ASH as being excellent or good. As part of the preparations for our strategic review, we commissioned a survey to measure the general public's knowledge of ASH. Compared to a similar survey conducted in 2005, unprompted recognition is up from 19% to 21% and prompted recognition was up substantially from 44% to 55%.

## CAMPAIGN FOR A COMPREHENSIVE TOBACCO CONTROL POLICY

### Smokefree Action Coalition (SFAC)

The Smokefree Action Coalition, formed originally to build support for the smokefree legislation, consists of 150 UK health and welfare organisations. These include ASH's main funders - the British Heart Foundation and Cancer Research UK. Other active participants include the BMA, the UK Centre for Tobacco Control Studies, the Royal College of General Practitioners and the Faculty of Public Health.

Following the General Election, the main focus of the SFAC has been to defend the tobacco elements of the 2009 Health Act. As part of the campaign, SFAC members have been active rebutting arguments put forward by the tobacco industry and retailers who argue that putting tobacco out of sight in shops and banning the sale of cigarettes from vending machines will harm businesses. Coalition members also signed up to an advertisement (see page 5) which was placed in a number of publications to encourage parliamentarians to support the point of sale legislation. At the time of writing, a public statement from the Government about implementation of the regulations was awaited.

SFAC campaigning has drawn on new evidence from Ireland, where a ban on the display of tobacco products at the point of sale has been in force since July 2009. This shows that young people under the age of 18 are less likely to believe that they could purchase tobacco products since the law came into effect. Furthermore, while legal sales of tobacco continue to decline, the fall is in line with previous years and there is no evidence to suggest that this is linked to tobacco smuggling as the industry claims.

For further information about the SFAC and how organisations can join see: <http://www.smokefreeaction.org.uk/>



### Government Strategy

In February, the Government published its tobacco control strategy for England. Entitled “A Smoke Free Future”, the report set out ambitious targets to reduce smoking among adults to 10% or less by 2020 and to reduce smoking among teenagers to 1% or less. The report included a commitment to harm reduction, to review the case for plain packaging of tobacco products, and to review the smokefree legislation.

*“ASH has acted as a critical friend to governments of all political complexions, working to drive forward public debate about the appropriate role for government in improving our nation’s health. I value the perspective that ASH provides and look forward to their contributions in the future.”*

Anne Milton,  
Minister of State  
for Public Health

Following the General Election, the new Coalition Government announced that “Action will be taken to improve public health and reduce health inequalities”. We have been working hard to try to ensure that measures to further reduce smoking will be included in the forthcoming public health White Paper due to be published as this report was going to press.

### All Party Parliamentary Group on Smoking and Health



On Boxing Day 2009, David Taylor MP, Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Smoking and Health (APPG) died suddenly of a heart attack. David had been a stalwart campaigner on tobacco issues for many years and his unexpected death was met with great sadness by all who had worked alongside him both within and outside Parliament.

At the meeting of the newly formed APPG held in July, Stephen Williams MP, the Liberal Democrat MP for Bristol West, took over as Chair. The meeting was co-hosted by the Royal College of Physicians and addressed by Professor John Britton who gave a presentation on the findings of the RCP’s report on passive smoking and children. [See also page 8]

The APPG decided to commission an Inquiry into the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of tobacco control to provide evidence for the Government’s spending review and public health white paper consultation. Ten tobacco control experts were invited to present evidence to the All Party Group at two well-attended hearings. The experts included ASH Board member Professor Martin Jarvis and other notable academics and researchers in the fields of public health, economics, epidemiology and psychology. ASH provided the administrative support to compile the Inquiry report which can be accessed at [www.ash.org.uk/APPGoct2010](http://www.ash.org.uk/APPGoct2010) Further information about the APPG on smoking and health can be accessed at: [www.ash.org.uk/APPG](http://www.ash.org.uk/APPG)

## TAX AND SMUGGLING

### Budget Submission

The ASH Budget submission this year was endorsed by 49 public health organisations including organisations as diverse as the English Community Care Association, the Foundation for the Study of Infant Deaths and the British Dental Health Foundation. To support the Budget submission, ASH released a new report: “*The Effects of Increasing Tobacco Taxation: A Cost Benefit and Public Finances Analysis.*” Written by an independent economist, Howard Reed, the report consists of an extensive economic evaluation of the benefits of significantly increasing tobacco taxes. To illustrate these benefits the report shows that raising tobacco prices through taxation by 5% above inflation would

- lead to a reduction in the number of smokers by 190,000;
- save the NHS over £20 million a year by reducing the cost of treatment of smoking-related diseases;
- reduce smoking-related absenteeism in the work place saving over £10 million a year;
- increase government tax revenues by over £500 million a year; a total of £2.6 billion in the first five years; and
- result in wider economic benefits in the first five years of over £270 million per year.

