Department of Health consultation on the proposals for UK law on the advertising of e-cigarettes
Cancer Research UK Response

About Cancer Research UK¹

1. Every year around 300,000 people are diagnosed with cancer in the UK and more than 150,000 people die from cancer. Cancer Research UK is the world’s leading cancer charity dedicated to saving lives through research. Together with our partners and supporters, our vision is to bring forward the day when all cancers are cured. As the largest fundraising charity in the UK, we support research into all aspects of cancer through the work of over 4,000 scientists, doctors and nurses. In 2014/15, we spent £341 million on research, plus £41 million to the Francis Crick Institute. The charity’s pioneering work has been at the heart of the progress that has already seen survival rates in the UK double in the last forty years. We receive no funding from the Government for our research.

Summary

2. Cancer Research UK welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Department of Health consultation on the proposals for UK law on the advertising of e-cigarettes. The evidence so far shows e-cigarettes are much safer than conventional tobacco cigarettes and may help smokers to cut down or quit smoking. A balanced approach is needed towards e-cigarettes – one that maximises their potential to help people quit smoking, whilst minimising the risks of unintended consequences that could promote smoking. To do this we believe that light touch regulations are needed to ensure that e-cigarettes are not marketed to non-smokers including children or contribute to a ‘re-normalisation’ of smoking amongst the general public, although we note that so far there is no compelling evidence to suggest this is happening with the current rules in place.

3. Cancer Research UK agrees with the Department of Health’s proposal of a minimal approach to the implementation of Article 20(5) of the Tobacco Products Directive, and the intention not to go beyond the requirements imposed by the Directive. We also agree in principle with the distinction between ‘information’ and ‘advertising’ but this could be difficult to determine in practice so we would welcome supporting guidance to provide further clarification. We believe it is particularly important that smokers are able to access information about e-cigarettes on the internet to assist them in choosing products best suited to their needs. We also feel it is important they are promoted at point of sale in places where tobacco is sold to encourage smokers to switch to e-cigarettes.

4. We would only support further regulation of domestic advertising if the measures were a proportionate and evidence-based response which seeks to protect young people and non-smokers from the marketing and appeal of e-cigarettes.

5. We would welcome monitoring of the TPD advertising regulations to determine the impact of their introduction on the use and perceptions of e-cigarettes among smokers and non-smokers.

¹ Registered charity in England and Wales (1089464), Scotland (SC041666) and the Isle of Man (1103)

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