

## Cancer Research UK Briefing: Point of Sale Tobacco Displays

Point of Sale (PoS) displays were removed from large retailers (floor area exceeding 280 sq metres) across the UK between April 2012 and April 2013. On 6 April 2015, the removal of PoS displays was completed across all retail spaces in the UK.

Evidence demonstrates that PoS display bans are effective in de-normalising tobacco, especially among young people. The removal of PoS displays will work in conjunction with the introduction of standardised tobacco packaging, as part of a comprehensive strategy to address tobacco marketing.

Further evidence suggests that a greater number of communities with higher levels of deprivation tend to be exposed to higher levels of PoS marketing. The removal of these displays is therefore important in addressing health inequalities.

### Background

In line with World Health Organisation recommendations, legislation has been passed and implemented to put tobacco products out of sight in shops across the UK. A review of evidence relating to tobacco PoS led by Professor Gerard Hastings was commissioned by Cancer Research UK (CRUK) and published in 2008<sup>1</sup>. This report concluded that PoS *'is a particularly valuable form of marketing for the tobacco industry'*, and that *'it provides a good way of reaching young people, and occurs disproportionately in locations frequented by them'*. It argues that comprehensive regulation of tobacco products at PoS, *'is therefore a necessary way of protecting children from tobacco'*.

In December 2008, the Government committed to introducing a PoS display ban on tobacco products in England, informed by evidence that such displays attracted a child's attention and promoted smoking<sup>2</sup>. In March 2011 following a legal challenge by four major tobacco companies<sup>3</sup>, which was eventually dropped in December 2011<sup>4</sup>, the Government announced that PoS removal would be implemented in large retailers in April 2012<sup>5</sup> and extended to small shops in April 2015. The regulations also apply in Wales and Northern Ireland, while comparative legislation in Scotland developed separately through the Tobacco and Primary Medical Services (Scotland) Bill. In Scotland the intention was to implement PoS removal in large retailers in 2011 and small shops in 2013. However, this was delayed due to a legal challenge by Imperial Tobacco; this challenge was unanimously dismissed in December 2012<sup>6</sup>. In February 2013, the Scottish Government confirmed implementation of their PoS ban from large retailers in Scotland in April 2013, extended to small shops in April 2015<sup>7</sup>.

### Point of Sale displays and health inequalities

There is a strong association between smoking prevalence and socio-economic categories with a large body of research suggesting that PoS displays exacerbate smoking related health inequalities. Three published studies based on states in the US suggest low income and/or minority neighbourhoods experience higher exposure to PoS tobacco advertising<sup>8,9,10</sup>. Research from Scotland highlighted the issue in the UK context<sup>11</sup>, demonstrating a positive linear relationship between neighbourhood deprivation and tobacco retail outlets (i.e. that less deprived areas have lower density of tobacco retailers and therefore lower exposure to PoS tobacco displays). Evidence suggests that PoS tobacco displays stimulate tobacco purchases<sup>12</sup> - including studies which specifically examine the impact of PoS displays on unplanned purchases<sup>13,14</sup>.

Three Australian studies found PoS exposure made it more difficult to quit, as well as stimulating tobacco purchases<sup>15,16,17</sup>. A comparative study of Australia, Canada, the UK and US found that implementing PoS tobacco display bans resulted in lower exposure to tobacco marketing and less frequent impulse-purchasing of cigarettes<sup>18</sup>. The systematic review<sup>19</sup> found evidence that images of tobacco packs elicit cravings for cigarettes among smokers and can lead to impulse purchasing and urges to start smoking amongst recent ex-smokers. The evidence-base for the removal of PoS displays, as its implementation is concluded across the UK, has continued to strengthen since the legislation was passed.

### Impact on smoking initiation among young people

Evidence indicates that tobacco PoS displays are attractive to children and young people<sup>20</sup>. In 2008, Hastings and colleagues published a review of the evidence relating to PoS display bans which concluded *'There is good evidence to support the imposition of controls which put tobacco completely out of sight at PoS'*<sup>21</sup>. Indeed, Hasting et al's 2008 review concludes that tobacco marketing at PoS is highly effective and that its role is *'instrumental in youth smoking'*<sup>22</sup>.

Studies from England<sup>23</sup>, New Zealand<sup>24</sup>, the US<sup>25</sup> and Norway<sup>26</sup> all reinforce the association between PoS displays and youth smoking. An evaluation of the PoS ban in Ireland found the law seemed to be effective at de-normalising smoking amongst children and youth<sup>27</sup>.



Above: a tobacco display in a small shop prior to the covering of PoS displays on 6 April 2015 (Image credit: Nicolas Chinardet)

### Economic and consumer impact

The Association of Convenience Stores – who have received financial contributions from the four largest tobacco companies in the UK<sup>28</sup> - claimed that it would cost retailers £10,000 per store to comply with new PoS legislation in the UK and Ireland. This was an upward revision of their claim, less than a year before, that it would cost retailers between £1,850 and £5,000 to meet the requirements. In fact, the average cost of compliance in Ireland was just £300, with the tobacco industry actually paying for the conversions in most shops<sup>29</sup>.

