

# Implementing inserts in cigarette and hand rolling tobacco packaging

Department of Health and Social Care consultation

Yorkshire Cancer Research response, January 2026

## Placement of pack inserts in packaging

We have included a short summary and the images for all the proposals in the survey. The full proposals, including images, are in the relevant sections above.

## Cigarette packaging

For flip-top cigarette packaging, we propose that loose inserts are placed between the cigarette bundle and the inner frame of the packet. The inserts should be easily removable and not attached to the rest of the packaging in any way.

Do you agree or disagree with the proposed placement of inserts for flip-top cigarette packaging? (Optional)

- **Agree**
- Disagree
- Don't know

For soft pack cigarette packaging, we propose that quit messaging is folded lengthwise twice and added in the side of the package.

Do you agree or disagree with the proposed placement of inserts for soft pack cigarette packaging? (Optional)

- Agree
- **Disagree**
- Don't know

For shoulder hinged cigarette packaging, we propose that the inserts are placed inside the pack, on top of the bundled cigarettes.

Do you agree or disagree with the proposed placement of inserts for shoulder hinged cigarette packaging? (Optional)

- **Agree**
- Disagree
- Don't know

If you have any comments on the proposed placement of inserts for cigarette packaging, please include them here. (Optional, maximum 500 words)

In 2012, Canada became the first country to use pack inserts to promote smoking cessation. Evidence from Canada finds a strong association between health warnings on pack inserts and an increase in self-efficacy to quit, quit attempts and sustained quit attempts.<sup>1</sup> Reading pack inserts was associated with a 68% increase in quit attempts and a 48% increase in sustained quit attempts which are more likely to result in successful smoking cessation. Additionally, research from Canada found between 26% and 31% of people who smoke had read the inserts at least once in the previous month.<sup>2</sup> Of those who had read the insert, 50% were likely to have tried to quit in the subsequent wave of the study.

To maximise this impact, it is vital they are not placed in a way that allows them to go unnoticed or ignored. The proposed placements of loose inserts in flip-top packaging and shoulder hinged cigarette packaging are likely to be effective, as they are immediately visible upon opening. However, the proposed placement for loose inserts in soft pack cigarette packaging could plausibly be overlooked. They are not immediately visible when the package is opened and require additional effort to remove and unfold.

Ideally, all inserts would be positioned inside the packaging. However, the charity recognises this may not always be feasible. In cases where it is impossible to include a separate insert within softpack packaging, cessation messages should be printed directly on the interior surfaces. If soft pack cigarette packaging is incompatible with both a loose insert and interior printed messages, the Department should consider limiting packaging formats to those where inserts can feasibly be included. This approach is consistent with Canada where cigarettes must now all be sold in 'slide and shell' packages, maximising space for health information and warnings.<sup>3</sup> If the inserts are folded and slotted into the outside of the packaging, the UK may be unable to replicate the success seen in Canada.

In addition, the potential of printing health promotion messages directly onto cigarettes should be explored through further research. Canada and Australia have both introduced health warnings printed on individual cigarettes indicating this could be practically feasible. However, there is no evidence on the effectiveness of positive quit

messaging on individual cigarettes. Theoretically, short health-related messages such as 'It's never too late to quit' and 'Quitting saves lives/money' printed onto individual cigarettes could amplify the impact of pack inserts by maintaining message visibility over a longer period.

Canada is currently in the process of updating the placement of health information in flip-top cigarette packaging, moving away from loose inserts and instead placing health information messages on an extended upper slide-flap for cigarette packages to make the information more prominent.<sup>4</sup> This change will come into force in 2026. Yorkshire Cancer Research recommends that the Department of Health and Social Care review the emerging evidence from Canada once this updated placement is implemented and adjust the UK's approach accordingly should it prove to be more effective.

### Hand rolling tobacco packaging

For wrap-around hand rolling tobacco packaging, we propose that instead of a pack insert, the same quit messaging is printed on the inner surface of the flap. The messaging must be positioned below the text health warning as the text health warning is positioned at the top edge of the pack when the pack is fully opened. The quit messaging must be visible and not covered by packaging seals.

