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Impact Report 2015-16

Action on Smoking and Health (ASH) Wales Cymru is a registered charity (1120834)



ash wales
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action on smoking and health

Working towards a smokefree Wales

Smoking is still the single biggest **preventable** cause of ill health and death. It is the **biggest driver** of **health inequalities** in Wales.

We are the only voluntary organisation in Wales solely dedicated to tackling the harm and inequality caused by tobacco. Set up in 2007, we are an independent body working in partnerships with other leading health bodies and our sister organisations across the UK.

We're dedicated to working for strong tobacco control policy in Wales. We raise awareness of the health, social and economic effects of smoking by engaging with communities, young people and partners across Wales. We work on projects and campaigns in order to achieve a reduction in, and eventual elimination of, the health problems associated with smoking and tobacco use.

Everything we do is aimed at tackling the harm and inequality caused by tobacco.



Contents

- 03 Message from the Chair and Chief Executive
- 05 Creating a smokefree Wales
- 09 Our online community, Smokefree Me
- 11 Research and Policy
- 16 Our work with young people
- 21 How we raised money and how it made a difference
- 22 Our plans for the future



Message from the Chair and Chief Executive

Developing strong tobacco control policies is fundamental to achieving a healthier, more equal Wales. Our aim is for Wales to become a smokefree nation. This year we are proud to say that ASH Wales Cymru has been at the forefront of policy change which we know will protect the lives of generations to come and help build a healthier nation.

Our achievements include a ban on smoking in cars with children, the introduction of standardised packaging, smokefree prisons, and a voluntary smoking ban on some of Wales' most beautiful beaches and school gates. These policies will protect others from the effects of second-hand smoke and ensure our young people see less tobacco in the world around them.



Our organisation is widely recognised as a definitive source of information on tobacco control by a range of audiences, including Assembly Members, Welsh Government, local authorities, health organisations, the media and partners in public health and tobacco control.

We have led the way on tobacco control and provided robust evidenced-based guidance on strategic public health issues such as e-cigarettes, illegal tobacco and tobacco use amongst young people.

**SMOKING RATES ACROSS WALES
DOWN 1% TO 19%**

**SMOKING RATES IN 'MOST DEPRIVED' AREAS
STATIC AT 29%**

**SMOKING RATES IN 'LEAST DEPRIVED' AREAS
DOWN 2% TO JUST 11%**

There is still so much to do. Rates of smoking have declined in Wales in recent years, but the rate of decline has stagnated in more disadvantaged groups. Health inequalities are widening and we know smoking is the single biggest cause of these inequalities.

To tackle these inequalities we are:

- Committed to providing support to those most at risk from the harm caused by tobacco. This year our team have made every effort to reach out and develop innovative ways of providing disadvantaged, vulnerable groups with opportunities to make life-saving lifestyle changes.
- Delivering stop smoking support to disadvantaged, disengaged young people and provided workshops to schools, colleges and youth provisions. We have trained youth workers, teachers and other

professionals on delivering prevention and cessation sessions.

- Sharing our model of engagement and delivery with European partners in Austria, Romania, Poland and Spain. ASH Wales was the first youth project in Wales to win European funding through the Erasmus+ programme. Through this programme we will work with our partners to develop a transnational approach to teaching young people about the dangers of tobacco use.
- Developing effective communications that resonate with smokers and the families of those who smoke. We have produced engaging social media campaigns and launched a new online support forum, offering incentives to those who want to quit.

There have also been significant staff changes as we said goodbye to Elen De Lacy, who steered the charity through a period of significant change and we welcomed Suzanne Cass as the new Chief Executive. All of ASH Wales would like to thank Elen for all of her hard work and dedication and I look forward to the next stage in the journey of this dynamic charity.

As we look forward we are ever more determined to drive policy and social change that will pave the way for a healthier, more equal, nation. We believe Wales can lead the way in robust tobacco control policies. We are committed to working with more partners and key stakeholders to ensure tackling the causes of health inequalities in Wales remains at the forefront of everyone's agenda.

Thank you to our staff, Trustees, supporters and funders, who have enabled us to direct policy change, inform the debate on smoking related issues and offer help and support to disadvantaged groups across Wales.

