

The Latest Anti-Smoking Propaganda

By **Alexander Baron** - Feb 25, 2015



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Smoking is an unfashionable habit, and rightly so. If you've ever kissed a smoker, you'll appreciate why this should be the case. People who smoke heavily are more prone to coughing, certain illnesses, they may be short of breath, and so on, but does smoking really cause depression? That is what the **latest research** from University College London indicates, or could it be that depressives smoke more?

The lunacy that is peddled by the anti-smoking lobby in this country beggars belief, but it never stops. This includes attacks on secondhand smoking, or passive smoking as it is usually called; passive smoking means being in the same room as a smoker, or in the same town if you believe **Action on Smoking and Health**, but who does? A few years ago there was a big crusade against passive smoking using all manner of scientific studies to prove both how obnoxious and how deadly it is. At least one study appeared to show that passive

smoking was more dangerous than regular smoking, something that borders on the absurd. Save for the smokers' rights organisation **FOREST**, the propaganda has been all one way, and has had a profound effect on public policy; smokers are now treated almost like pariahs in some places.

Since July 2007, smoking has been banned in all public buildings in the UK, that includes private buildings like shops. If you see your local shopkeeper standing outside having a quick drag, that is because he is banned by law from smoking on his own premises, even if he owns the freehold. Later this year it will become a criminal offence to smoke in a car if **a child is present**; as that great Libertarian Chris Tame used to say, when they talk about protecting children, what they really mean is destroying your rights.



Could smoking be one of the causes for depression?

The propaganda campaign and legal restrictions would probably be even more vicious if the Government were not caught in a bind. This **official table** shows the staggering taxation on cigarettes in the UK; the less people smoke, the less revenue for the Treasury. A side-effect of this repressive taxation is the trade in contraband cigarettes; it was partly this that led to the controversial death of Eric Garner in New York. He was trying to make an honest living by selling cigarettes bought from outside New York State where the taxes are lower; he ended up being arrested over a victimless crime and dying as a result of overzealous policing.

What is behind this campaign? Most knowledgeable observers believe it is more about power than concern for people's welfare. Does smoking really kill as many people prematurely as its enemies claim? The comedian Bob Hope and the songwriter Irving Berlin were both smokers; Hope died at 100, Berlin at 101!

You also pay standard rate **VAT** at 20% on alcohol and tobacco products.

Tobacco Duty

You pay different rates of Tobacco Duty on cigarettes, cigars and other tobacco products.

Tobacco product	Rate
Cigarettes	16.5% of the retail price plus £3.68 on a packet of 20
Cigars	£2.30 on a 10g cigar
Hand rolling tobacco	£4.51 on a 25g packet
Other smoking tobacco and chewing tobacco (eg pipe tobacco)	£2.52 on a 25g packet

Tobacco tax and duties in the UK, taken from the official GOV.UK site