A woman in the foreground is out of focus, holding a lit cigarette. In the background, a man with curly hair and a beard, wearing a dark turtleneck sweater, stands by a window, also smoking a cigarette. The scene is lit with natural light from the window.

YouGov Survey 2023

ash wales
cymru

action on smoking and health

YouGov Survey 2023

To understand public opinion in Wales relating to tobacco control, ASH Wales Cymru conducts an annual opinion poll, carried out by YouGov ¹.

The 2023 survey was undertaken between 22nd February and 15th March 2023. The survey questions were asked of a representative sample of 1,117 adults (aged 18+) in Wales and was conducted online.

ASH Wales Cymru is recognised as the leading organisation for tobacco control in Wales. Our work brings together experts in population health, behavioural studies, and smoking cessation to secure support for ambitious tobacco control plans for Wales.

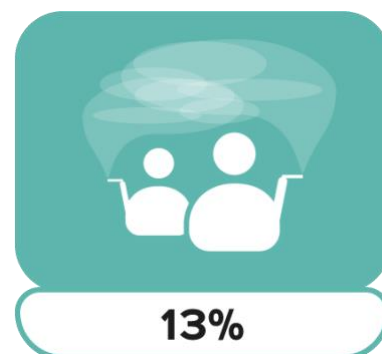
Summary of Findings

Behaviours and Attitudes

Smoking Prevalence:

- **13%** were current smokers
- **36%** were ex-smokers
- **51%** had never smoked
- Only **8%** of homeowners currently smoke compared to **21%** of private renters, rising to **28%** amongst those who live in social housing ²
- **8%** of those living in the highest social grade (AB) smoke, compared to **17%** of those in the lowest social grade (DE)

- **Smokers:**
- **59%** said they want to quit smoking
- Only **6%** said they never wanted to quit
- **51%** of Welsh adult smokers smoke, on average, 10 or less cigarettes (both ready-made and hand-rolled) each day
- **Only 14%** of Welsh adult smokers smoke, on average, 21 or more cigarettes (both ready-made and hand-rolled) each day

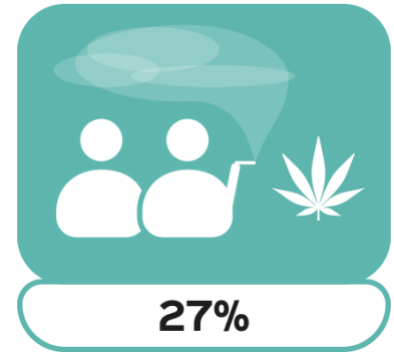


¹ This survey is part of a wider Smokefree GB survey, commissioned by ASH (UK). ASH Wales Cymru commissions the Welsh dataset.

² Social housing refers to respondents who rent from local authority/a housing association.

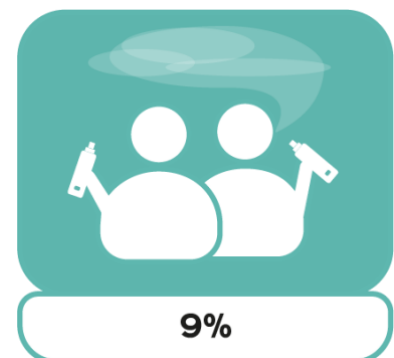
Smoking and cannabis use:

- **27%** of Welsh adults said they had ever used cannabis, rising to **37%** of 18-24 year olds, and **39%** of 35-44 year olds
- **8%** of Welsh adults had used cannabis in the last 12 months, with **3%** saying they use it daily
- **63%** of adults who have smoked cannabis in the last 12 months, smoked it with tobacco (in a joint or spliff) or in a blunt (cigar)
- **12%** vaped it in liquid form through an e-cigarette or other vaping device



E-cigarettes:

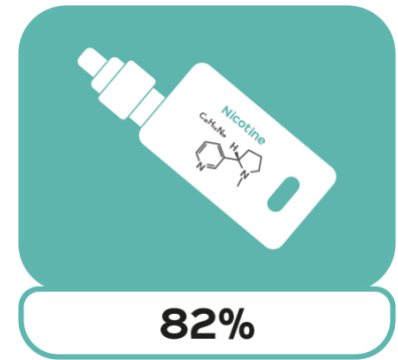
- **94%** of Welsh adults have heard of e-cigarettes
- **25%** of all Welsh adults have tried e-cigarettes
 - **74%** of current smokers have tried an e-cigarette
- **9%** of respondents said they currently use an e-cigarette
 - Only **1%** of never smokers are current e-cigarette users
- **57%** of current e-cigarette user say the main reason is to help them quit or reduce their tobacco consumption
- **78%** of people who vape, or used to vape, only use one main device
- **65%** of adults who have tried and still use e-cigarettes most often use rechargeable e-cigarettes, with a refillable tank or reservoir
 - **25%** of adults who have tried and still use e-cigarettes most often use disposable vapes
 - **21%** of those who use or have used one device, used their device of choice, because it's more convenient
- **46%** of current vapers buy e-cigarettes in-person from a shop
- **44%** of all adults in Wales who currently vape buy from the internet ³.
- **17%** use or have used e-cigarettes for more than 5 years, and up to 10 years ⁴



³ This excludes those who have only used an e-cigarette once or twice.

