

## **Tobacco control Measures in the Health Bill 2009**

We are writing to you in our capacity as Directors of the recently established UK Centre for Tobacco Control Research Studies, to ask for your support in strengthening regulations on the sale and display of tobacco products in the Health Bill 2009, currently in the House of Lords.

The proposed legislation in the Health Bill to prohibit the display of tobacco at the point of sale has our full support. Tobacco is currently displayed, frequently alongside sweets or magazines, in a vast number of retail outlets in England. Evidence indicates that children are influenced by point of sale displays of tobacco, in terms of their susceptibility to smoking, experimentation and uptake.

The Health Bill also proposes to restrict access to vending machines by young people. We would like to see this strengthened and support legislation to remove the sale of tobacco through vending machines altogether. Recent figures have shown that 17% of young smokers get their tobacco from vending machines. No other age restricted product is allowed to be sold through vending machines and given the enormous health consequences of smoking, we do not understand why cigarettes are still accessible in this way.

Finally, a tabled amendment to the Health Bill to introduce plain packaging for all tobacco products also has our full support. Since the Tobacco Advertising and Promotion Act in 2002, packaging of tobacco products has become more glamorous and attractive. Our own research has indicated that plain packaging would reduce the appeal of tobacco products to young children.

We strongly believe that all of the above measures would help to protect young people from a career in smoking with all its damaging consequences. If you would like further information then we would be happy to meet and discuss these measures, and the evidence behind them, with you.

Yours sincerely

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