

# Labour HEALTH spokesman Anas Sarwar under fire as family firm promotes benefits of smokers to clients

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**N** [thenational.scot/news/15554952.Labour\\_HEALTH\\_spokesman\\_Anas\\_Sarwar\\_told\\_to\\_come\\_clean\\_over\\_tobacco\\_cash\\_as\\_family\\_firm\\_tells\\_clients\\_to\\_remember\\_smokers\\_can\\_be\\_worth\\_2000\\_a\\_year/](https://thenational.scot/news/15554952.Labour_HEALTH_spokesman_Anas_Sarwar_told_to_come_clean_over_tobacco_cash_as_family_firm_tells_clients_to_remember_smokers_can_be_worth_2000_a_year/)



ANAS Sarwar, who says the [NHS](#) is a priority, has been told to come clean over how much money he's made from the sale of tobacco products.

His family firm, United Wholesale ([Scotland](#)) supply cigarettes and tobacco to hundreds of shops.

In their latest list of offers to retailers, UWS recommend shopkeepers keep prices of tobacco low, as smokers "can be worth over £2000 a year" to stores.

It goes on to say that while shop owners "are of course at all times free to sell tobacco products at whatever price [they] choose," keeping the mark-up low can lead to smokers spending more when they come in for cigarettes. Smokers, UWS says, will spend on average £11.30 when visiting a store — £8.60 on tobacco and £2.70 "additional spend".

In May, the company ran a competition for shops, offering them a chance to win two return flight tickets to anywhere in the world if they spent £1000 on any tobacco product.

The firm are also key members of the Scottish Wholesale Association, who took money from British American Tobacco to campaign against plain packaging of cigarettes.

Earlier this week, Sarwar tweeted: “For [Sturgeon](#) the three most important letters to her are S,N,P. But for me, the three most important letters will always be N,H,S.”

Smoking is the primary preventable cause of ill-health and premature death in Scotland, costing the NHS more than £300m every year. The latest official figures shows that tobacco kills around 10,000 Scots, and is linked to 128,000 hospital admissions annually.

Sarwar’s record in parliament has previously been strongly anti-smoking, and as an MP he voted in favour of plain packaging for cigarettes.

But yesterday, the [SNP](#) said the [MSP](#) needed to come clean.

“Anas Sarwar is Labour’s Health spokesperson and he needs to urgently make clear whether he has benefited financially — either directly or indirectly — from the aggressive promotion of tobacco,” an SNP spokeswoman said.

A spokesman for Anas Sarwar said: “This is utterly pathetic from the SNP. You have to question why the SNP is so obsessed about Anas Sarwar. If only the party would devote as much time to closing the education attainment gap, tackling the NHS crisis, or lifting children out of poverty.”

Sarwar has been under siege recently, forced to defend decisions over wages, and union recognition made by UWS, the firm, set up by his father Mohammed, and run by his brother, Asim.

Sarwar owned 23 per cent of the total issued share capital shares in UWS, with reports suggesting this minority shareholding had a value of around £4.8m.

Over the weekend, he announced that he had completely divested from the business.

In a “fact-check” page added to his website yesterday, the [Glasgow](#) MSP’s campaign team blamed the “the SNP — aided and abetted by its friends in the media” for the “politicised attacks on Anas Sarwar”.

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The website says Sarwar, has “relinquished all his shares” putting them in a “discretionary trust deed that means he can never access the assets”.

The MSP, it goes on to say, “will be unable to access the assets or take any remuneration for his lifetime, demonstrating his unswerving commitment to public service,” and that the “beneficiaries of the trust will be Mr Sarwar’s three children, who will not access the assets until they are adults.”

The MSP’s campaign team also released his most recent tax return, which revealed he received a dividend from the shares of around £20,000-a-year, and in 2015, that he received a one-off consultancy fee from UWS of £5000 in 2015 to “assist in identifying and distributing charitable donations to international aid organisations and local charities and community groups – including the Ucare Foundation and Second Chance Project.”

The Ucare Foundation, formerly known as the Pakistan International Foundation, was founded by Anas’s father.

Unfortunately for the campaign team when they released the tax return they inadvertently released all of Sarwar’s private details too, including his address, sort code, account number and tax code number.

One member of Team Sarwar told the BBC that winning now would be “tough but not impossible”.

Sarwar is up against little known left winger Richard Leonard in the leadership battle.