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Smokers' lobby group launches campaign to amend the smoking ban

- **Forest calls on government to be "fair and practical"**

The smokers' lobby group Forest will today lobby members of parliament to amend the public smoking ban and allow licensed smoking rooms in pubs and clubs.

Speaking at a reception hosted by Philip Davies MP for Forest in the House of Commons, director Simon Clark will tell MPs:

"The comprehensive nature of the smoking ban is out of all proportion to the risk from passive smoking. Many pubs and clubs have suffered serious economic hardship and for many smokers the social impact has been equally severe.

"Smokers may have adapted to the ban, but that doesn't mean they support it. There is still a great deal of anger and resentment at the extent of the ban, which is out of step with most European countries."

Announcing the launch of a new campaign to amend the legislation, Clark will add:

"Our message to politicians is simple. Tobacco is a legal consumer product. In Britain at least ten million adults smoke. A huge number enjoy smoking and have no intention of giving up. If anything, the ban has made them more determined than ever not to quit.

"Many smokers are staying at home instead of going to their local pub or club. The ban is creating social exclusion, loneliness and unemployment. It is very unfair, especially on older smokers. For some mental health sufferers the impact of the ban has been devastating.

"Smokers are not going to disappear like a puff of smoke, so let's be fair and practical about this. We are asking the government to amend the legislation so that pubs and clubs can apply for a license to introduce well-ventilated separate smoking rooms. We want to bring back some element of choice for consumers, owners, and members of staff."

For further comment, contact Simon Clark on 07774 781840 or Neil Rafferty on 07733 301721

Economic impact of the smoking ban:

<http://www.forestonline.org/output/Economic-Impact.aspx>

Social impact of the smoking ban:

<http://www.forestonline.org/output/Social-Impact.aspx>