



YouGov 2017 – Attitudes towards tobacco control in Wales

To determine public opinion in Wales relating to tobacco control ASH Wales Cymru conducts an annual opinion poll in conjunction with YouGov. The 2017 survey was undertaken between 16th February and 19th March 2017. The survey questions were asked of a representative sample of 1,120 adults (aged 18+) in Wales. 52% of respondents had never smoked, 34% used to smoke but have since given up and 14% currently smoked at the time of the survey. The survey was conducted online.

Smokefree spaces

83% of all respondents surveyed support the law making all enclosed public places and workplaces smokefree, including 55% of the smokers surveyed. In addition, there appears support for extending the current scope of the smoking ban to include additional places. For instance, 71% of respondents to the survey agree that smoking should be banned in hospital grounds, 61% agree with banning smoking in communal recreational spaces, such as parks and beaches, whilst 83% of respondents agree that smoking should be banned in outdoor children's play areas, including over half (56%) of all the smokers surveyed.

Tobacco control legislation

When asked about the government's activities to limit smoking 42% of respondents felt they were not doing enough, with 11% of the opinion that they were doing too much.

A proposed measure to reduce the prevalence of smoking is to require businesses to have a licence before they can sell tobacco. 79% of respondents to the survey are in support of this measure, including 51% of smokers. Other measures that have been proposed to reduce smoking include raising the tax on cigarettes and introducing standardised cigarette packaging. In the case of the former, 65% of all respondents (24% of smokers) support increasing tax on cigarettes and tobacco by 5% above the annual rate of inflation, whilst 65% (33% of smokers) support the law requiring tobacco to be sold in plain standardised packaging with the product name in standard lettering.

When asked about their support for raising the age of sale for tobacco from 18 to 21, 58% of respondents support this measure (33% of smokers), whilst 75% of respondents (46% of smokers) agree that penalties for people who sell illegal tobacco should be higher to deter

sales, with 91% (87% smokers) indicating they would support a measure that increased penalties for selling tobacco to children.

With regards to smoking in the media, 66% of respondents (41% of smokers) agree that smoking should not be included in entertainment media aimed at young people, such as films for under 18s or music videos. 44% of respondents (20% of smokers) support a measure requiring that all films that include images of smoking should be accompanied with a short anti-smoking ad before the film.

Attitudes towards smoking

63% of respondents to the survey view smoking tobacco cigarettes as common, with 13% viewing this activity as uncommon.

When asked whether in their opinion people in general approve or disapprove of people smoking tobacco cigarettes 72% of respondents answered disapprove, with this being the opinion of 56% of the smokers surveyed. Interestingly e-cigarettes and vaping devices are considered far more acceptable, with just 40% of respondents (26% of smokers) forming the opinion that people in general disapprove of people using e-cigarettes or vaping devices.

Electronic cigarettes

As many as 97% of respondents had heard of electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes), with 16% having tried them at least once. Interestingly, the proportion of respondents who reported use of e-cigarettes was much higher among smokers (63%) than non-smokers (8%). 6% of respondents (23% of smokers) reported currently using e-cigarettes.

Among respondents who had tried e-cigarettes (n = 162) 37% report doing so to stop smoking tobacco entirely, and 17% to reduce the amount of tobacco they smoke. 20% of respondents who had tried e-cigarettes did so because they had made an attempt to quit smoking already and required an aid to help them keep off tobacco, whilst 35% merely used e-cigarettes just to give them a try.

Views were sought on whether e-cigarettes were more, less or as harmful as regular cigarettes. 47% of respondents who had heard of e-cigarettes believe them to be less/not harmful with just 2% considering them to be more harmful than tobacco cigarettes. Worryingly as many as 23% of respondents think e-cigarettes are just as harmful as tobacco cigarettes.

Of those respondents who have smoked and tried e-cigarettes (n = 155) 65% consider them to be either less or a lot less satisfying than ordinary tobacco cigarettes.

