

Dodgy Cigs – Key Points

The truth about illicit tobacco in two graphs

The tobacco industry often opposes new tobacco laws on the grounds that they will cause rises in the level of illicit tobacco (such as smuggled and counterfeit cigarettes). But the truth is that **illicit tobacco is falling**, despite cigarette prices going up. Illicit tobacco is falling even faster than the smoking rate. This stands in stark contrast to tobacco industry claims of a rising market in response to laws to protect against tobacco.

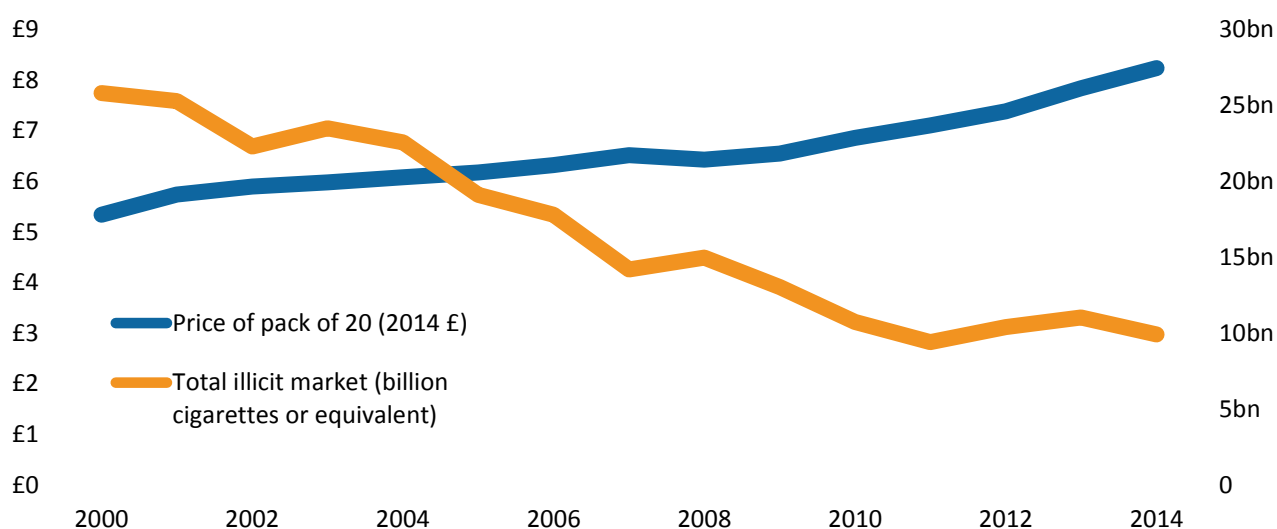


Figure 1 – HMRC’s estimate of the size of the illicit tobacco market in the UK, plotted alongside to the price of a pack of 20 cigarettes (in 2014 GBP). The illicit market has consistently fallen at a time when tobacco prices have increased.

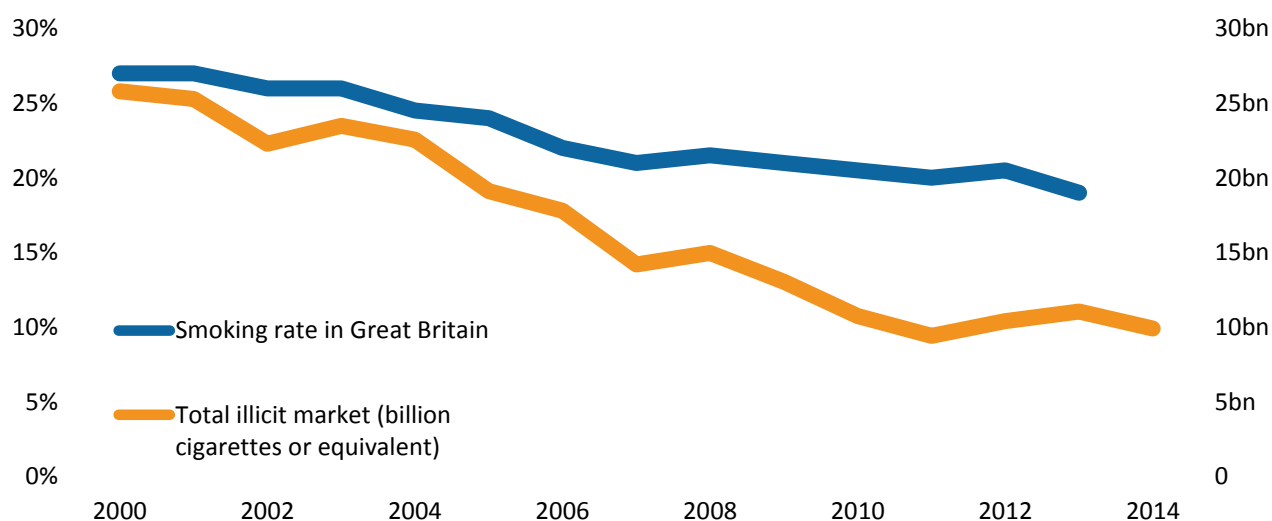


Figure 2 – Adult smoking rate in Great Britain compared to the total illicit market in the UK (HMRC figures). Illicit tobacco has fallen faster than the smoking rate.

Australia introduced plain packaging in 2012. There, the tobacco industry used reports with flawed methodologies to make sweeping claims that use of illicit tobacco had risen, despite more reliable Government figures showing that it had not.

It takes time for plain packaging to work, because the policy relies on putting tobacco out of sight and out of mind to protect children from starting smoking. But the industry isn't willing to wait for reliable evidence, instead commissioning its own reports – criticised by the scientific community.



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