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Illegal cigarette consumption rose by almost a third in Ireland last year

The county that saw the greatest use of illegal cigarettes was Waterford, researchers said.

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ILLEGAL CIGARETTE CONSUMPTION rose in Ireland in 2012, according to new figures.

The latest figures from MS Intelligence show that the level of non Irish duty paid (NIDP) cigarettes in Ireland has risen to 28.2 per cent in 2012, which makes it the second biggest tobacco supplier in the country.

Research

The research was carried out by collecting empty packs from 22 towns and cities across the country. The researchers say their findings indicate a large increase since 2011, when NIDP was measured at 24.5 per cent in Ireland.

A spokesperson for the Irish Tobacco Manufacturers Advisory Committee described Ireland as “a haven for international crime syndicates who can operate here within the illegal tobacco market on the premise it is low risk, with paltry fines, and high reward, with gangs making over €3 million a week in Ireland”.

They claimed:

“Since this has become a major problem the Government has done nothing to try and reverse this NIDP figure, which would see hundreds of millions flow back into the Irish economy and the retail sector.”

Where was the highest incidence of NIDP cigarettes in Ireland measured? In Waterford, which has an average level of 33.3 per cent of cigarettes being purchased from the black market.

But despite the high level in Waterford, there were only three convictions in 2012 related to the illegal tobacco trade.

- The second highest incidence was recorded in Navan, which had an NIDP of 31.7 per cent
- Limerick’s level was 31.4 per cent
- Dublin was fourth highest at 30.2 per cent
- Cork was 29.3 per cent
- Letterkenny was 29.5 per cent
- Bray was 30.2 per cent

“There is no great surprise in these figures,” said the spokesperson. We felt that given the large increase that was put on legitimate cigarettes in December 2011, there would be an



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upsurge in the illegal market and that is exactly what has happened.”


“ The shocking reality is that one third of tobacco consumed in Ireland in 2012 completely avoided excise and VAT.

They added that they believed new EU rules on tobacco will push this figure even higher. According to ITMAC, 84 per cent of consumers say they will purchase tobacco products from alternative sources if they become unavailable through legitimate Irish retailers.

“ This will increase black market sales and decrease legitimate Irish business, simple as that.


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