The report clearly shows that an above-inflation rise in the price of tobacco is not only good for the health of the individual but also for the health of the country.

In this year’s Budget, for the first time in nine years, a tobacco tax escalator was reintroduced consisting of a 1% increase above inflation for 2010 and 2% above inflation from 2011 to 2014.

*“It is a great pleasure to work with ASH in my role as Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Smoking and Health. ASH is a professional, focussed and effective organisation which provides me with invaluable support. I have a strong personal commitment to reducing health inequalities and premature death from preventable illnesses and it is good to know that my commitment is matched by that of the team at ASH.”*

Stephen Williams  
MP

## PROTECTION FROM SECONDHAND SMOKE

Over the past year, ASH has been working with SFAC partners to help defend the smokefree legislation which has been under attack by the pro-tobacco lobby. Whilst the Labour government had pledged to review the law this year, the new Coalition government decided that a review was not necessary. This did not stop opponents of the law from attempting to undermine it but a 10-minute rule bill to allow smoking rooms, tabled by a back-bench MP, was voted down. This was thanks to strong arguments presented by Kevin Barron MP, former Chair of the Health Select Committee and past Chairman of the All Party Group on Smoking and Health.

### RCP Report on passive smoking

ASH staff Deborah Arnott & Martin Dockrell contributed to a major new report – ‘Passive smoking and children’ - published in March this year by the Tobacco Advisory Group of the Royal College of Physicians. The report revealed that some 2 million children currently live in a household where they are exposed to cigarette smoke. While adults are now largely protected from secondhand smoke thanks to the smokefree legislation, children continue to be exposed to smoke in the home and in other places such as private cars. The report estimates that child illnesses resulting from breathing in adults’ tobacco smoke generate over 300,000 UK GP consultations and about 9,500 hospital admissions which cost the NHS about £23.3 million a year. The report concluded that the most effective means of protecting children from passive smoking is to reduce the prevalence of smoking in adults, and particularly parents and other carers.

### Public Support for smokefree law

Public support for smokefree legislation continues to grow, notably among smokers, surveys undertaken for ASH have shown. For the past five years ASH has commissioned YouGov to question people about their views on the law. The surveys show that overall 80% of adults support the law while support among smokers has doubled since the law was introduced. Now more smokers (50%) are in favour of the law than oppose it (38%).

There is also substantial support among smokers for further restrictions on smoking: for example, 61% support a ban on smoking in cars with children and only 22% oppose the measure.

## PRODUCT REGULATION

### Nicotine regulation

The Chief Executive of ASH was invited to join the Commission on Human Medicines Working Group on Harm Reduction and Nicotine Replacement Therapy (the CHM is an independent body of experts which advises the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency). In the light of the working group’s advice the MHRA announced an extended indication for nicotine replacement therapy (NRT), to include harm reduction. This is a new element to the indication for “harm reduction”, which reflects the fact that, to quote the MHRA *“it has become widely accepted that there are no circumstances in which it is safer to smoke than to use NRT”*.

The extension of the indication for NRT to include harm reduction also raised the issue of the regulation of other unlicensed nicotine containing products on the market such as electronic cigarettes, which have not been assessed for safety, quality, and efficacy. The MHRA launched a public consultation on whether/how to bring these products into regulation. ASH responded to this consultation in support of the regulation of e-cigarettes and all nicotine delivery devices to ensure that any products sold in the UK are compliant with stringent health and safety standards. At the time of writing the outcome of this consultation has still to be announced.

*“The RCP is proud to have set up ASH in 1971 and we continue to work with ASH to ensure that evidence-based measures to reduce smoking prevalence remain at the heart of public health policy. ASH has been invaluable in galvanising the public health community to work collaboratively and to concentrate our efforts to greatest effect.”*

Sir Richard Thompson,  
President of the Royal College of Physicians.