Do you agree or disagree with the proposed placement of messaging for wrap-around hand rolling tobacco packaging? (Optional)

- Agree
- **Disagree**
- Don't know

If you have any comments on the proposed placement of messaging for wrap-around hand rolling tobacco packaging, please include them here. (Optional, maximum 500 words)

Evidence suggests smokers find it useful to be able to retain inserts to refer to in future and potentially motivate a quit attempt.<sup>5</sup> Study participants raised the issue that messaging printed directly on packs will be discarded with the pack whereas a removable insert can be retained. For example, people can intentionally keep the insert in their wallet, or it may be left on the side and seen for a prolonged period.

The proposed placement of messaging for wrap-around hand rolling tobacco packaging prints the message directly onto packaging rather than including a loose insert. If it is unfeasible for inserts to be included, printing the message directly onto packaging would be the next best option. However, this would potentially remove the longevity of the visibility and impact of the messaging. Given that, as highlighted in the consultation itself, Australia uses loose inserts for wrap-around packaging this is

demonstrably feasible and therefore, to prolong the visibility of messages, pack inserts in UK wrap-around packaging should align.

For hand rolling tobacco packaged in cylinders and standing pouches, we propose that the inserts are placed inside the packs with the tobacco.

Do you agree or disagree with the proposed placement of inserts for cylinder and standing pouch packaging of hand rolling tobacco? (Optional)

- **Agree**
- Disagree
- Don't know

If you have any comments on the proposed placement of inserts for cylinder and standing pouch packaging of hand rolling tobacco, please include them here. (Optional, maximum 500 words)

The proposed placement of inserts for cylinder and standing pouch packaging of hand rolling tobacco facilitates the necessary visibility and removability for health information messaging to be effective.

## Shape and size of pack inserts

### Cigarette packaging

For flip-top and shoulder hinged cigarette packaging, we propose that the inserts are sized based on the pack's outer dimensions but reduced by 8mm in both width and height.

Do you agree or disagree with the proposed sizing of inserts for flip-top and shoulder hinged cigarette packaging? (Optional)

- **Agree**
- Disagree
- Don't know

For soft pack cigarette packaging, we propose that the inserts must measure 48mm wide by 95mm high, and when folded, 16mm wide and 95mm high.

Do you agree or disagree with the proposed sizing of inserts for soft pack cigarette packaging? (Optional)

- **Agree**
- Disagree

- Don't know

If you have any comments on the proposed sizing of inserts for cigarette packaging, please include them here. (Optional, maximum 500 words)

The proposed shape and size of the inserts for cigarette packaging is likely sufficient to ensure they are visible, easy to read and large enough to be kept for future reference without being easily lost.

### Hand rolling tobacco packaging

For wrap-around hand rolling tobacco packaging, we propose the printed quit messaging must measure 115mm wide by 63mm high.

Do you agree or disagree with the proposed sizing of messaging for wrap-around hand rolling tobacco packaging? (Optional)

- **Agree**
- Disagree
- Don't know

If you have any comments on the proposed sizing of messaging for wrap-around hand rolling tobacco packaging, please include them here. (Optional, maximum 500 words)

The proposed shape and size of the inserts for wrap-around hand rolling tobacco packaging is likely sufficient to ensure they are visible, easy to read and large enough to be kept for future reference without being easily lost.

For hand rolling tobacco packaged in cylinders and standing pouches, we propose that the inserts must measure 55mm wide by 80mm high.

Do you agree or disagree with the proposed sizing of inserts for cylinder and standing pouch packaging of hand rolling tobacco? (Optional)

- **Agree**
- Disagree
- Don't know

If you have any comments on the proposed sizing of inserts for cylinder and standing pouch packaging of hand rolling tobacco, please include them here. (Optional, maximum 500 words)

The proposed shape and size of the inserts for cylinder and standing pouch packaging of hand rolling tobacco is likely sufficient to ensure they are visible, easy to read and large enough to be kept for future reference without being easily lost.

### Shape of loose inserts and printed messaging

We propose that loose inserts and printed messaging are rectangular in shape. They must not be bevel shaped or embellished in any way.

Do you agree or disagree with the proposed shape of the inserts? (Optional)

- **Agree**
- Disagree
- Don't know

If you have any comments on the proposed shape of inserts, please include them here. (Optional, maximum 500 words)

This proposal aligns with Australian policy which states health promotion inserts must be rectangular for both cigarette packs and all other kinds of tobacco to which the requirement applies.<sup>6</sup>

### Material to use for pack inserts

#### Cigarette packaging

For all cigarette packaging, we propose that loose inserts must be recyclable and coated with a clear, protective matt finish. The clear coating must not prevent the insert from being recycled.

