



APPG pays tribute to David Taylor

A packed meeting of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Smoking and Health was joined by Speaker John Bercow and front benchers from the opposition and government to remember David Taylor. David had been Chair of the APPG until his sudden and untimely death on Boxing Day 2009. David himself had arranged the meeting inviting the Government to present their recently published tobacco control strategy.



Members of David's family and representatives of health groups were present as a series of speakers remembered David. He was a much loved and respected parliamentarian who was planning to stand down at the coming election. To mark his retirement from the Group, a giant "no smoking" sign had been obtained for friends and colleagues to add their best wishes. In the event, another three signs were needed to accommodate all the tributes.

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Smoking at a crossroads

Deborah Arnott Chief Executive ASH

This will be our last Political Bulletin before the election so let me take the opportunity to thank our many friends and supporters in Parliament, especially those of you who will be standing down. Between us we have achieved a great deal for public health. Sadly at Christmas we lost David Taylor, chair of the All Party Group on Smoking and Health. His family attended the APPG meeting we held in his memory in February – thank you to all those who came to pay your respects, it was much appreciated.

As this is the year designated to review England's smokefree laws, it is a time to look back at how successful the laws have been and to assess what more needs to be done. The Royal College of Physicians has just published a review of the effects of secondhand smoke, particularly on children. Support for the legislation has continued to grow to nearly 80% and much of the increase has come from smokers who find things are not as bad as they were led to expect. But while the legislation has been very effective in protecting adults, as the report makes clear we need to do more, both through legislative and non-legislative measures, to protect our children from the harm caused by secondhand smoke.

It's also worth pointing out that it's a myth that the licensed trade has been seriously harmed by the legislation. Indeed, in the year England went smokefree the number of premises licensed for "on sales" rose from 33,000 in 2007 to 35,000 in 2008, only dipping slightly by 2009 to 34,700 as the recession began to take its toll. (1) So how can it be that, to quote a recent survey, "39 pubs are closing every week"? It seems news of the death of the trade has been greatly exaggerated as the BBC's Mark Easton revealed that for the purposes of the survey, "If a pub starts selling food, it will move from one category to another. If it sells enough meals, the pub is deemed to have "closed" and a restaurant has opened up." (2)

This issue also draws your attention to another report. ASH recently commissioned an independent economist to calculate the impact of using taxation to raise the price of tobacco by 5%. The conclusion was that it would reduce the number of smokers by 190,000 (half of whom would be young people who would be put off taking up the habit), and benefit the wider economy by £10.2 billion net present value over 50 years.



There is good news too for those more concerned about the lifetime of a parliament. The combination of increased revenue and decreased costs on healthcare and disability would benefit the public finances by £520 million a year for the first five years. (3) We think that makes a powerful case.

Thank you again for all your help and support. We hope to work with you again soon whether inside or outside parliament.

(1) DCMS Statistical Bulletin - Alcohol, Entertainment and Late Night Refreshment Licensing 2009

(2) <http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/thereporters/markeaston/2009/07/>

(3) <http://www.ash.org.uk/tax/analysis>

New packs push the limits

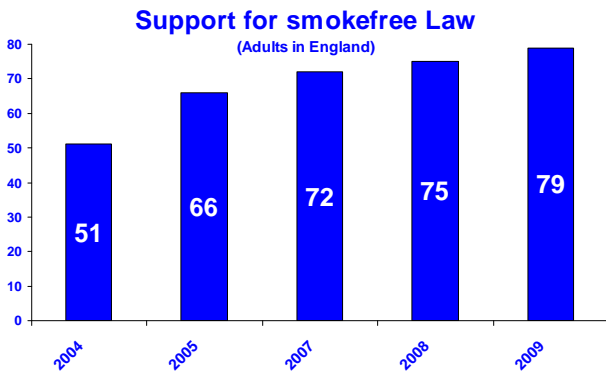
The latest innovation in tobacco packaging has strengthened the case for plain packs, campaigners claim. The new Benson & Hedges "push and slide pack" has angered the health community by directly undermining statutory health warnings. The packs carry the quote "I owe my success to having listened respectfully to the very best advice and then going away and doing the exact opposite".

Martin Dockrell, Director of Research and Policy at ASH said, "Packaging is the industry's main way of appealing to young people. The message here is clear and cynical. It underlines the case for legislation to require plain packaging."



Support for smokefree grows – even among smokers

The Royal College of Physicians new report “Passive smoking and children” concludes that “With a few exceptions, of which the tobacco industry is one, smokefree legislation has been good for just about everyone”. The report makes a careful analysis of the latest evidence on the harm caused to children and the problems of secondhand smoke in vehicles and other public places. It also charts how public attitudes in England have shifted in favour of smokefree.



What is surprising about the RCP's report is not that that England's smokefree law has grown ever more popular – 8 out of 10 adults now support the law – but that the fastest growth in support of legislation is among smokers.

Using surveys with UK sample sizes of up to 12,000, the report is able to make a detailed assessment of changes in public opinion. For example, around one in eight non-smoking adults still reports being exposed to secondhand smoke at work with a similar number reporting exposure at home. Until now, as the rest of us have been enjoying the benefits of smokefree pubs and restaurants, this group has been

89% say “smokefree law has been good for workers’ health”

largely ignored. Similarly, few large studies have examined the attitudes of England's smokers to the law.