Studies from (Ontario) Canada<sup>30</sup>, Ireland<sup>31</sup>, Norway<sup>32</sup> and (Melbourne) Australia<sup>33</sup> have all found very high levels of retailer compliance once PoS display bans have been legislated. Similarly, a study of retailers who voluntarily removed tobacco displays from site in New Zealand, found that removing open tobacco displays did not *'impose a significant financial burden on retailers'*, and that participants *'did not incur high costs'*<sup>34</sup>. All this suggests that the disastrous effects of tobacco PoS removals, as predicted by opponents of the legislation, have not materialised. In January 2015, three months before the removal of PoS displays from small shops, a YouGov survey commissioned by CRUK found that 75% UK adults supported the removal of tobacco PoS displays<sup>35</sup>.

### A comprehensive strategy to address tobacco marketing

In March 2015, one month before PoS displays were removed from small shops across the UK, CRUK launched a new report: *Closing the Doors on Tobacco Promotion*. The report surveyed retailer preparations for implementation<sup>36</sup> using interview data with shopkeepers across London and Newcastle, assessing the views, preparedness and planned response to upcoming PoS regulations. In its key findings the report found that the vast majority of retailers were prepared for implementation, with 40% of retailers signalling a desire to reduce their

reliance on tobacco sales more generally; 94% of retailers acknowledged that they made little profit from selling tobacco.

The report also audited the display of electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes) in these shops, finding that the most prominently displayed e-cigarette brands were owned by the tobacco industry. However there did not seem to be a coordinated approach between tobacco brands and the company's respective e-cigarette brands (i.e. tobacco PoS displays were not being systematically replaced with e-cigarette displays either by tobacco industry associated or independent e-cigarette brands).

In March 2015, MPs voted to introduce standardised tobacco packaging, with implementation set for 20 May 2016. The new laws, which will apply across all four nations of the UK, will require that all cigarettes and rolling tobacco products are sold in drab green packaging stripped of their novel marketing features, which evidence consistently demonstrates serves to reduce the appeal of tobacco products to young people; two-thirds of smokers start before the age of 18<sup>37,38</sup>.

The tobacco industry has also made claims of increased product retrieval times, in their opposition to standardised packaging in Australia. However, an empirical study of retrieval times in small shops in Australia following the implementation of standardised packaging found that retrieval time returned to the baseline range 'by the second week of implementation, remaining so several months later'<sup>39</sup>. This suggests that tobacco retailers quickly adapt to changes in legislation relating to the storage and display of tobacco products.

The removal of PoS displays, alongside the introduction of standardised packaging have different but complementary outcomes. Standardised packaging makes tobacco products less appealing and health warnings more prominent to children, while removing PoS displays diminishes the social norm of smoking among young people.

## References

- 1 Hastings G, Mackintosh AM, Holme I, Davies K, Angus K, Moodie C. Point of Sale Display of Tobacco Products. Stirling: Centre for Tobacco Control Research, University of Stirling, The Open University and Cancer Research UK, 2008.
- 2 BBC News. 9 December 2008. Health: [Ban on tobacco displays announced](#).
- 3 Stevenson A. Govt delays cigarette display ban on No Smoking Day: Politics.co.uk, 2011.
- 4 Kirby J. Tobacco Firms Drop Law Challenge: Press Association, 2011.
- 5 *Large retailers are those having in excess of 280m<sup>2</sup> floor space. The definition is based on the Sunday Trading Act 1994.*
- 6 The Supreme Court. 12 December 2012. Judgements on decided cases. *Imperial Tobacco Limited (Appellant) v The Lord Advocate (Respondent) (Scotland)* ([pdf](#))
- 7 Scottish Government. 7 February 2013. [Scotland set for tobacco bans](#).
- 8 John R, Cheney MK, Azad MR. Point-of-Sale Marketing of Tobacco Products: Taking Advantage of the Socially Disadvantaged? *Journal of Health Care for the Poor and Underserved* 2009;20(2):489-506.
- 9 Loomis BR, Kim AE, Goetz JL, Juster HR. Density of tobacco retailers and its association with sociodemographic characteristics of communities across New York. *Public Health* 2013;127(4):333-38.
- 10 Siahpush M, Jones PR, Singh GK, Timsina LR, Martin J. The association of tobacco marketing with median income and racial/ethnic characteristics of neighbourhoods in Omaha, Nebraska. *Tob Control* 2010;19(3):256-8.
- 11 Shortt NK, Tisch C, Pearce J, Mitchell R, Richardson EA. [The density of tobacco retailers in both home and school environments and relationship with adolescent smoking behaviours in Scotland](#). *Tob Control* doi:10.1136/tobaccocontrol-2013-051473
- 12 Hastings G, Mackintosh AM, Holme I, Davies K, Angus K, Moodie C. Point of Sale Display of Tobacco Products. Stirling: Centre for Tobacco Control Research, University of Stirling, The Open University and Cancer Research UK, 2008.
- 13 Carter OBJ, Mills BW, Donovan RJ. The effect of retail cigarette pack displays on unplanned purchases: Results from immediate postpurchase interviews. *Tobacco Control* 2009;18(3):218-21.
- 14 Clattenburg EJ, Elf JL, Apelberg BJ. Unplanned cigarette purchases and tobacco point of sale advertising: a potential barrier to smoking cessation. *Tob Control* 2013;22(6):376-81.
- 15 Burton S, Clark L, Jackson K. The association between seeing retail displays of tobacco and tobacco smoking and purchase: findings from a diary-style survey. *Addiction* 2012;107(1):169
- 16 Carter OBJ, Mills BW, Donovan RJ. The effect of retail cigarette pack displays on unplanned purchases: Results from immediate postpurchase interviews. *Tobacco Control* 2009;18(3):218-21.
- 17 Germain D, McCarthy M, Wakefield M. Smoker sensitivity to retail tobacco displays and quitting: A cohort study. *Addiction* 2010;105(1):159-63.
- 18 Li L, Borland R, Fong GT, Thrasher JF, Hammond D, Cummings KM. Impact of point-of-sale tobacco display bans: findings from the International Tobacco Control Four Country Survey. *Health Educ Res* 2013;28(5):898-910.
- 19 Paynter J, Edwards R. The impact of tobacco promotion at the point of sale: a systematic review. *Nicotine Tob Res* 2009;11(1):25-35.

