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**New tobacco control measures expected in Health Bill**

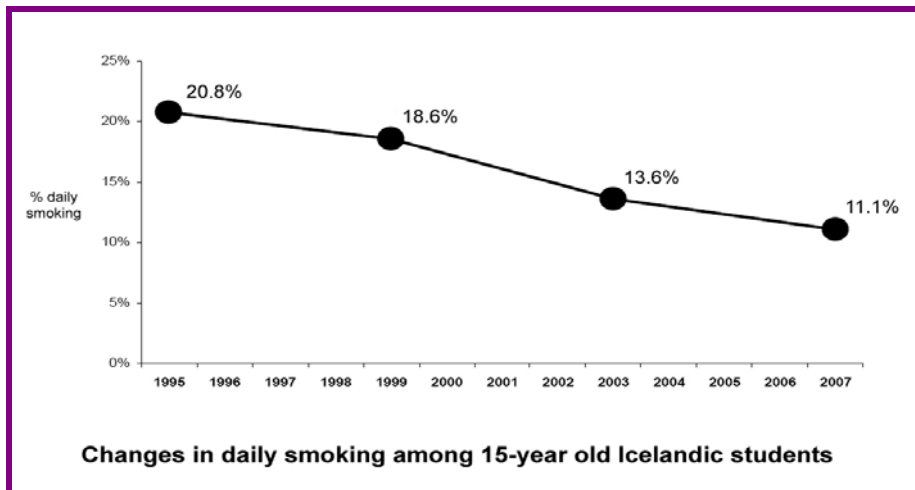
Although the Queen's speech did not include any specific reference to tackling smoking, ASH remains confident that new measures to protect children from tobacco will be included in the forthcoming health bill to be published shortly. This follows the Department of Health's consultation on the future of tobacco control, which proposed a series of new legislative measures as part of a comprehensive strategy. ASH believes that a ban on the sale of tobacco from vending machines and the removal of tobacco products from public view in shops will lead to a significant decline in the number of young smokers taking up the habit. The public support the toughest possible measures to protect children from a life-long addiction to tobacco.

**Ending tobacco displays**

Since the introduction of the tobacco advertising ban, tobacco companies have become increasingly reliant on point of sale displays as a means of advertising their products. Tobacco industry documents reveal that many brands and pack designs are developed specifically to recruit young people and since 1998 brand families have grown in size by more than 50%.

Research shows that these displays have a direct impact on young people and children. Jurisdictions that have enforced tobacco point of sale bans as part of a range of tobacco control measures have seen a decrease in smoking prevalence among young people. In Iceland the prevalence of daily smoking among 15 year olds fell from 18.6% in 1999 prior to the cigarette display ban to 13.6% in 2003, two years after the law came into effect, and has continued to fall thereafter.





Those opposing the ban on point of sale displays of tobacco argue that it will have an adverse financial impact on retailers. For example the tobacco industry funded Tobacco Retailers Alliance claims that it will cost retailers £5000 while the Association of Convenience Stores estimate that it will cost retailers £1850. However, the experience internationally suggests that the tobacco industry has continued to make payments to retailers to stock cigarettes despite point of sale display bans.

### Prohibiting the sale of tobacco from vending machines

The latest survey of smoking among children reveals that 14% of 11 to 15 year olds who smoke report that they usually buy cigarettes from vending machines whereas overall, tobacco sales from vending machines only make up 1% of total sales. Prohibition on sales from vending machines will bring England in line with other European countries and ensure that, following the rise in the minimum age of sale, this problem does not get any worse.

### Plain Packaging

One measure in particular could significantly change people's attitudes to tobacco. Tobacco manufacturers believe plain packaging would pose a major threat to their operations and are vigorously opposed to the concept. But the removal of colourful, eye-catching branding would stop the pack acting as the 'silent salesman' of the tobacco industry which currently lures young people into a lifelong addiction. ASH evidence shows that branded packs appeal to young people and create misleading impressions about the relative safety of products. Reserve powers in the Health Bill would enable government to introduce plain packaging at a later date.

### Prohibiting advertising and promotion of 'associated tobacco products'

A glaring loophole of the Tobacco Advertising and Promotion Act is that it does not include the advertising of cigarette papers and associated tobacco products. Companies are using the advertising ban loophole on cigarette papers to promote a 'cool' image to young people. Closing the loophole could be done by regulation and does not require primary legislation.



Two 'Rizla girls' advertising the product at a superbike event

Briefing sheets are available from the ASH website on point of sale displays, vending machines and plain packaging [www.ash.org.uk](http://www.ash.org.uk)

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