

Quick facts, standard packs: briefing for health professionals

- In May 2016 the rules surrounding the way tobacco packaging looks changed.
- These changes were included in two sets of regulations: [Standardised Packaging Regulations](#) and the revised [Tobacco Products Directive](#).
- The purpose of the briefing is to explain the changes and to consider how the new packaging might be used to encourage smokers to quit.

WHAT'S CHANGING ON CIGARETTE PACKS?

Larger health warnings, on 65% of the front and back



Graphic picture at the top of pack



Brand name in a standard font



Minimum size of 20 cigarettes, no more 'lipstick' or 'perfume' packs



Top opening only, no more **side-opening** packs



Packs are drab brown, **not white...**



...with **no glamorous, glitzy** packaging.



No more misleading information like 'low tar' or 'organic'

Picture: Action on Smoking and Health. The image conforms to the requirements of the EU Tobacco Products Directive and UK law on standardised packaging.

LET'S BEAT CANCER SOONER
cruk.org/tobacco

ash.
 action on smoking and health



When did the changes come into effect?

- The new regulations came into effect on 20th May 2016.
- There is a one year transitional period to allow for the sell-through of old stock.
- This means **all tobacco products on sale in the UK must comply with the regulations by May 2017.**

Why are packs changing?

- Smoking is an addiction of childhood: two thirds of smokers start before they are 18 and the vast majority while still teenagers ([ONS](#), 2012).
- Every day hundreds of children in the UK start smoking ([Hopkinson et al](#), 2013).
- There is good evidence that standard packs are less attractive, particularly to young people ([Moodie](#), 2012).
- As well as being less attractive a [review](#) of peer reviewed research shows that **standard packs make health warnings more effective** and **reduce the ability of the packaging to mislead consumers** about the harms of smoking.

Will standardised packaging encourage quitting?

Standardised packaging is primarily designed to deter young people from starting to smoke.

However, when Australia introduced plain standardised tobacco packaging in December 2012, calls to smoking quitlines increased significantly in the months following. [One study](#) found a 78% increase in the number of calls to the Quitline in NSW following the introduction of tobacco plain packaging.

A 2016 [review](#) by the Australian government reported that standardised packaging was responsible for one quarter of the decline in smoking in Australia in the previous three years.

What does this mean for me?

Evidence from Australia suggests that standardised packaging may prompt smokers to make a quit attempt. Health professionals should support all smokers to quit in line with NICE Guidance: [PH1](#) and [PH48](#).

What actions should I take as a health professional?

Health professionals have a key role to play in encouraging smokers to quit. Surveys have found that prompts from health professionals are the second most common reason for a quit attempt.

All health professionals working in primary and secondary should identify and refer smokers. The National Centre for Smoking Cessation and Training (NCSCT) has developed a simple method known as "Very Brief Advice" (VBA). VBA has 3 components: Ask, Advise and Act.

Ask and record smoking status



Advise that the best way to quit is through a combination of specialist support and medication



Act. Provide information and refer to stop smoking service. If the smoker is not ready to quit, consider a harm reduction approach.

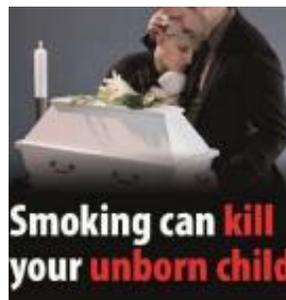
New health warnings on tobacco packaging

At the same time as the introduction of standardised packaging, all tobacco packaging was required to have graphic images on the front and back and combined pictorial and text health warnings were required to cover 65% of the pack. Studies show that large, pictorial health warnings are effective deterrents for non smokers ([Vardavae et al](#), 2009) and increase cessation amongst current smokers ([Hammond](#), 2011). See [here](#) for the full library of images.



Lung cancer has a poor prognosis. Only 10% of people will live more than 5 years.

Smoking causes 80-85% of cases.



Smoking causes harm to the baby from day one.

It is responsible for **5000 miscarriages** every year.

Peripheral Arterial Disease can lead to amputation.

Smoking is the biggest preventable risk factor.



The vast majority of **oral cancer** is preventable.

Over 60% of **cases** are linked to tobacco smoke.