John Griffiths
Chairman

Suzanne Cass
Chief Executive



Creating a smokefree Wales

Many of our proudest achievements have come as a result of our campaign work where we have been able to persuade key decision makers to introduce measures that directly improve the health and well-being of all children and young people in Wales. We have produced signage, toolkits and policies designed to support the campaigns. ASH Wales designed signage can now be seen at beaches, school gates and playgrounds across Wales.

Smokefree Spaces

Every year our campaign for Smokefree Spaces gathers pace and strength. This year we have seen Smokefree School Gates and Smokefree Beaches being embraced by local authorities across Wales and the final sign-up to our campaign for Smokefree Playgrounds.



A man in a dark suit, white shirt, and green striped tie is looking upwards and to the right. He is holding a white sign with red text that reads "NO SMOKING DIM Y SMYGU". The sign also features a small illustration of a playground and some text in Welsh. In the top left corner, there is a dark grey circle containing white text.

ALL 22 LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN WALES NOW HAVE SMOKEFREE PLAYGROUNDS

Smokefree Playgrounds

November 2015 saw the two remaining local authorities, Powys and Merthyr, implement smokefree playgrounds. This campaign has been an enormous success, after starting in 2013 with just one local authority it has snowballed into all 22 local authorities now having smokefree playgrounds.

Smokefree playgrounds not only protect young people from second-hand smoke, but also many councils have seen a significant decrease in cigarette litter. Future plans will see councils assessing the impact and refreshing signage.

Smokefree School Gates

In June 2015, Wrexham joined Gwynedd and the Isle of Anglesey by launching a Smokefree School Gates programme for primary schools. Around 60 primary schools in Wrexham joined the voluntary ban.

This was shortly followed by Pembrokeshire and Ceredigion who also developed and launched a smokefree school. With a planned campaign for the end of 2016, Smokefree school gates is on track to grow throughout next year.



Smokefree Beaches

In April 2015, we developed our campaign for Smokefree Beaches by producing and releasing a toolkit and template signage for communities and councils. We shared examples from across the world and liaised with local authorities across Wales to monitor the impact of the campaign.

The spring of 2016 saw the first of Wales's beautiful beaches go smokefree. Pembrokeshire Council became the first to launch a smokefree beach in the popular seaside resort of Little Haven. They were quickly followed by Swansea Council who proudly launched blue flag beach, Caswell Bay, as smokefree. Both councils are planning to extend the number of beaches involved.

Smokefree Cars

This year ASH Wales supported the implementation of the ban on smoking in vehicles carrying children which became law in Wales on 1st October 2015. We produced a series of videos, commissioned by Welsh Government, of primary school children showing what they think about smoking in cars.



 WATCHED ALMOST **27,500 TIMES**
BY OVER **3,000 PEOPLE**

Smokefree Prisons

This year Wales led the way as three Welsh prisons became the first in the UK to become smokefree. All prisons in Wales will be smokefree by April 2017 which allows for the gradual implementation of the policy. The main aim is to protect staff and prisoners from the harmful effects of second hand smoke.

**ALL WELSH PRISONS COMPLETELY
SMOKEFREE BY APRIL 2017**



PRISONERS OFFERED **NRT** 
AND **E-CIGARETTES** 
TO HELP THEM BE SMOKEFREE

OUR CESSATION ADVISERS ARE HELPING PRISONERS TO QUIT SMOKING

Illegal tobacco

The illegal tobacco market makes up 15% of all tobacco sales in Wales - the highest in the UK. These cheap products make it easier for children to start smoking, as they are sold at pocket money prices by criminals who don't care about age-restriction laws.

We are the leading campaigners in Wales tackling illegal tobacco and in March 2016 we staged a pilot roadshow in Cardiff city centre to find out what the public knew about the problem. We gathered intelligence on who was selling illegal tobacco and gave people information on how to report illegal activity.



IN JUST ONE DAY

- National coverage on the BBC News about Illegal Tobacco
- Gathered 35 intelligence reports for Trading Standards.
- Surveyed 145 people about their experiences with illegal tobacco:



87% AGREED IT SHOULD BE KEPT OUT OF THEIR LOCAL COMMUNITY



28% HAD CONTACT WITH ILLEGAL TOBACCO IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS



93% WERE AWARE OF ILLEGAL TOBACCO

Our online community

**70% OF WELSH
SMOKERS
WANT TO QUIT**



Smokefree Me
Fi di-fwg

We know that 70% of all smokers want to quit, but finding information and getting the right advice can be a crucial part of that stop smoking journey. To support would-be quitters we created “Smokefree Me”, an online advice community hub with a Facebook page, top tips, and an online chat facility with our trained advisers. Through Smokefree Me we offer advice, support and the latest information as well as directing would-be quitters to Stop Smoking Wales and other support networks.

