

**All Party Parliamentary Group on Smoking and Health
News Release**

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**APPG on Smoking and Health Says:
Let Parliament Decide on Standardised Packaging**

The All Party Parliamentary Group on Smoking and Health has expressed its “*bitter disappointment*” over the Government’s announcement that it will not introduce standardised packaging for cigarettes and other tobacco products. The APPG wants Parliament to be given an early opportunity to debate and vote on the issue.

The APPG is calling for the early introduction of standardised packs based on the “strong evidence” set out in the Department of Health’s consultation document on the policy. A systematic review of peer reviewed studies found that plain standard packaging is less attractive especially to young people, improves the effectiveness of health warnings, reduces mistaken beliefs that some brands are ‘safer’ than others and is therefore likely to reduce smoking uptake amongst children and young people. [1]

Since the close of the public consultation Australia has implemented standard packs and Ireland has pledged to do so next year. The Scottish, Welsh and Northern Ireland Governments have all stated their support for the policy.

Commenting, Stephen Williams MP (Lib Dem: Bristol West) said:

“I’m bitterly disappointed that the Government is not pressing forwards as fast as possible with standardised packaging. Most smokers start when they are children, and the evidence from the Department of Health’s own consultation document shows quite clearly that standardised packaging can prevent the tobacco industry from marketing its lethal products to vulnerable young people.”

Parliament must be given an early chance to vote on the issue: I believe that there is a majority in favour of standardised packs in both Houses.”

Bob Blackman MP (Conservative: Harrow East) said:

“This is not a Party political issue. There is strong support for standardised packaging across every Party in Parliament. Like many of my colleagues, I am convinced that we need to stop the tobacco industry from using its packs to market cigarettes. Every year, over 200,000 children start to smoke. This policy is urgently needed to cut that tragically high number. Parliament should decide on this issue: there should be a full Parliamentary debate and vote as soon as possible.”

Kevin Barron MP (Labour: Rother Valley) said:

“In 2006, Parliament was allowed a free vote on legislation on smokefree workplaces, after cross-Party pressure from members of the Health Select Committee and others. If this Government cannot muster the nerve to bring forward legislation on standardised packaging, then Parliament must act on its own. This is a vitally important issue of child health and child protection. There is no excuse for further delay. Only the tobacco industry will benefit, and the next generation of child smokers will pay a heavy price, of disease, addiction and premature death.”

ENDS

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[1] Moodie, C, Stead, M, Bauld, L et al. Plain tobacco packaging: a systematic review. Public Health Research Consortium, University of Stirling, Institute of Education and UK Centre for Tobacco Control Studies, 2012.

http://phrc.lshhtm.ac.uk/papers/PHRC_006_Final_Report.pdf