

# ILLEGAL TOBACCO: THE FACTS



**ILLEGAL  
TOBACCO**  
KEEP IT OUT

## WHY TACKLE TOBACCO?

Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable death and disease globally. In the UK it leads to over 100,000 avoidable early deaths every year and causes many more people to lose years of active life through smoking-related illnesses.

Cigarettes are the only consumer product which, when used exactly as the manufacturer intends them to be used, will kill one in two of all long term smokers. Tobacco smoke contains a toxic cocktail of over 7,000 chemicals, many of which are known to cause cancer, heart disease and lung conditions. All forms of tobacco are harmful regardless of whether it was bought from a legal or illegal source.

## WHY IS ILLEGAL TOBACCO AN ISSUE?

The size of the illegal tobacco market has shown a sustained, longterm national decline in recent years as a result of co-ordinated efforts regionally, nationally and internationally. However, illegal tobacco is still a problem in some of our most deprived communities and efforts must be sustained in order to continue this downward trend.

### **The illegal tobacco trade undermines efforts to reduce smoking rates**

Despite good progress, the existence of an illegal trade in tobacco products undermines the effectiveness of measures to reduce these rates even further because:

- Illegal tobacco is often available at low prices, undermining smokers' efforts to cut down or quit
- Children are often able to get hold of illegal tobacco easily within their local communities, enabling them to become hooked at a young age

### **The tobacco industry is complicit and misuses data to oppose effective regulation**

Tobacco smuggling increased in the 1990s due to a vast expansion in British cigarettes being sold overseas in bulk. These cigarettes were destined to be smuggled straight back to the UK with tobacco manufacturers benefitting from the increase in sales of their products at a cheaper tax-free price.

Subsequently, the tobacco multinationals have all signed legally binding agreements with the European Union with massive financial settlements to ensure the security of their supply chains. As well as tobacco companies being implicated in fuelling the illegal trade, the tobacco industry has been criticised for exaggerating the size of the illegal tobacco market to oppose or delay the introduction of tobacco regulations and promote their image as responsible manufacturers.

## WHAT IS ILLEGAL TOBACCO?

### CIGARETTES

#### **'Illicit White' cigarettes:**

- No legal market in the UK
- UK duty has not been paid
- Health warnings and images may not be present
- Some products may be legally sold in countries outside the UK

#### **Counterfeit cigarettes:**

- Illegally manufactured
- Sold by a party other than the original trademark or copyright holder
- Can also include the counterfeiting of illicit whites

#### **Genuine cigarettes smuggled into the UK:**

- Produced legitimately for a local market
- Includes UK and non-UK brands
- Often have correct health warnings and images
- Also cigarettes meant for sale outside the UK that have been smuggled in or duty free cigarettes being illegally sold, rather than kept for personal use

### HAND-ROLLING TOBACCO

- Non-UK hand-rolling tobacco brands that are not intended for legal over the counter sale in the UK
- Counterfeit hand-rolling tobacco is, like cigarettes, illegally manufactured and sold by a party other than the original trademark or copyright owner. It can also include the counterfeiting of non-UK products
- Genuine or UK hand-rolling tobacco brands including products intended for both the UK and non-UK markets