Do you agree or disagree with the proposed material of inserts for cigarette packaging? (Optional)

- **Agree**
- Disagree
- Don't know

For flip-top and shoulder hinged cigarette packaging, we propose that the inserts must be printed on 180gsm paper.

Do you agree or disagree with the proposed paperweight of inserts for flip-top and shoulder hinged cigarette packaging? (Optional)

- **Agree**

- Disagree
- Don't know

For soft pack cigarette packaging, we propose that the inserts must be printed on 80gsm paper, to allow for the folding required.

Do you agree or disagree with the proposed paperweight of inserts for soft pack cigarette packaging? (Optional)

- **Agree**
- Disagree
- Don't know

If you have any comments on the proposed material and paperweight of inserts for cigarette packaging, please include them here. (Optional, maximum 500 words)

Yorkshire Cancer Research agrees with the proposed material and paperweight of inserts of cigarette packaging. It is important that, while remaining recyclable, inserts are made to be durable.

Many inserts will end up discarded so it is important that they are able to be recycled to minimise the environmental impact of this policy. However, it is important to note that any negative environmental impact of the additional paper insert is likely to be offset by the positive environmental impact of increased smoking cessation. The environmental costs of tobacco are substantial.<sup>7</sup> An increase in sustained quit attempts due to pack inserts should outweigh any environmental concerns over potential waste.

It is equally important that inserts are durable. The proposed protective finish is likely to help ensure this. Durability is important so that inserts can be kept, intentionally or otherwise, to maintain their impact over a longer period. If the material of inserts could not withstand being left lying around, being in someone's pocket or wallet or getting slightly wet, their impact would be reduced to only the immediate moment after the packaging is opened. This is consistent with the Australian approach which highlights that health promotion inserts must be removable from packaging without damaging them.<sup>6</sup>

### Hand rolling tobacco packaging

For wrap-around hand rolling tobacco packaging, we propose that quit messaging must be printed directly onto the packaging and the pouch must be coated with the same protective finish that is currently used.

Do you agree or disagree with the proposed material of messaging for wrap-around hand rolling tobacco packaging? (Optional)

- Agree
- **Disagree**
- Don't know

If you have any comments on the proposed material of messaging for wrap-around hand rolling tobacco packaging, please include them here. (Optional, maximum 500 words)

Yorkshire Cancer Research disagrees with the proposed material of messaging for wrap-around hand rolling tobacco packaging. Inserts should not be printed directly onto existing materials as this is likely to be quickly discarded and only visible when people are about to smoke. Enabling people to retain the insert and therefore see it at times when they are not currently smoking, could amplify the impact. The charity recommend that this proposal is amended to align with the Australian approach where all health promotion inserts must be easily removable from the packaging.<sup>6</sup>

For hand rolling tobacco packaged in cylinders and standing pouches, we propose that loose inserts must be recyclable and coated with a clear, protective matt finish. The clear coating must not prevent the insert from being recycled. We propose that the inserts must be printed on 200gsm paper.

Do you agree or disagree with the proposed material and paperweight of inserts for cylinder and standing pouch packaging of hand rolling tobacco? (Optional)

- **Agree**
- Disagree
- Don't know

If you have any comments on the proposed material and paperweight of inserts for cylinder and standing pouch packaging of hand rolling tobacco, please include them here. (Optional, maximum 500 words)

Yorkshire Cancer Research agrees with the proposed material and paperweight of inserts for cylinder and standing pouch packaging of hand rolling tobacco. The proposed protective finish and increased robustness are consistent with the need for durability of inserts, to maximise the longevity of impact.

## Messaging and imagery on pack inserts

### Loose pack inserts

The proposed messaging and imagery of loose pack inserts applies to:

- all cigarette packaging

- cylinder hand rolling tobacco packaging
- standing pouch hand rolling tobacco packaging

We propose that the loose inserts are printed on both sides, with quit messaging on one side. On the other side, we propose that the loose inserts have a QR code and web address to a smoking cessation website, as well as the 4 nation healthcare logos. For soft pack cigarette packaging, part of the back of the insert would also have the text health warning on it.