400 FACEBOOK LIKES AND **500 WEBSITE VISITORS** IN JUST 3 MONTHS



1ST COMPETITION HAD **30 ENTRIES AND 18 PLEDGES** TO BE PART OF QUIT TO GET FIT



OVER 1,400 PEOPLE CLICKED ON OUR SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT TO FIND OUT MORE



QUIT TO GET FIT

Our first online competition was launched in January 2016 with the aim of encouraging smokers, ex-smokers and families to set a fitness goal.

We tied it in with creating New Year's Resolutions as keeping fit and active is a great distraction from cigarette cravings.

Throughout the Six Nations we ran a competition for people to set their goals with us. The prizes, stadium tour tickets, were donated by the WRU. A total of 28 people took up the challenge and we announced 3 winners.



“Quit smoking, get fit and in good shape and run”



“I will quit smoking and be able to climb Pen-Y-Fan”



“Quit smoking and run 5k”



Policy and Research

ASH Wales has led the way on tobacco control and developed strong links that have delivered significant changes in policy. We have provided evidence-led direction to decision makers across Wales.



Stronger Together - Collaborating for Success

To enable the latest information to be shared across Wales, ASH Wales leads the Wales Tobacco or Health Network (WTHN) and the Wales Tobacco Control Alliance (WTCA) action groups. We are also members of the UK-wide Smokefree Action Coalition (SFAC) led by ASH England.

WTCA - Welsh Tobacco Control Alliance

Through the WTCA we have brought together all third sector and professional organisations involved with tackling tobacco in Wales. We have used their professional experience to inform policy development and implementation, at both a UK and Wales level. In the last year we have provided briefings to members on e-cigarettes, the Public Health (Wales) Bill and the ban on smoking in private vehicles with children present and provided a collective response to Assembly Members on the Public Health Bill.

WTHN - Welsh Tobacco Health Network

The WTHN brings together the country's leading figures in tobacco control, frontline service providers and campaigners to debate the emerging opportunities and challenges. In 2015 we brought experts together to talk about the current state of smoking cessation services in Wales, and the progress of smokefree prisons.

WHAT WTHN PARTNERS SAID:



"WE NEED A **COLLECTIVE MISSION**", WE NEED TO "**TAILOR SMOKING CESSATION SERVICES** TO EACH INDIVIDUAL CASE" WE NEED TO "FOCUS ON THE **AREAS WITH THE GREATEST NEED**"

Ashley Gould, Public Health Wales

"**SMOKEFREE PRISONS WILL BE HANDLED WITH SAFETY, DECENCY, AND SECURITY... THERE WILL BE PROPORTIONATE AND ROBUST ENFORCEMENT OF THE POLICY.**"

Jo Hargreaves, NOMS (National Offender Management Service) Wales



Electronic cigarettes and Public Health Wales Bill

In June 2015 the Welsh Government introduced the Public Health (Wales) Bill. Among the proposals included in the Bill was restricting the use of nicotine inhaling devices such as e-cigarettes in enclosed and substantially enclosed public and work places, bringing the use of these devices into line with existing provisions on smoking. The Welsh Government cited e-cigarettes re-normalising smoking and acting as a gateway to tobacco products among young people as reasons for bringing in this measure.

ASH Wales submitted a response to the Welsh Government consultation on the Bill and subsequently made this available to our partners within the Wales Tobacco or Health Network (WTHN) and the Wales Tobacco Control Alliance (WTCA). Furthermore, in October 2015 ASH Wales gave oral evidence on the general principles of the Bill to the National Assembly for Wales' Health and Social Care Committee.

OUR VIEWPOINT:

- **Insufficient evidence.**
- **Research suggests e-cigarettes do not act as a gateway to tobacco smoking among young people nor do they re-normalise smoking as an activity.**
- **Recommended the evidence be monitored on an ongoing basis.**



Consultations and Briefings

ASH Wales has responded to a number of consultations at both a Wales and UK level during 2015/16 and provided a number of briefings.