## Electronic cigarettes research

ASH commissioned YouGov to conduct research into smokers' attitudes and behaviour relating to e-cigarettes, devices which look similar to cigarettes and deliver nicotine in vapour form. The purpose of the survey was to explore the use of e-cigarettes, to improve our understanding of the attitudes and behaviour of smokers who use these products and what makes them continue or cease use.

The survey found that 52% of smokers had heard of e-cigarettes but not tried them, with only 9% having tried e-cigarettes of whom 3% were still using them at the time of the survey.

Our research suggests that although there is interest among smokers for e-cigarettes as a substitute for smoking to help them cut down or quit, there are a number of factors limiting the acceptability of the products currently available.

## RIP Cigarettes

Finland has become the first European country to introduce fire safety standards for cigarettes sold in the country. ASH continues to support work to finalise an agreed ISO standard (International Organization for Standardization) to apply to the whole of the European Union.

## TOBACCO INDUSTRY

### BAT AGM & July demo

This year's activity to mark BAT's AGM sought to highlight the company's complicity in child labour. Thirty-six young people from the North West, Wales and London attended the demonstration outside BAT's offices. They engaged with shareholders and BAT staff going into the meeting, asking tough questions about the ethics of their involvement with child labour. BBC Radio 4 covered the event and Martin Dockrell was interviewed as part of Channel 4's 'Unreported World' documentary on child labour and the tobacco industry which was broadcast in August.

Further action by the young tobacco control activists took place in July when they visited Westminster to lobby their MPs about the tobacco industry's involvement with child labour.

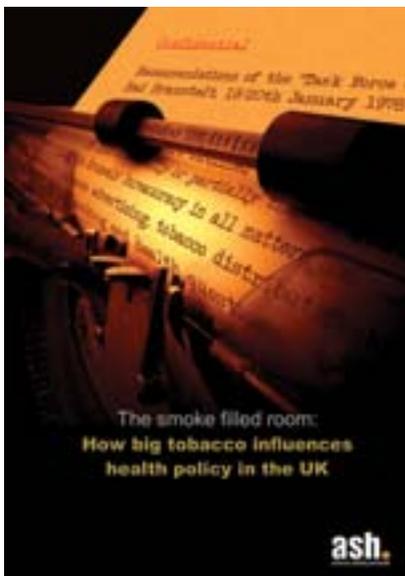


*"Through the Smokefree Action Coalition, ASH ensured that the voice and concerns of the public health community were taken into account during the debates on the legislation to prohibit tobacco display in shops and sale from vending machines.*

*There is no doubt that they played a major role in helping ensure that the legislation became law. ASH has a justifiably high reputation amongst parliamentarians across the political spectrum. The briefings and research materials they provide parliamentarians like myself are timely, evidence-based and to the point - they make us much more effective."*

Baroness  
Glenys Thornton  
Shadow Health  
Minister, House of  
Lords





### The smoke filled room: How Big Tobacco tries to influence health policy in the UK

In May, ASH published a new report showing how the tobacco industry attempts to influence UK tobacco control policy. Drawing on the industry's own internal documents, the report demonstrates how Big Tobacco uses front groups to try to challenge or derail Government policy. The report includes accounts of contacts with serving politicians and reveals how the industry has been covertly lobbying to challenge the tobacco control measures included

in the 2009 Health Act. In addition the report exposes tobacco industry lobbying at international level, based on research carried out by Professor Anna Gilmore, a former Board member of ASH. Specifically it reveals how BAT formed a coalition of companies and engaged the services of a policy think tank to ensure that corporations would be included in European policy discussions early in the policy making process.

Commenting on the report, Professor John Britton, ASH Board member and Chair of the Royal College of Physicians' Tobacco Advisory Group said:

*"This is a shocking account of the deceitful practices of the tobacco companies, not just in past decades but now and in relation to current health legislation. These companies are among the most unethical and amoral organisations on the planet. We have to act to guard against these gross perversions of the democratic system."*

The smoke filled room report is available at:

[http://ash.org.uk/files/documents/ASH\\_726.pdf](http://ash.org.uk/files/documents/ASH_726.pdf)

## INTERNATIONAL

### Framework Convention on Tobacco Control

Deborah Arnott attended the fourth Conference of the Parties of the FCTC held in Uruguay in November. The Conference adopted the following measures:

- Guidelines to restrict or prohibit the use of additives that increase the attractiveness of tobacco products in order to reduce the number of new smokers, especially among youth; (Articles 9 & 10)
- Guidelines on smoking cessation (Article 14), for which the UK was a key facilitator. These include a recommendation that services should be integrated into national health systems to make them more available to smokers who wish to quit;
- Guidelines on education, communication and training (Article 12) to raise public awareness about the harm caused by tobacco and to promote social change.