- 
- 20 Hastings G, Mackintosh AM, Holme I, Davies K, Angus K, Moodie C. Point of Sale Display of Tobacco Products. Stirling: Centre for Tobacco Control Research, University of Stirling, The Open University and Cancer Research UK, 2008.
- 21 Ibid
- 22 Ibid
- 23 Spanopoulos D, Britton J, McNeill A, Ratschen E, Szatkowski L. Tobacco display and brand communication at the point of sale: implications for adolescent smoking behaviour. *Tob Control* 2013.
- 24 Paynter J, Edwards R, Schluter PJ, McDuff I. Point of sale tobacco displays and smoking among 14-15 year olds in New Zealand: a cross-sectional study. *Tob Control* 2009;18(4):268-74.
- 25 Henriksen L, Schleicher NC, Feighery EC, Fortmann SP. A longitudinal study of exposure to retail cigarette advertising and smoking initiation. *Pediatrics* 2010;126(2):232-8.
- 26 Scheffels J, Lavik R. Out of sight, out of mind? Removal of point-of-sale tobacco displays in Norway. *Tob Control* 2013;22(e1):e37-42.
- 27 McNeill A, Lewis S, Quinn C, Mulcahy M, Clancy L, Hastings G, et al. Evaluation of the removal of point-of-sale tobacco displays in Ireland. *Tob Control* 2011;20(2):137-43.
- 28 University of Bath. Tobacco Control Research Group. Tobacco Tactics. [Association of Convenience Stores](#). Accessed 14 April 2015.
- 29 Action on Smoking & Health. [Briefing: Industry claims about point of sale display bans – where are the now?](#) March 2012.
- 30 Dubray JM, Schwartz RM, Garcia JM, Bondy SJ, Victor JC. Vendor compliance with Ontario's tobacco point of sale legislation. *Can J Public Health* 2009;100(2):109-12.
- 31 McNeill A, Lewis S, Quinn C, Mulcahy M, Clancy L, Hastings G, et al. Evaluation of the removal of point-of-sale tobacco displays in Ireland. *Tob Control* 2011;20(2):137-43.
- 32 Scheffels J, Lavik R. Out of sight, out of mind? Removal of point-of-sale tobacco displays in Norway. *Tob Control* 2013;22(e1):e37-42.
- 33 Zacher M, Germain D, Durkin S, Hayes L, Scollo M, Wakefield M. A store cohort study of compliance with a point-of-sale cigarette display ban in Melbourne, Australia. *Nicotine Tob Res* 2013;15(2):444-9.
- 34 Hoek J, Vaudrey R, Gendall P, Edwards R, Thomson G. Tobacco retail displays: a comparison of industry arguments and retailers' experiences. *Tob Control* 2012;21(5):497-501.
- 35 Cancer Research UK. Press Release: [‘Tobacco goes out of sight as shop keepers admit to little profit from cigs’](#). 6 March 2015
- 36 Robert Calder, Sara Hitchman, Catriona Rooke and Ann McNeill. [‘Closing the Doors on Tobacco Promotion’](#). Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology & Neuroscience, King's College London. March 2015
- 37 Standardised packaging of tobacco. Report of the independent review undertaken by Sir Cyril Chantler (April 2014). Available at ([pdf](#))
- 38 Moodie C, Angus K, Stead M and Bauld L (2013). [Plain Tobacco Packaging Research: An Update](#). Stirling, Scotland: Centre for Tobacco Control Research, Institute for Social Marketing, University of Stirling.
- 39 Wakefield M, Bayly M, Scollo M. Product retrieval time in small tobacco retail outlets before and after the Australian plain packaging policy: real-world study. *Tobacco Control* 2013.

**For more information, please visit [cruk.org/tobacco](http://cruk.org/tobacco)**