

# Public slams tobacco industry as untrustworthy

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Almost two thirds (65 per cent) of the public distrust the tobacco industry to present believable and independent arguments about how to reduce smoking rates, according to new Cancer Research UK figures published today.

And the new survey shows that most people also distrust groups who take money from the tobacco industry.

Nearly two thirds (62 per cent) of the public say they are less likely to believe arguments from organisations arguing against measures to reduce smoking rates if they knew they were receiving funding from the tobacco industry.

Responses of more than 2000 adults from across the UK reveal that only

23 per cent want the government to listen to the industry on [tobacco control policies](#). And only 7 per cent wanted the government to listen to groups that receive money from the industry.

Professional medical organisations and health and medical charities are listed most commonly as the groups the government should listen to.

The public's dismissal of the industry comes just weeks after the Advertising Standards Agency (ASA) ruled that Japan Tobacco International (JTI) advertisements made false claims that could not be substantiated.

The ASA ruled that the series of JTI advertisements were misleading when they claimed the government had rejected the standardised packaging of [cigarettes](#) in 2008 due to a lack of credible evidence.

Results also show the overwhelming support for the government (85 per cent) in trying to reduce the number of young people who start smoking.

The UK government launched a public consultation on the future of tobacco packaging in April 2012. This closed in August 2012. Proposals would mean the existing brightly coloured and slickly designed packaging is replaced with packs of uniform size, shape and design, which would be less appealing to young people.

No decision has been made at this stage but health campaigners are urging the government to support the move as soon as possible.

Tobacco kills around 100,000 people in the UK each year. It causes at least 14 different types of cancer and is responsible for around a quarter of all cancer deaths.

Sarah Woolnough, Cancer Research UK's executive director of policy

and information, said: "For years the [tobacco industry](#) denied the link between smoking and lung cancer, so perhaps it's not surprising that these results show how little the public trust them. Their track record means they're not allowed to play any part in developing policies designed to reduce [smoking rates](#). But despite this, the industry continues to attempt to influence policies through advertising campaigns and funding pro-smoking groups.

"With 207,000 under 16s starting to smoke every year in the UK and half of all long term smokers dying of their addiction, it's vital that efforts continue to reduce the number of people taking up smoking. We urge the [government](#) to keep the industry at arm's length and introduce standardised packaging as soon as possible. Existing attractive packaging misleads young people and lessens the impact of health warnings. Plain, standardised packaging won't stop everyone from smoking, but it will give millions of children one less reason to start."

Provided by Cancer Research UK

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