

UK Government to replace tobacco industry "con" with plain packaging



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On Sunday November 21 Health Secretary Andrew Lansley announced that he was "looking at the idea of making tobacco firms have completely plain packaging on their killer brands" so that only basic information and health and picture warnings would be visible.

In a strongly worded statement the Department of Health said "light colours on packets has been shown to con children and adults alike into falsely believing that one brand is somehow less harmful than another".

In a statement which appeared to endorse the principle of BOTH plain packaging and a tobacco product display ban Andrew Lansley said "the evidence is clear that packaging helps to recruit smokers, so it makes sense to consider having less attractive packaging. It's wrong that children are being attracted to smoke by glitzy designs on packets."

ASH has been campaigning for plain packaging for several years but cautioned that the offer of plain packaging sometime in the future is no substitute for implementing existing law to end tobacco displays due to come into force in less than a year.

Martin Dockrell, Director of Policy and Research at ASH said: "Putting tobacco in plain packs would be an historic step for public health and an amazing centrepiece for Lansley's promised Public Health Strategy. Industry marketing men have become increasingly pushy with pack design, making it a 21st Century billboard, identifying this brand as "cool", that brand as "feminine". That is why it is so important to end the lavish displays behind the sweets in shops but it cannot be a question of one or the other. If the effect of this move was to kick the display ban into the long grass, it would backfire horribly on the Government. It could be years before Lansley's proposed law comes into effect, while the display ban can and must come in next year as planned."

Click [here](#) for further information on plain packaging.