

New tobacco products: heat-not-burn ASH Scotland Viewpoint



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Introduction

Philip Morris International (PMI) is piloting a new tobacco product, iQOS, in the UK under the name Heets. This statement is intended to give ASH Scotland's view of what this could mean in the context of smoking-related legislation and public health.

This device is part of a class sometimes known as "heat-not-burn" products. It claims to heat tobacco to 300C rather than burning it, creating emissions which, when inhaled, mimic the experience of smoking.

It is not an e-cigarette or vapouriser and should not be confused with these. Electronic cigarettes do not contain actual tobacco, but instead heat a fluid containing nicotine and flavourings to produce a smoking sensation. By contrast, iQOS uses a small "heatstick" of tobacco which is heated and later replenished. The harmful component in a cigarette is tobacco, rather than nicotine per se.

This device is already available for sale in test markets around the world, including Nagoya in Japan and Milan in Italy. Both Japan Tobacco and British American Tobacco have similar products at different stages of development – Ploom and iFuse respectively.

Policy and legal position

iQOS is a tobacco product and, as such ASH Scotland believes it should be subject to all tobacco-related legislation – including regulations on smoking in indoor public places, the ban on display in shops and standardised packaging for the product and refills.

Health effects of new tobacco products

These products are entirely new, and as such there has been no independent scientific evidence indicating that they avoid the harm caused by using tobacco. We don't know what their health effects may be, and it should be remembered that other forms of

smokeless tobacco have been shown to have serious consequences for health. Nor do we know how effective they may be at helping people quit smoking lit tobacco.

With that in mind, heat-not-burn devices should be thought of in the same category as any other tobacco products. Statements by tobacco companies that these devices carry a “reduced risk” should be challenged, at least until a consensus develops among independent scientists.

How the tobacco industry may use new tobacco products

While the health harm resulting from new tobacco products is at this time unknown, our view is that these products should be regulated as tobacco even if their harm profile may be less than lit tobacco. The tobacco industry must not be allowed to use these products to insinuate that the use of tobacco – which, in the vast majority of cases, means cigarettes - can be anything other than injurious to health.

The tobacco industry has a history of using novel tobacco products to confuse this message and promote tobacco use. Snus, a form of oral tobacco, was banned in the UK after tobacco companies promoted it as a new way to smoke. Recently, smokeless tobacco products have been promoted by Big Tobacco as useful [“for when you can’t smoke”](#), suggesting that the industry has an interest in maintaining its profits through tobacco use and addiction, not in truly reducing harm by helping smokers to quit using lit tobacco altogether.

Tobacco tactics

The tobacco industry has a long, substantial and well-documented history of misstatement and untruth when engaging with policymakers. They may use these new products to position themselves as “part of the solution” to the public health crisis of tobacco - at the same time as they use techniques banned in the UK to sell cigarettes in the developing world. We must have no illusions about their responsibility for the tobacco epidemic.

Article 5.3 of the [Framework Convention on Tobacco Control](#), the world’s first public health treaty, exists to protect health policies from tobacco industry interference:

In setting and implementing their public health policies with respect to tobacco control, Parties shall act to protect these policies from commercial and other vested interests of the tobacco industry in accordance with national law.

[This does not prohibit engagement with the industry](#) but set out an expectation that parties will put in place measures to engage in an appropriate manner on issues relating

to the industry's business and administration, while ensuring that "big tobacco" lobbyists cannot influence public health policy.

We would encourage parliamentarians not to engage with tobacco industry representatives on any health matters, even if they claim to have good intentions, and to be mindful of Article 5.3's requirement to protect public health from an industry which has caused so much damage.



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