CONSULTATIONS :

- **EU Tobacco Products Directive (TPD)**
- **Smokefree prisons**
- **Public Health (Wales) Bill**
- **Licensing of illicit tobacco**

BRIEFINGS :

- **Smoking in prisons**
- **Tobacco retailers register**
- **Smokefree vehicles**
- **E-cigarettes and harm reduction**

All were made available to ASH Wales' partners in the WTCA as well as being downloadable from the ASH Wales website. In addition some of the briefings were sent directly to Welsh AMs prior to debates about these topic areas in the National Assembly.

Research

Electronic cigarettes and young people

The growing use of e-cigarettes has provoked much debate in public health communities, the political realm and society in general. ASH Wales has been called upon to provide expert evidence and support. To inform the debate and to find out what young people know about e-cigarettes and how they use them, we sent out a survey across Wales. A total of 838 young people aged 18 and under responded.



The report showed awareness of e-cigarettes has increased, however there was no suggestion this is leading to non-smokers taking up the habit of using e-cigarettes.

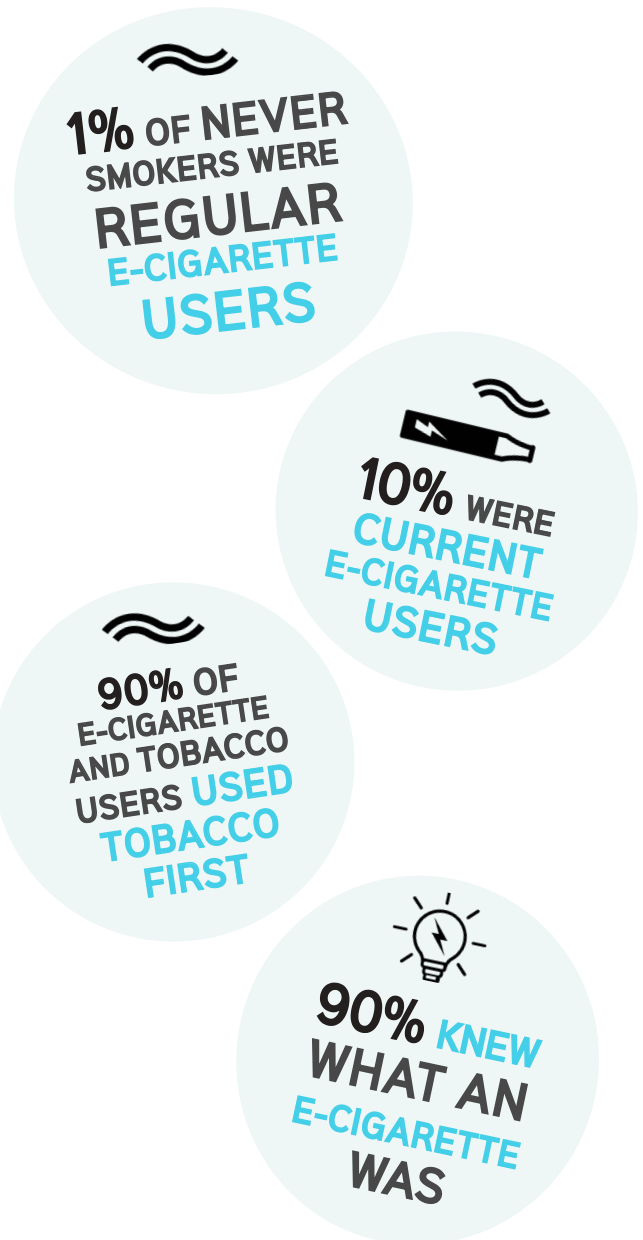
Of those who reported using both e-cigarettes and tobacco cigarettes at some point, 90% had used tobacco cigarettes first. This would suggest that young people were not trying e-cigarettes and then going on to smoke tobacco cigarettes.

The report also found young people from more deprived areas of Wales were more likely to use an e-cigarette than those from the more affluent areas.

A number of reasons were provided for using e-cigarettes by survey participants, including an inquisitorial attitude to their taste and because friends were using them.

The survey results also suggested e-cigarettes were being used as an effective smoking cessation device.

It is clear further research is necessary on the use of e-cigarettes and the long term effects. ASH Wales is committed to providing evidenced-based direction and support to help reduce smoking prevalence in Wales.



