

**NEWS RELEASE ... NEWS RELEASE ... NEWS RELEASE ..**

## **SOMERSET'S STOP SMOKING SERVICE SUPPORTS CALL FOR PLAIN TOBACCO PACKAGING**

**Nine out of ten people think plain tobacco packaging would put  
youngsters off taking up the habit**

Stop Smoking campaigners in Somerset are adding their support to a new South West campaign to take the glamour out of tobacco packaging.

Smokefree South West want to see tobacco sold only in standardised coloured packaging with plain font brand name and increased health warnings.

The call is backed by Somerset NHS Stop Smoking advisors, as well as charities such as Cancer Research UK, the British Heart Foundation and the Royal College of Physicians.

It is estimated some 200,000 children and young people start smoking regularly each year and of these nearly 9 in 10 start by the age of 19. Research also shows the design and style of today's tobacco packaging is still influential in persuading people to take up the habit - more so than plain packaging.

Research undertaken by Smokefree South West\* shows:

- Nearly 8 in 10 young people surveyed in the South West think selling cigarettes in 'plain packs' – with no coloured branding or logos and larger health warnings – would make it easier for people to smoke less or quit.
- The overwhelming majority – 9 in 10, in the South West thought plain packs were less attractive than branded packs and that plain packaging could make a significant difference in deterring young smokers from taking up the habit.

David Stapleton, Chair of the Smokefree Somerset Alliance warmly welcomed the launch of this campaign and urged parents to get involved, saying:

"I wonder how many parents even know about the newer packs that feature leading aspirational fashion brands, clearly designed to appeal to image conscious girls, or the shiny holographic packs that appeal to children. Or the fancy sliding packs featuring motorbikes or music imagery, appealing to boys. Plain packs would prevent tobacco companies using clever marketing designs like these to make their product look cool and recruit our children to this deadly addiction.

"The more people who get involved and show their support for this campaign by visiting the 'plainpacksprotect' web site, the more likely it is that Parliament will follow Australia's lead in making tobacco packs plain."

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To find out more about the Smokefree South West plain tobacco packaging campaign and show your support just visit their campaign web site at [www.plainpacksprotect.co.uk](http://www.plainpacksprotect.co.uk) today.

Smokefree South West is also holding events across the region showcasing the differing examples of the tobacco brands currently available and how plain packaging can help protect children from their appeal and this will be supported by an innovative billboard campaign.

## **Ends**

**Date: Tuesday 17 January 2012**

### **For more information contact:**

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### **Notes for editors**

Reference:

\*All survey figures from an online OnePoll survey of 2,771 16-25 year olds run between October 21 to November 23 2011.

\*\*Robinson S, Harris H. Smoking and drinking among adults 2009: a report on the 2009 General Lifestyle Survey. London: Office for National Statistics; 2011. Available at: <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/ghs/general-lifestyle-survey/2009-report/smoking-and-drinking-among-adults--2009.pdf>

A YouGov poll commissioned by ASH in 2010 found that 64 per cent of the UK public would support plain packaging if there was evidence that plain packaging was less likely to give the false impression that one type of cigarette is safer than another. Three quarters of respondents said they would support plain packaging if it made health warnings more effective, and 80 per cent would support it if they were found to be less attractive to children and young people than branded packs. (Source: Action on Smoking and Health. Plain Packaging for tobacco products and Public Opinion in the UK; 2011. Available at: [http://www.ash.org.uk/files/documents/ASH\\_765.pdf](http://www.ash.org.uk/files/documents/ASH_765.pdf) )