



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

4th March 2024

Dear Anthony,

RE: SMOKING

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of actions the Government is taking to reduce smoking rates in England. I have read your comments with interest.

As the single leading behavioural cause of preventable death across our country, responsible for around 1 in 4 cancer deaths and 80,000 preventable deaths per year, reducing smoking is crucial for ensuring we live longer, healthier lives.

Significant progress has been made, with smoking rates now the lowest on record, thanks to duty on cigarettes being doubled since 2010 and continued funding of stop smoking services. However, we must reduce smoking rates further, given the substantial cost to the economy and the NHS.

In the King's Speech, the Government committed to bringing forward the *Tobacco & Vapes Bill* to ensure that children aged 14 or younger - anyone born on, or after, the 1st April 2009 – can never legally be sold tobacco products. By 2040, these proposals will ensure that smoking is phased out completely among young people.

This Bill will focus on those who sell tobacco products or buy them on behalf of someone else. All tobacco products - including heated tobacco and herbal smoking products - will be in the scope of the Bill. In addition, I want to clarify that a national licence scheme is not being proposed, which could have placed a greater burden on convenience stores.

I would also make the point that, to encourage existing smokers to quit, funding for stop smoking services in England is being substantially increased and new funding will support national anti-smoking marketing campaigns. An additional £70 million a year (to a total of £140 million) will be provided over the next five years to expand locally delivered services. It is estimated that this funding will support around 360,000 people a year to quit smoking.

In addition, the Government has recently announced additional funding for national anti-smoking campaigns, that will provide £15 million a year from 2024/25 to 2028/29 to explain the changes to age of sale, the benefits of quitting smoking, and the support available.

Further, activity to enforce the law is being strengthened, with £30 million of investment each year for action to prevent underage sales and to tackle the import of illicit tobacco at the border. I understand that on-the-spot fines will also be introduced for rogue retailers who commit underage sales and further steps will be taken to enhance online age verification.



I fully recognise your support for the proposals to phase out the sale of tobacco products to young people. As the Prime Minister has stated, the legislation will be subject to a free vote, and I will await further details of the proposals, listen to the debate, consider all the evidence, and listen to the views of my constituents, before finally settling on my position.

Once again, thank you for having taken the time to contact me and if I can ever be of any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Tom Pursglove'.

**TOM PURSGLOVE MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**