Public attitudes towards smoking

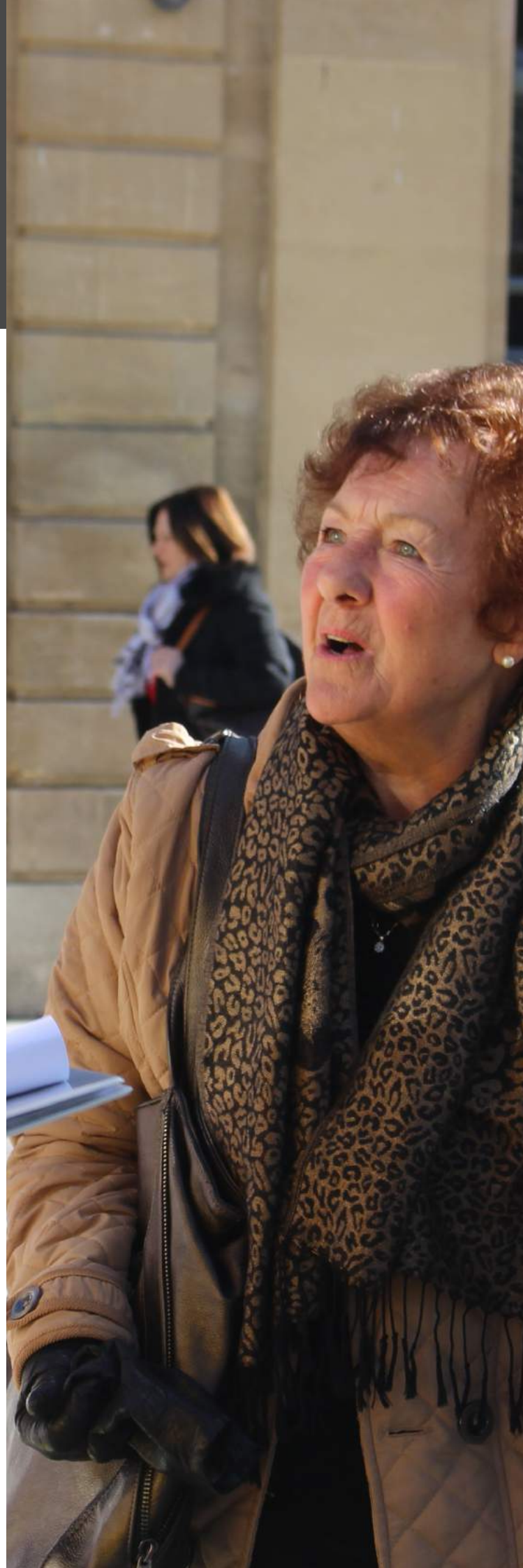
To determine public opinion in Wales relating to tobacco control ASH Wales conducts an annual opinion poll in conjunction with YouGov. The 2016 survey was undertaken in March. The headline results include:

TOBACCO :

- Support to extend the smoking ban to include additional places, such as communal recreational spaces like parks, beaches, outdoor children's play areas and all cars
- A high level of support, including among smokers, for businesses to have a valid licence to sell tobacco which can be removed if they are caught more than once selling to under-age smokers
- 58% said they would support raising the age of sale of cigarettes from 18 to 21
- 92% of current smokers reported no illicit purchases of cigarettes, a rise from the figure of 79% observed in 2015
- 39% of smokers feel more uncomfortable smoking tobacco cigarettes in public these days
- 74% of respondents, including 60% of the smokers surveyed, believe people in general disapprove of people smoking tobacco cigarettes

E-CIGARETTES :

- Almost all respondents had heard of e-cigarettes
- Number of e-cigarette users was higher among smokers (68%) than non-smokers (9%)
- As many as 23% of respondents thought e-cigarettes were just as harmful as tobacco cigarettes
- Of those who have tried e-cigarettes 64% consider them to be either less or a lot less satisfying than tobacco cigarettes
- 52% support extending the law banning smoking in enclosed public places and workplaces to cover the use of e-cigarettes





Our work with young people

Most smokers experiment with tobacco and get addicted to nicotine in their teenage years. We believe it is vitally important a targeted service is available for young people to ensure they don't start smoking and if they have, to help them stop.