In addition it was agreed that a working group would be established to prepare guidelines on a price and taxation policy and that negotiations on a protocol to combat illicit trade in tobacco products would continue, with the aim of completion in 2012.

The Conference also adopted a decision in support of Parties, such as Uruguay, that face legal challenges by the tobacco industry for implementing the FCTC and its guidelines.

### ATP Davidoff sponsorship campaign: victory for health

Persistent campaigning by ASH and tobacco control activists in France and Switzerland has brought about an end to the last high profile overt tobacco sponsorship of sport in Europe.

'ASH is absolutely pivotal to the UK tobacco control effort. Its evidence-based policy analysis, coordination and leadership have been central to achieving the smoking prevalence reductions seen in the UK over the past decade. We need ASH more than ever if we are going to get smoking prevalence down further or indeed prevent it from rising.'

Professor Robert West, Director of Tobacco Studies, Cancer Research UK Health Behaviour Research Centre, University College London

Imperial Tobacco's Davidoff cigarette brand has been the principal sponsor of the Swiss Indoor tennis tournament held in Basle for the past 17 years but the 2010 event will be the last to accept tobacco sponsorship. The event organisers have been forced to concede that broadcasting the tobacco-sponsored event contravened international laws.

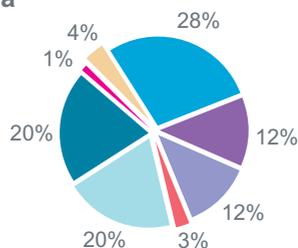
### ASH INFORMATION AND MEDIA WORK

ASH's information service continues to be in high demand and highly rated by our stakeholders. According to the survey undertaken to inform ASH's strategic review, 97% of respondents felt that ASH's publications were good or excellent.

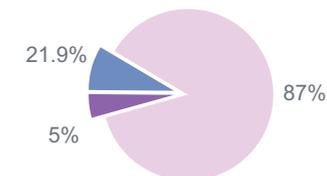
As in previous years we provided information on a daily basis to journalists, health professionals, politicians and the general public on a wide range of tobacco-related issues. Over the past year ASH responded to a number of government and other agency consultations and issued 24 press releases on a wide range of tobacco-related issues. We produced two new fact sheets: one on smoking in cars and the other on smokefree prisons. The ASH fact sheets and other briefings are available to read or download free of charge at: <http://ash.org.uk/information>

Monitoring of press coverage over the past year has found that our weekly reach (i.e. the number of people exposed to references to ASH in news stories) was an estimated 5 million. News items in which ASH was quoted or staff were interviewed include the regulations to put tobacco out of sight in shops, smoking in the home and in cars, E-cigarettes and quitting smoking.

### Overall media coverage by subject area



### Total coverage by media type



### ASH Website

Over the past twelve months the website received 219,085 visits, averaging 654 per day. Of these more than three-quarters were new visitors (78%). While 61% of traffic is from within the UK, the ASH website has a truly global reach and was used by people in 198 countries and territories over the past year. Note that since September 2009 we have adopted a new web measurement tool which may partly account for differences between this year's figures and those of previous years.

The ASH website also attracts a high number of visits in comparison with other health websites of a similar size. For example a snapshot survey of visits from 10 June to 20 July 2010 revealed that ASH had almost 21,000 visits compared to 5,300 to comparable health websites in the UK and in other countries. Similarly, ASH scored highly on page views, with 60,271 views during the 6-week period compared to 16,313 page views on similar websites. The ASH website also fared well in comparison with other non-profit websites of a similar size which attracted 4,500 visits and 13,800 page views during the same review period.

### Accounts 2008-09

A full copy of the audited accounts for the financial year ended 31st March 2010 can be found on the ASH website at: [www.ash.org.uk/accounts2010](http://www.ash.org.uk/accounts2010)

## Acknowledgements

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



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