Do you agree or disagree with the proposed messaging and imagery that would be included on loose inserts? (Optional)

- Agree
- **Disagree**
- Don't know

We propose that the loose inserts are printed in portrait orientation.

Do you agree or disagree with the proposed printing orientation of loose inserts? (Optional)

- **Agree**
- Disagree
- Don't know

If you have any comments on the proposed messaging or printing orientation of loose inserts, please include them here. (Optional, maximum 500 words)

There are a few adjustments that could increase the effectiveness of messaging.

There is evidence that pregnancy-related smoking cessation messages on inserts can be equally impactful for men and women.<sup>8</sup> This contrasts with pregnancy-related harm-based warning labels, which tend to be more effective for women than men. One possible reason is that some cessation messages explicitly referenced men, whereas harm-based warnings typically focus only on pregnant women. To make inserts more broadly relevant, they should include statements highlighting the benefits of quitting for those living with a pregnant person, such as reducing second-hand smoke exposure for both mother and baby.

Given the prevalence of misconceptions around the harm of vaping, there could be a benefit to strengthening the messaging around stop smoking aids. In Yorkshire 59% of people who smoke incorrectly believe vaping is more or equally as harmful as smoking.<sup>9</sup> This is higher than the average in Great Britain (53%).<sup>10</sup> Messaging could highlight the effectiveness and comparative safety of vaping products as smoking cessation tools. By integrating explicit, evidence-based references to NRT and vaping products, messages can more effectively encourage smokers to take

concrete steps toward quitting, beyond just considering it. For example, when encouraging a quit attempt after relapse, inserts can refer to the added value of stop smoking aids using messaging such as ‘Every quit attempt helps. Increase your chances of success by using stop smoking aid’.

Inserts focused on pregnancy could also address harm misperceptions. Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) is recommended for smoking cessation during pregnancy.<sup>11</sup> However, there is low NRT adherence in this group, likely due to concerns around safety. Evidence suggests that NRT is safer during pregnancy than smoking. In Yorkshire, 7.5% of women smoke at time of delivery, significantly higher than the national average of 6.1%.<sup>12</sup> Hull has the highest percentage of women who smoke at time of delivery in the country at 13.2%. To improve adherence, inserts could include a clear statement such as, ‘Nicotine Replacement Therapy during pregnancy is safer than continuing to smoke and can help protect your baby’s health’.

Messaging should further emphasise the added benefits of getting help to quit. The current messaging primarily focuses on the positive impacts of quitting and only three of the eight loose inserts mention practical steps people can take, such as managing cravings, staying persistent or using stop smoking aids. Just one of these refers to the support available from stop smoking services. This is a missed opportunity, as people are three times more likely to quit successfully with professional support than when attempting to quit alone.<sup>13</sup> Messaging should highlight this statistic, encouraging people to reach out to their local stop smoking services to increase their chances of quitting.

Finally, the better health website, accessed via the QR code, should make the ‘find your local stop smoking service’ page more visible. While it is necessary to first select the home country, it should then be obvious how to navigate to find your local stop smoking service rather than clicking through multiple pages.

### **Wrap-around hand rolling tobacco packaging**

We propose that the printed messaging on wrap-around hand rolling tobacco packaging includes:

- quit messaging
- a QR code and web address to a smoking cessation website
- the 4 nation healthcare logos

This is the same messaging as shown on the loose inserts.

Do you agree or disagree with the proposed printed messaging for wrap-around hand rolling tobacco packaging? (Optional)

- Agree
- **Disagree**
- Don't know

We propose that the messaging printed on wrap-around hand rolling tobacco packaging must be printed in landscape orientation.

Do you agree or disagree with the proposed printing orientation of printed messaging for wrap-around hand rolling tobacco packaging? (Optional)

- **Agree**
- Disagree
- Don't know

If you have any comments on the proposed messaging or printing orientation of messaging for wrap-around hand rolling tobacco packaging, please include them here. (Optional, maximum 500 words)

There are potential benefits to differentiating some messaging for roll your own (RYO) and factory made (FM) cigarette inserts. The proportion of people who smoke RYO tobacco is increasing.<sup>14</sup> The charity estimates that there are now 360,961 people who smoke RYO tobacco in Yorkshire.<sup>12, 15, 16</sup> Evidence suggests that many RYO smokers incorrectly believe RYO tobacco is less harmful than FM cigarettes, often citing fewer additives and a more “natural” product.<sup>14, 17</sup> Introducing targeted pack inserts for RYO tobacco that emphasise the need for smoking cessation, even for RYO users, could help challenge these misconceptions. Combining ‘myth busting’ messages with cessation support may be effective. Qualitative evidence from a focus group of young people who smoke RYO indicates that pack inserts aiming to combat misconceptions may not be trusted.<sup>17</sup> There are suggestions that, to improve credibility, such inserts may need to reference authoritative sources. This could be achieved by including citations on the linked website accessed via the QR code.

