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Independent Audit of Vending Machines in Ireland

Prepared for:

ICMOA/Tobaccoland Ltd

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1. Introduction

Behaviour & Attitudes were commissioned to conduct an independent audit of vending machines across the Republic of Ireland. The focus was on licenced public houses. The objective was to review whether, or not, it was possible to purchase tobacco from vending machines in open public spaces within these outlets, without the intervention of a staff member, or the purchase of a token.



2. Research Methodology

A listing of all licenced public houses was received from Tobaccoland. This list was the official number of licenced premises in Ireland in 2015. This listing contained a regional stratification, with each outlet being tagged by county.

Behaviour & Attitudes stratified this universe listing by region: Dublin, Rest of Leinster, Munster and Connaught/Ulster. The universe was further stratified by county within each region.

In total 1,525 audits were conducted. The outlets for audit were selected on a random basis in proportion to the regional stratification from the listings received. Behaviour & Attitudes conducted all sampling from this listing in-house. The sample is designed to be representative in terms of a regional stratification of all outlets (licensed public houses) with vending machines in the Republic of Ireland.

Sample Stratification by Region	
Dublin	12%
Rest of Leinster	24%
Munster	36%
Conn./Ulster	27%

Trained Behaviour & Attitudes interviewers were utilised to conduct all 1,525 audits. In terms of each audit, the interviewer was given a randomly selected listing of outlets to audit from B&A head office, and each interviewer attempted to purchase cigarettes from a vending machine within each outlet with cash, (i.e. without having to purchase or acquire a token from a member of staff). The auditor recorded on their survey form whether or not they could purchase tobacco from the vending machine in cash without acquiring a token or a member of staff intervening. In the incidences of being able to actually purchase with cash from a vending machine, the outlet name was recorded and the packet of tobacco purchased was returned to Behaviour & Attitudes tagged to that outlet.

Fieldwork was conducted between 25th November and 16th December 2015.



3. Research Findings

The following were the results of this audit.

- Percentages

	TOTAL	Region			
		Dublin	Rest of Leinster	Munster	Conn./Ulster
Base:	1,525	179	404	531	411
	%	%	%	%	%
Yes Auditor could buy with cash from vending machine in open public space without token	3	3	7	2	1
No the Auditor could not buy with cash, they needed a token	89	89	87	91	88
The cigarette machine was behind the bar/bar sold cigarettes behind the bar	7	7	5	6	10
The barman had to activate the machine before Auditor could purchase the cigarettes with cash	-	1	-	-	1

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Profile of Purchasing

	TOTAL	Could you buy a packet?			
		Yes Auditor could buy with cash from vending machine in open public space without token	No the Auditor could not buy with cash, they needed a token	The cigarette machine was behind the bar/bar sold cigarettes behind the bar	The barman had to activate the machine before Auditor could purchase the cigarettes with cash
Base:	1,525	53	1,357	108	7
	%	%	%	%	%
Dublin	12	12	12	12	15
Rest of Leinster	24	50	24	19	13
Munster	36	26	37	31	15
Conn./Ulster	27	12	27	38	57

- Raw Audit Numbers

Could you buy tobacco?

	TOTAL	Region			
		Dublin	Rest of Leinster	Munster	Conn./Ulster
Base:	1,525	179	404	531	411
	<i>No.</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>No.</i>
Yes Auditor could buy with cash from vending machine in open public space without token	51	3	26	14	6
No the Auditor could not buy with cash, they needed a token	1358	165	322	507	364
The cigarette machine was behind the bar/bar sold cigarettes behind the bar	108	13	20	33	41
The barman had to activate the machine before Auditor could purchase the cigarettes with cash	7	1	1	1	4

Profile of Purchasing

	TOTAL	Could you buy a packet?			
		Yes Auditor could buy with cash from vending machine in open public space without token	No the Auditor could not buy with cash, they needed a token	The cigarette machine was behind the bar/bar sold cigarettes behind the bar	The barman had to activate the machine before Auditor could purchase the cigarettes with cash
Base:	1,525	53	1,357	108	7
	<i>No.</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>No.</i>
Dublin	186	6	165	13	1
Rest of Leinster	369	26	322	20	1
Munster	555	14	507	33	1
Conn./Ulster	416	3	364	41	4

In total 1,357 vending machines (89% of the sample) needed a token (i.e. the auditor could not buy cigarettes without a token). In addition a further 7% of outlets only sold cigarettes behind the bar/the vending machine was behind the bar and in seven other outlets the barman had to activate the vending machine before cigarettes could be purchased by the auditor with cash.

In total 53 outlets (3% of the sample) had vending machines in open public spaces where the auditor could actually buy tobacco in cash without a token. As can be seen from the table, a higher incidence of this occurred in the Rest of Leinster region.