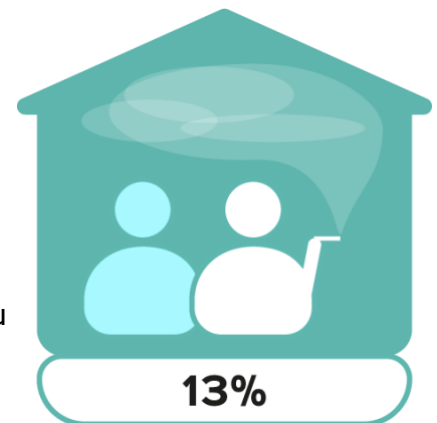
⁴ This excludes those who have only used an e-cigarette once or twice.

- **82%** of current or ex-vapers use/used e-cigarettes that contain nicotine in the device that they use most often.
- **45%** of vapers said that the e-cigarette they currently use most often contains 'fruit' flavoured liquid
- **16%** of vapers said that the e-cigarette they currently use most often contains 'tobacco' flavoured liquid
- **51%** of smokers in Wales, who don't currently use e-cigarettes, would be interested in trying e-cigarettes if they were given free by a health professional (e.g. GP, nurse, pharmacist)



Exposure to second-hand smoke:

- **70%** of respondents said that smoking was not allowed at any time in the vehicle they travel in most often
- **13%** of all Welsh adults surveyed said that someone smokes most days in the home they live in, rising to **29%** of those who reside in social housing ⁵
- When asked if their tenancy agreement includes a rule that you must not smoke in your home, **42%** of private renters said yes, compared to just **13%** of those who reside in social housing ⁶



Attitudes towards smoking:

- **49%** of respondents viewed smoking tobacco cigarettes as common, a decrease from **67%** in 2016
- **55%** of 18-24 year-olds viewed smoking as common
- When respondents were asked whether people in general approved or disapproved of smoking, **65%** said they thought they disapproved, and **7%** thought they approved



Attitudes towards e-cigarettes and vaping:

- **72%** of adults viewed the use of e-cigarettes or vaping devices as common
- **76%** of 18-24 year olds viewed the use of e-cigarettes as common
- When respondents were asked whether people in general approved or disapproved of people using electronic cigarettes, **43%** said they thought they disapproved, and **13%** thought they approved

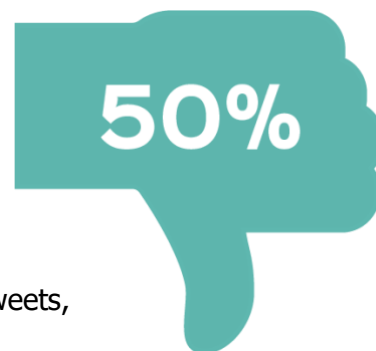
⁵ Social housing refers to respondents who rent from local authority/a housing association.

⁶ Ibid.

Policies and Actions

Support for Welsh Government action:

- **50%** of those surveyed think Welsh Government is not doing enough to limit smoking, up from 43% in 2022. In 2023, **one in five smokers** (20%) also feel not enough is being done
- Only **8%** of all those surveyed believe Welsh Government is doing too much, compared to 13% in 2016
- **76%** of adults in Wales support a ban on using the names of sweets, cartoons and bright colours on e-cigarettes
- **75%** support a ban on advertising and promotion of e- cigarettes at point of sale
- The majority (**69%**) would support the setting of a target date, to reduce smoking in Wales to less than 5% of the population by 2030. **48%** of people surveyed 'strongly' support this action, only **12%** oppose this
- **69%** of people support Welsh Government's target to end smoking by 2030
- The majority (**68%**) are in favour of increasing government investment in public education campaigns on smoking, aimed at adults and children, with only **8%** opposing this action



Support for UK Government action:

- More than three quarters of respondents (**77%**) support a measure to require tobacco manufacturers to pay a levy to Government for measures to help smokers quit and prevent young people from smoking
- Two thirds, **67%**, support the requirement of including inserts with Government information about quitting on cigarette packs
- **67%** are in favour of requiring tobacco companies to print health warnings on cigarette sticks to encourage smokers to quit. 10% oppose this action
- **63%** support raising the age of sale for tobacco from 18 to 21. Only **15%** oppose this move
- **59%** support a tax rise to increase the price of tobacco products to 5% above the rate of inflation each year. **20%** oppose this action



