

SECTION B

Read Figure 1 and the following extracts (A and B) before answering Question 6.

Answer ALL Question 6 (a) to 6 (e), and EITHER Question 6 (f) OR Question 6 (g).

You are advised to spend 1 hour and 5 minutes on this section.

Question 6

The market for cigarettes

Figure 1: Price elasticity of demand - a comparison between tobacco and e-cigarettes

Price of packet of 20 tobacco cigarettes £7.70–£9.50	Price of e-cigarette kit £9.99–£19.99
Average price per tobacco cigarette 48p	Single cigarette equivalent price of an e-cigarette 7p
Price elasticity of demand for tobacco cigarettes –0.35	Price elasticity of demand for e-cigarettes –1.9

(Source: adapted from <https://www.blucigs.co.uk/united-kingdom/kits/all-kits>)

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Extract A**Government intervention on tobacco**

There was a time when smoking was fashionable. Television and magazine advertisements glorified smoking. Everyone from your dad to your doctor smoked in all places – cars, restaurants and even hospitals.

Tobacco is still the single biggest cause of cancer in the world and the leading cause of preventable deaths. Nearly 80% of the 1 billion smokers worldwide live in low- and middle-income countries. 5

Bans on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship can reduce tobacco consumption. Comprehensive smoking bans covering indoor workplaces, public places and public transport have been introduced in 48 countries.

Tobacco taxes are the most cost-effective way to reduce tobacco use, especially among the young and people in low-income groups. A tax increase that raises tobacco prices by 10% decreases tobacco consumption by 4% in high-income countries and 5% in low- and middle-income countries. 10

However, some 8 million people are expected to die each year by 2030 – because they have smoked tobacco or have been exposed to passive smoking. The use of alternative products such as electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes) are gaining in popularity but information about their effects is uncertain. Little research has yet been done about the long-term health effects of e-cigarettes and the nicotine dispensed by e-cigarettes is highly addictive. The illegal tobacco market still counts for 1 in every 10 cigarettes consumed globally. In addition, tobacco companies still spend tens of billions of dollars each year on advertising and promoting tobacco products and sponsoring events. They continuously challenge the regulatory measures governments are taking. 15
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(Source: adapted from <http://www.who.int/topics/tobacco/en/> and <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/commentaries/reducing-tobacco-use/en/>)



Extract B**Free market approach**

Are free markets incompatible with good health? If the solution to every problem involves banning advertising, raising prices and restricting availability, you might easily conclude that the free market is the disease and government regulation is the cure. From this perspective, the providers of food, alcohol and tobacco are determined to push the most unhealthy products on the public at the lowest prices.

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Contrary to this viewpoint, the profit motive is not unhealthy. Businesses have an obvious incentive to keep their customers alive and customers have a strong incentive to seek out healthier options. Any company that can make a scientifically sound health claim gains a competitive advantage over its rivals. Health sells. In contrast, government regulation can lead to negative health outcomes. Markets can correct themselves long before government failures are even acknowledged. Over a million Britons, almost all of whom are smokers or ex-smokers, use e-cigarettes, as a less hazardous product than cigarettes and yet e-cigarettes face increased regulations and in many countries they are banned.

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It is neither consistent nor ethical to prevent smokers from switching to much safer alternatives. Efforts to regulate e-cigarettes are a far greater threat to public health than the products themselves.

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We argue that the interests of consumers are nearly always better advanced by the provision of accurate information and free choice than by prohibitions and regulations. The government policy of small but steady tax rises on tobacco and ever-larger warning labels is becoming less effective and leads to unintended consequences.

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(Source: adapted from <http://www.iea.org.uk/blog/free-market-solutions-in-health-should-be-allowed-to-flourish>, Christopher Snowden, 11th July 2013)