61% of respondents to the survey support extending the law banning smoking in enclosed public places and workplaces to cover the use of e-cigarettes. This was the case for 66% of non-smokers and 30% of smokers.

Heat not burn tobacco products

Knowledge and use of heat not burn tobacco products among respondents of the survey was low, with just 7% having heard of them and only 2% having tried them.

Of those respondents who had heard of heat not burn tobacco products (n = 76) 8% consider them to be more harmful than regular cigarettes, with 33% believing they are less harmful and 25% of the opinion they are just as harmful as regular cigarettes.

Comparison with previous surveys

YouGov questions	2017		2016		2015	
	All	Smokers	All	Smokers	All	Smokers
Support for the law making all enclosed public places and workplaces smokefree	83%	55%			81%	50%
Agree smoking should be banned in hospital grounds	71%	27%				
Agree smoking should be banned in communal recreational spaces, such as parks and beaches	61%	15%	62%	16%	54%	5%
Agree smoking should be banned in outdoor children's play areas	83%	56%	82%	58%		
Think the Government are doing too much to limit smoking	11%	42%	13%	43%	16%	50%
Think the Government are not doing enough to limit smoking	42%	9%	40%	10%	39%	12%
Support requiring businesses to have a licence before they can sell tobacco	79%	51%	84%	70%	83%	69%
Support increasing tax on cigarettes and tobacco by 5% above the annual rate of inflation	65%	24%	59%	10%		
Support the law requiring tobacco to be sold in plain standardised packaging with the product name in standard lettering	65%	33%	65%	36%	65%	33%
Support for raising the age of sale for tobacco from 18 to 21	58%	33%	58%	42%		
Agree that penalties for people who sell illegal tobacco should be higher to deter sales	75%	46%				
Support increasing penalties for selling tobacco to children	91%	87%				
Agree that smoking should not be included in entertainment media aimed at young people, such as films for under 18s or music videos	66%	41%				
Support requiring all films that include images of smoking should be accompanied by a short anti-smoking ad before the film	44%	20%			38%	17%
View smoking tobacco as common	63%	60%	67%	57%		
View smoking tobacco as uncommon	13%	11%	11%	12%		
Consider people in general approve of people smoking tobacco cigarettes	4%	10%	4%	11%		
Consider people in general disapprove of people smoking tobacco cigarettes	72%	56%	74%	60%		
Consider people in general approve of people using electronic cigarettes or vaping devices	11%	15%	12%	21%		
Consider people in general disapprove of people using electronic cigarettes or vaping devices	40%	26%	33%	21%		
Heard of e-cigarettes	97%	99%	95%	98%	95%	98%

YouGov questions	2017		2016		2015	
	All	Smokers	All	Smokers	All	Smokers
Tried e-cigarettes at least once	16%	63%	17%	68%	17%	61%
Current e-cigarette user	6%	23%	5%	16%	7%	21%
Tried e-cigarettes to stop smoking tobacco entirely	37%	29%	39%	36%	38%	29%
Tried e-cigarettes to reduce the amount of tobacco they smoke	17%	28%	11%	18%	20%	25%
Tried e-cigarettes because they had made an attempt to quit smoking already and wanted an aid to help keep off tobacco	20%	24%	29%	28%	32%	34%
Tried e-cigarettes just to give them a try	35%	30%	37%	34%	29%	29%
Believe e-cigarettes to be just as harmful as tobacco cigarettes	23%	12%	23%	16%	20%	12%
Consider e-cigarettes to be either less or a lot less satisfying than ordinary tobacco cigarettes	65%	73%	64%	75%		
Support extending the law banning smoking in enclosed public places and workplaces to cover the use of e-cigarettes	61%	30%	52%	32%	52%	28%
Heard of heat not burn tobacco	7%	4%				
Tried heat not burn tobacco	2%	2%				
Consider heat not burn tobacco products to be just as harmful as regular cigarettes	25%	30%				