Support for regulation:

- **90%** of Welsh adults believe that organisations submitting evidence to government and parliamentary committees should be required to declare who they get their funding from
- **85%** support requiring businesses to have a valid licence to sell tobacco, which can be removed if they sell to underage smokers more than once. Only **4%** oppose this
- The vast majority of respondents (**85%**) support the banning of cigarette butts that contain plastic to protect the environment
- **75%** support banning advertising and the promotion of e-cigarettes at point of sale (at the till, in store and as people enter shops)
- **74%** believe that all government health policy should be protected from the influence of the tobacco industry and its representatives
- The majority of adults (**74%**) support a ban on advertising smoking material and accessories (for example brands of rolling papers)
- **66%** of all Welsh adults surveyed believe penalties for people who sell illegal tobacco should be higher to deter sales

Additional Smoke-free Spaces:

- **76%** would support banning smoking in sports grounds and stadiums
- **68%** would support banning smoking in further education colleges
- **65%** would support a ban on smoking in all cars
- **63%** would support banning smoking on university and college campuses
- **61%** would support banning smoking in outdoor eating areas of all restaurants, pubs and cafes
- **59%** would support banning smoking on beaches
- **58%** would support banning smoking in parks



75%



76%



59%

Support for the following measures. Banning smoking in...	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Children's play areas	-	89%	-	-	-
Outdoor areas where children play sport	-	80%	81%	82%	-
All cars	65%	64%	67%	67%	63%
Outdoor seating areas of all restaurants, pubs and cafes	61%	62%	67%	-	63%
University and college campuses	63%	59%	64%	-	-
Beaches	59%	58%	64%	-	-
Parks	58%	59%	62%	-	-
Town centres	-	54%	62%	-	59%
Sports grounds and stadiums	76%				

Cessation and Prevention:

- The majority, **68%**, of adults (and **47%** of smokers) are in favour of increasing government investment in public education campaigns on smoking aimed at adults and children. Only **8%** of adults oppose this move
- **67%** of adults were in favour of a requirement for cigarette packs to include inserts with government information about quitting
- **48%** of Welsh adults surveyed supported the rollout of the NICE guidance for the NHS, recommending financial incentives for pregnant women to encourage them to stop smoking

Analysis of findings

Behaviours and Attitudes

Smoking prevalence:

13% of all Welsh adults surveyed said they were current smokers. This figure has remained relatively unchanged since 2017, when **14%** of all adults surveyed said they were current smokers.

Inequalities are evident when comparing smoking prevalence of those living in different areas of deprivation. Those in the lowest social grade (DE) are twice as likely to smoke as those in the highest social grade (AB). (**17% vs 8%**)

Since 2018, the housing tenure of respondents has been included in the survey. Smoking prevalence among respondents that live in social housing has been consistently higher than those who own their own homes or who are private renters.

In 2023, **28%** of social housing tenants said they were current smokers

Among those who privately rent, **21%** report that they currently smoke, compared to **8%** of homeowners.

Smokers:

The percentage of people who are smoking tobacco in Wales remains stable.

59% said they would like to give up smoking at some point. Only **6%** said that they never wanted to quit.

Smoking and Cannabis use:

The prevalence of daily cannabis use remains low at **3%**, and is unchanged from 2022.

63% of adults who have smoked cannabis in the last 12 months, say they smoked it with tobacco (in a joint or spliff) or in a blunt (cigar)

12% said they vaped it in liquid form through an e-cigarette or other vaping device.

Both figures show no change from 2022.

E-cigarettes:

Almost everyone surveyed in Wales (**94%**) had heard of e-cigarettes and a quarter of people (**25%**) had tried them, up from **15%** in 2018.

However, those who report as currently using e-cigarettes has only risen slightly to **9%** in 2023, consistent with **8%** in 2022.

E-cigarettes remain a significant and popular smoking cessation tool, with **57%** of current e-cigarette user say the main reason is to help them quit or reduce their tobacco consumption

82% of current or ex- vapers use/used e-cigarettes that contain nicotine in the device that they use most often.

And among current smokers in Wales, **51%** of them who don't currently use e-cigarettes, would be interested in trying e-cigarettes if they were given free by a health professional (e.g. GP, nurse, pharmacist)

46% of adults in Wales who currently vape, buy their e-cigarettes face-to-face from a shop and **44%** buy from the internet ⁷.

The gap between vaping prevalence and the public's perception of prevalence is interesting.

In 2023, **72%** of adults viewed the use of e-cigarettes as common, consistent with **76%** of 18-24 year olds. Actual vaping prevalence in Wales stands at **9%** in 2023.

