

# ASH call for higher tobacco taxes on No Smoking Day



*Chancellor urged to raise tobacco taxes – a call echoed by ex-smokers*

Health campaigners and academic experts are marking this year's No Smoking Day by calling on the Chancellor to raise the tax on cigarettes by 5% above inflation in next week's Budget. This coincides with research released today by the British Heart Foundation showing that nearly half (42%) of ex-smokers said that raising the tax on tobacco would help other smokers to quit.

In a submission endorsed by 80 health and welfare organisations as well as Directors of Public Health, ASH and the UK Centre for Tobacco and Alcohol Studies are calling for the following measures:

Ø Introduce a tobacco tax escalator of 5% above inflation for this and subsequent years.

Ø Reduce the growing price differential between the most expensive and cheapest

cigarettes to discourage down-trading

Ø Increase the tax on hand-rolled tobacco (HRT) by introducing a larger tax escalator of 15% above inflation until tax on HRT is equivalent to that on manufactured cigarettes.

Ø Support the development of regulations to introduce plain,

standardised

packaging of tobacco packs.

Ø Update the Government's anti-smuggling strategy

Deborah Arnott, Chief Executive of health charity ASH said:-

“Raising the price of tobacco through taxation is the most effective way of reducing smoking and saving lives. Increasing taxes is a win-win for Government: it raises much needed revenue and encourages smokers to quit a deadly addiction. That is why we are calling on the Chancellor to be bold and raise the tax by 5% above inflation to further motivate smokers to quit.”

Professor Anna Gilmore, Professor of Public Health at the University of Bath and a UKCTAS Public Health Researcher the UK Centre for Tobacco and Alcohol Studies, said:- “Tobacco companies constantly complain about tax rises while at the same time quietly increasing prices and amassing huge profits from the sale of a product that kills half their long-term customers. This shows there is scope for raising tobacco tax. Increasing taxes not only helps smokers to quit but also deters children from starting a life-long addiction.”