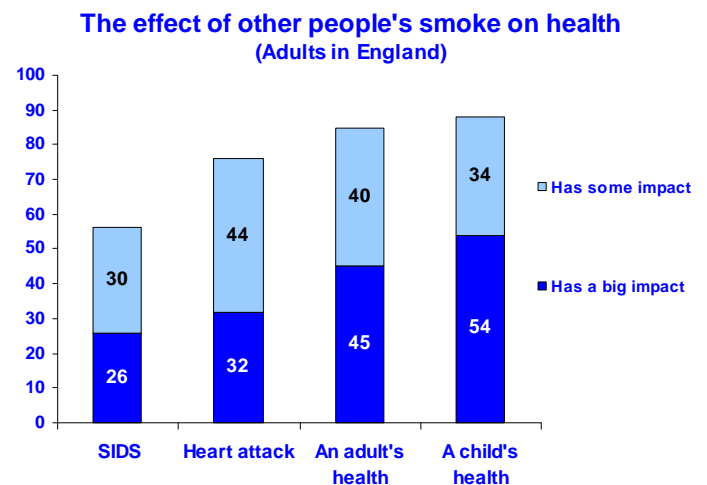
Both these groups, and the population at large, are increasingly of the view that secondhand smoke is harmful. The report finds that as recently as 2005 as few as 28% of adults believed secondhand smoke was harmful to children, by 2009 this had grown to 88%. Fully 85% believe that secondhand smoke has an impact on adults' health, with almost half (45%) believing it has a big impact.

The corollary of this is that smokefree places are increasingly seen as good for health. 95% of those who have never smoked believe that the legislation has been good for workers' health but there was always a gap between the attitudes of smokers and non-smokers. However, this gap

has narrowed significantly as smokers too have seen the benefits of legislation. By the 2009 survey 68% of smokers reported that smokefree legislation was good for workers' health and most smokers now believe the legislation has been good for their own health (52%).

Attitude Shift

This dramatic shift in attitudes has been followed by a change in behaviours. People are increasingly taking steps to protect themselves and their families from secondhand smoke. The report examines changes in the rules people apply to smoking in their own homes. In 2006 the ONS found 61% of adults reported that smoking was prohibited throughout their home. This rose to 67% and by 2008 to 69%. In the 2009 survey covered in the RCP report, this rose to 78% including almost half of smokers (47%).



Failed by the law

And what of the 14% of non-smokers who continue to be exposed to secondhand smoke at work? They seemed to be the victims of people breaking the rules, especially in vehicles. Whereas 79% said that smoking was banned in the vehicle they used most, 45% of them said they were exposed to smoke in vehicles. They tended to be male and strong supporters of the law but understandably, they felt that the government was not doing enough to protect them.

Passive smoking and children. A report by the Tobacco Advisory Group is available at www.rcplondon.ac.uk

What would happen if we put 30p on a pack of 20?

Price has a strong impact on smoking rates so, each year, ASH makes a submission in advance of the Budget. This year we supported the submission with a detailed and independent analysis from Landman Economics on the effect of using tax to put an extra 30p on a pack of 20 above the rate of inflation.

Currently, the price of a typical pack of twenty cigarettes is just over £6, of which around 76% is tax. The authors calculate that putting an extra 5% on the price would have a range of benefits:

→ 190,000 fewer smokers

The author calculates that 95,000 smokers would quit and a further 95,000 would decide not to start in the first year of the new tax.

→ £500 million benefit to the Exchequer

In 5 years Government finances would benefit by over £500 million per year as revenue increases and demand on the NHS and welfare benefits fall.

→ £10.2 billion benefit to the economy

Over 50 years the wider economy would benefit by £10.2 billion as people live longer, more productive lives. The economy would benefit by £270m in each of the first 5 years.

The author made two separate analyses, a cost benefit analysis (CBA) examining the impact on the wider economy over 50 years and a public finances analysis (PFA) examining the impact on government finances over the next 5 years.

The impact on public finances

In addition to over £400 million in added revenue, the PFA estimates that the Government would save over £53 million on healthcare and welfare

benefits in the first year alone, even allowing for the increase in pensions as people live longer, healthier lives. As well as the direct revenue arising from tobacco tax, the author calculates that there would also be significant additional revenue from reduced absenteeism and longer working lives. The table below (taken from the main body of the report) shows the results from the public finances analysis.

The impact on the economy

The PFA measures the net effects of the tobacco tax increase on government revenue over the five years, but the CBA calculates the net present value over 50 years. Overall, the Net Present Value adds up to £10.2 billion including almost £2 billion in savings to the NHS and over £1.3 billion in reduced absenteeism.

The tobacco industry argues that a high price would lead to increased smuggling. However, analysis by the World Bank has shown that trade in illicit tobacco is linked, not to taxation, but to corruption and tolerance of contraband sales. Indeed, both low-tax and high-tax jurisdictions suffer from the illicit tobacco trade.

Full details of the methodology used to produce the estimates, and the assumptions made, are given in Chapter 3 and Annex 1 of the report.

www.ash.org.uk/tax/analysis

Results from PFA of 5% increase in tobacco prices: central scenario

All figures in £m, 2010 prices

Cost/benefit	Individual years					Average
	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	
Increased tobacco taxation	427.4	430.6	433.7	436.9	439.9	433.7
NHS cost savings	23.5	24.2	27.6	29.7	31.9	27.4
Income Tax/NICs/VAT - extra working life	14.2	14.6	14.9	15.3	15.7	14.9
Income Tax/NICs/VAT - reduced absenteeism	12.6	14.4	16.5	18.8	21.0	16.7
Reduced disability benefits	33.0	33.1	33.3	33.4	33.5	33.3
Increased pensioner benefits	-3.3	-3.4	-3.5	-3.7	-3.9	-3.6
TOTAL	504.9	511.7	518.8	526.2	533.5	519.0