

Dear Members of the Senedd,

I am writing to you from ASH Wales: Wales' leading tobacco control charity.

Our Scottish counterparts have raised concerns that JTI (Japan Tobacco International) are sending video cards to Scottish Parliament members. This video contains material referencing the igiveabutt campaign, a PR stunt which claims to target cigarette butt littering. Unfortunately, a Welsh charity received funds from JTI to roll out the initiative in South Wales, and has been cited as an example of JTI's positive corporate responsibility activity. Subsequently, ASH Wales has distanced itself from the campaign due to its tangible links with tobacco sales.

The video sent to Scottish elected representatives was delivered in a gift box, which we understand some have repurposed.

We would like to take this opportunity to kindly remind officials of Article 5.3 of the World Health Organization's (WHO) Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), that requires governments to take measures to protect health policy "from commercial and other vested interests of the tobacco industry".

In addition to this, we would also like to remind officials that despite the well-funded campaigns JTI promotes through glossy press releases and small NGO's: JTI remains a giant in the tobacco sales landscape, with their website reporting that 2020 marked their 22nd consecutive year of profit growth¹. With brands such as Silk Cut, Camel and Benson & Hedges, JTI is very much a big player in tobacco sales. Needless to say, the company's tobacco distribution and the inherent harm it causes overshadow any small grassroots campaigns.

We write this letter in conjunction with new data released in the UK Tobacco Industry Interference Index (UKTI). This data informs part of the Global Tobacco Index (GTI), which ranks countries on how well they comply with the previously mentioned obligations of WHO, and their framework to prevent tobacco industry interference with governments. Sadly, the data shows that the UK has made no improvement, scoring 32 out of a possible 100 – compared to 26 in 2019—where the lower the score, the better a country is fairing².

ASH Wales takes considerable care to ensure our work is funded and endorsed by ethical third parties, who have no dealings with tobacco distribution. We hope that this same commitment is mirrored in Welsh Government.

For information relating to the UK's own efforts to reduce the effects of littering on our environment, please do not hesitate to get in touch. ASH Wales' Smokefree Beaches is such a campaign that has a long-standing commitment to the environment and wildlife of Wales³. In addition, many of our campaigns focus on environmental harm caused by cigarette waste.

If you would like to find out more, please contact me directly. Furthermore, if you would like to join our commitment to achieve a smoke free and healthier Wales, please do not hesitate to get in touch with myself or ASH Wales team.

Yours sincerely,

Suzanne Cass

CEO ASH WALES

CC'd: John Griffiths MS

Chair of Cross-Party Group on Smoking and Health

¹ [About us | Japan Tobacco International – a global tobacco company \(jti.com\)](#)

² <https://www.bath.ac.uk/case-studies/the-uk-tobacco-industry-interference-index-2021>

³ <https://ash.wales/campaign/beaches/>