Given the potential importance of the QR code for this group, it is vital that it is visible and clearly labelled. In the current proposal, whilst the QR code itself is visible, it is not that clear what it links compared to on loose inserts which include the ‘scan to learn more about how quitting can benefit your health’ message. This could potentially reduce the number of people who opt to scan the QR code, reducing the impact of the insert.

If you have any comments on the consideration of inks for loose inserts and printed messaging, please include them here. (Optional, maximum 500 words)

N/A

### Equal use of messaging

We propose that across all cigarette and hand rolling tobacco packaging, the different insert messages should appear in, or on, equal numbers of retail packages. This applies to different brand families, brands and packaging sizes and types.

Do you agree or disagree with the proposed equal use of messaging? (Optional)

- **Agree**
- Disagree
- Don't know

If you have any comments on the proposed equal use of the messaging, please include them here. (Optional, maximum 500 words)

Yorkshire Cancer Research agrees with the proposed equal use of messaging across different brand families, brands and packaging sizes and shapes. This will prevent people who smoke from repeatedly seeing the same messages and eventually ignoring it. Evidence suggests it is important to rotate different messages to prevent desensitisation, consistent with evidence from warning labels which require rotation to maintain their behavioural impact.<sup>5, 18</sup> Therefore, just as it is important that insert messages are rotated equally across different products, it is also important that messages are updated every few years to avoid desensitisation.

### Access to pack inserts messaging

We propose that manufacturers will access the pack insert messaging through an online platform called DH eXchange. Manufacturers currently access the combined health warnings through this platform.

Do you agree or disagree with the proposed method of providing manufacturers with access to the messaging? (Optional)

- **Agree**
- Disagree
- Don't know

If you have any comments on the proposed method of providing manufacturers with access to the messaging, please include them here. (Optional, maximum 500 words)

N/A

## Implementation timelines

We propose that manufacturers have a maximum of 12 months after the regulations are made to implement the requirements in legislation.

Do you agree or disagree with the proposed implementation timelines? (Optional)

- **Agree**
- Disagree
- Don't know

If you have any comments on the proposed implementation timelines, please include them here. (Optional, maximum 500 words)

N/A

## Any other comments

If there are any cigarette or hand rolling tobacco packaging types we haven't included in this consultation, please include them here. (Optional, maximum 500 words)

If you have any further comments on the proposals in this consultation, please include them here. (Optional, maximum 500 words)

Yorkshire Cancer Research broadly welcomes the introduction of pack inserts in the packaging of tobacco products, subject to the small amendments outlined above to further improve the likely impact. As explained, international evidence suggests that inserts are effective in promoting behaviour change and increasing quit attempts. This is critical to reduce rates of cancer, especially in Yorkshire. Yorkshire has the highest smoking prevalence of any region in England at 12.2% compared to 10.4% nationally and was one of two regions to see an increase in smoking prevalence between 2023 and 2024 instead of a decrease.<sup>12</sup> The charity estimates that smoking causes 5,154 cases of cancer in the region each year and costs Yorkshire nearly 7,500 lives annually.<sup>19, 20</sup>

Currently not enough people who need support to quit are currently accessing smoking cessation services. In England, only around 5% of adults who smoked set a quit date with local stop smoking services in 2024/25.<sup>12, 21</sup> Yorkshire has the lowest rate of any region in England of people setting a quit date at 3,833 people who smoke per every 100,000. This is compared to the national rate of 4,403 per 100,000.<sup>21</sup> Even though Local Authority smoking cessation services in Yorkshire support thousands to stop smoking each year, the charity estimates that 362,462 people need to quit in Yorkshire to reach the 5% target.<sup>12, 16</sup> Pack inserts could be a

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key route to increasing quit attempts and bringing the region closer to the 5% smoking prevalence target.

Please attach any other information to support your submission. (File upload)

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