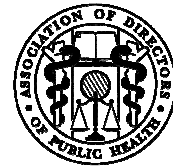


PRESS RELEASE



January 2010

Public Health bosses call for tougher tactics in fight against alcohol and tobacco

Calls for a minimum price on alcohol and a crackdown on illicit tobacco sales have been made by Directors of Public Health (DsPH) across the UK.

In a survey conducted by the Association of Directors of Public Health (ADPH), 83% of DsPHs said that lobbying for a minimum price of 50p per unit of alcohol was one of their top priorities in the run up to the General Election.

Dr Frank Atherton, President of the ADPH, said: "These survey results should alert politicians to the fact that the issue of minimum pricing for alcohol is not going to go away."

Minimum pricing was first proposed by the Chief Medical Officer Sir Liam Donaldson in 2008 but was rejected by ministers.

"It is vital that everything possible is done to try and decrease alcohol consumption which is a very real threat to public health. A 50p minimum price per unit has been shown to deter heavy drinkers and could result in saving over 3000 deaths per year." Dr Atherton continued.

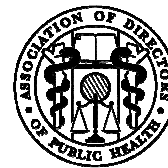
The survey, which was sent to all the UK DsPHs, also found that 70% of Directors regard the trade of illicit tobacco as a priority.

"The illicit tobacco trade makes it easier for people to access cigarettes. The UK needs to take firm action to tackle the threat to health which is posed by cheap and illicit tobacco." Dr Atherton added.

The ADPH will be lobbying the main political parties in the run up to this year's General Election on a wide range of other public health issues including nutrition and physical activity.

ENDS

Notes to editors follows/



PRESS RELEASE

For further information and interview requests please contact Nicola Close, Chief Executive of the ADPH on 07801 515567 or nicola.close@adph.nhs.uk.

Notes to editors:

- Of the 172 Directors of Public Health in the UK, 97 (56%) completed the ADPH's survey.
- The survey asked DsPHs to say how important 22 public health issues were. DsPHs were asked to cite each issue as being in their 'top three', 'top ten', 'important but not in their top ten' or, 'not a priority at present'.
- Further information about Sir Liam Donaldson's proposals regarding minimum pricing for alcohol, including a breakdown of research results, can be found in the CMO Annual Report (2008) at www.dh.gov.uk