Worryingly, there is also a sizeable proportion of adults in Wales who believe that e-cigarettes are just as harmful, or more harmful than tobacco cigarettes. The percentage

⁷ This excludes those who have only used an e-cigarette once or twice.

who feel this way has grown from **25%** in 2017 to **46%** in 2023. This is consistent among smokers, with **47%** who fell this way, again a significant increase from **14%** of smokers in 2017.

Exposure to second-hand smoke:

When asked about smoking in the car that they travel in most days, the vast majority of respondents (**70%**) said that smoking was not allowed at any time.

13% of Welsh adults surveyed said that someone smokes most days in the home they live in, rising to **29%** of those who reside in social housing ⁸

Responses from people who rent their homes are showing signs that tenancy clauses involving smoking are becoming more prominent. **42%** of people living in private rentals saying their tenancy agreement includes a rule that you must not smoke in your home, compared to just **13%** of those who live in social housing ⁹ In 2022, these figures were 40% and 9% respectively.

Attitudes towards smoking:

The number of Welsh adults who view smoking as 'common' remained stable at **49%**.

However, in 2023,, **55%** of 18-24 year olds still viewed smoking as common.

In the 2023 survey, the majority of adults (**65%**) think people in general disapprove of smoking, with only 7 % thinking people approve.

Almost 6 in 10 of current smokers (**59%**) said they'd like to give up smoking at some point. Only **6%** said they never wanted to quit.

Policies and Actions

Support for Welsh Government action:

50% of those surveyed think Welsh Government is not doing enough to limit smoking, a significant rise from **39%** in 2018.

Only **8%** of all those surveyed believe the Government is doing too much.

69% of people support Welsh Government's target to end smoking by 2030, consistent with **72%** of 18-24 year olds.

The majority (**68%**) are in favour of increasing government investment in public education campaigns on smoking aimed at adults and children, with only **8%** opposing this action.

⁸ Social housing refers to respondents who rent from local authority/a housing association.

⁹ Ibid.

Support for UK Government action:

One of the most popular UK policies would be the introduction of a tobacco levy, with **77%** of Welsh adults surveyed in favour of making tobacco manufacturers pay a levy to government for services to help smokers quit and to prevent young people from taking up smoking. More than half of smokers, **53%**, also supported this in 2023.

Support for raising the age of sale for tobacco appears to be growing among both the general population and smokers.

Over 6 in ten adults (**63%**) support measures to raise the age of sale of tobacco from 18 to 21. This is an increase from **58%** in 2016.

These measures are also backed by **47%** of smokers in 2023, compared to **31%** of smokers in 2019.

Support for regulation:

There remains clear majority support for robust tobacco regulation, which includes monitoring of tobacco sale licensing, tobacco products advertising bans and scrutiny of tobacco companies' lobbying work in health policy.

The vast majority of those surveyed (**85%**) are in favour of a requirement for businesses to have a valid licence to sell tobacco, which can be removed if they sell to underage smokers more than once. Only **4%** of adults oppose this.

It should be noted that the percentage of smokers who support licensing in 2023 is **72%**.

There is also majority interest in using cigarettes and packaging to promote health advice to smokers. **67%** of adults were in favour of a requirement for cigarette packs to include inserts with government information about quitting. In addition, **67%** of adults were in favour of health warnings printed on cigarette sticks to encourage smokers to quit, consistent with **65%** in 2022.

Almost three quarters of adults surveyed, **74%**, support a ban on advertising smoking material and accessories (e.g. rolling papers)

There is also a steadily increasing level of public interest in the lobbying power of tobacco companies, with **74%** supporting the idea that all government health policy should be protected from the influence of the tobacco industry and its representatives – consistent with **71%** in 2022.

In environmental concerns, **85%** of respondents support the banning of cigarette butts that contain plastic.

Additional Smoke free spaces:

There is majority support for additional smokefree spaces, with spaces centred on learning and sport showing highest support.

Three quarters of Welsh adults (**76%**) would support banning smoking in sports grounds and stadiums - showing the highest support in the 2023 survey out of all spaces.

68% would support banning smoking in in further education colleges.

65% would support a ban on smoking in all cars. Support was at **61%** in 2016.

63% would support banning smoking on university and college campuses, consistent with **59%** in 2022.

61% would support banning smoking in outdoor eating areas of all restaurants, pubs and cafes.

In addition, **58%** would support banning smoking in parks.

59% would support banning smoking on beaches.

Cessation and Prevention:

There is majority support from Welsh adults for measures to help and encourage smokers to quit, with **68%** of adults and **47%** of smokers in favour of increasing government investment in public education campaigns on smoking aimed at adults and children. Only **8%** of adults oppose this move.

NICE guidance for the NHS, recommending financial incentives to pregnant women to encourage them to stop smoking, sees **48%** of Welsh adults in favour of this action. This is consistent with **46%** of adults in support in 2022.