ASH Wales has developed The Filter to fill a gap in existing smoking cessation services and to complement school-based smoking prevention initiatives. The service is highly valued by both the young people and those involved in tobacco control. Funding from Big Lottery came to an end in October 2015, but in order to allow ASH Wales to develop the service Welsh Government has agreed to fund this work for a further 2 years.

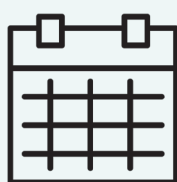


Our highly-trained youth workers have delivered:



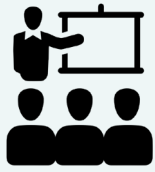
One-off-sessions to 1,500 young people

in youth groups, colleges and schools. These brief prevention and cessation sessions educate and increase knowledge.



Intensive 10 week interactive support service

to help young people give up smoking. We monitored their carbon monoxide (CO) levels, increased their knowledge and changed attitudes to smoking.



We taught more than 200 other youth workers

how to deliver sessions on smoking cessation and prevention to the young people they engage with.

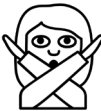



We offer online advice and support

through our bi-lingual youth information website and social media channels.

What we have achieved

90% OF THE YOUNG PEOPLE
KNEW MORE ABOUT THE
RISKS OF SMOKING 

82% SAID THEY WERE
LESS LIKELY TO START/
MORE LIKELY TO
STOP SMOKING 

97% OF THE YOUTH WORKERS
WE TRAINED SAID WE INCREASED
THEIR KNOWLEDGE
ABOUT SMOKING 

87% SAID THEY WILL USE
WHAT THEY HAVE LEARNT
IN THEIR WORK WITH
YOUNG PEOPLE 





A New Direction

Our commitment to delivering support services to young people has not waivered. Thanks to funding from the Welsh Government we have been able to continue our work and have developed a new intensive smoking cessation service for disadvantaged and disengaged young people.

The headline results so far:

69% 

OF THE PARTICIPANTS FROM
OUR NEW CESSATION SERVICE,
**COMMIT TO QUIT,
MADE A QUIT ATTEMPT.**

71% 

OF THE PARTICIPANTS WHO
MADE A QUIT ATTEMPT
**SUCCESSFULLY QUIT
SMOKING AT FOUR WEEKS**

80% 

OF THE PARTICIPANTS HAD
**FAMILY MEMBERS
WHO SMOKED**

41% 

OF THE PARTICIPANTS
WHO QUIT IDENTIFIED
THEMSELVES AS
EX-SMOKERS

**SMOKERS
AGED 13-14**

**HAD THE HIGHEST
QUIT SUCCESS RATE**

Our work in Swindon

We were commissioned by Swindon Borough Council's Healthy Schools team to deliver smoking intervention sessions to ten schools. Our youth team engaged with more than 1,600 year 7 pupils on the issue of tobacco use and smoking.

These 11 to 12 years olds told us that:

84% SAID THEY WERE **LESS LIKELY TO START/MORE LIKELY TO STOP SMOKING**

86% OF THE YOUNG PEOPLE **KNEW MORE ABOUT THE DANGERS OF SMOKING** 

41% SAID THEY UNDERSTOOD MORE **WHY PEOPLE START SMOKING**

35% SAID THEY KNEW WHERE TO GET **ADVICE AND HELP ON HOW TO QUIT.**

A significant number of these young people said that they had been positively affected by The Filter's smoking session. A majority of them said they were more likely not to start smoking and more likely to quit. ASH Wales believes that this level of intervention in schools is essential if we are to drive down smoking rates and create a healthier Wales.

Our work in Europe



We have been proud to lead and be involved in two European projects this year.

The Filter Europe is aimed at improving the knowledge and skills of youth workers and disadvantaged young volunteers. ASH Wales is leading this two year project and is pleased to be working with four other European partners; Austria, Poland, Spain and Romania.

The project began in September 2015 and has already facilitated 60 youth workers meeting in Vienna to develop new ways of working and in July 2016, 60 young people met in Bucharest, sharing ideas, cultures and skills to develop their volunteering skills and intercultural learning.





Through the project youth workers and young volunteers will be equipped with the skills to work with young people to prevent them from smoking in the first place or to address their smoking behaviour.

We have found that working with their peers has the greatest impact on young people. The project is supported by a website, social media and a toolkit so that young people are able to access information in the ways that they want. At the end of the project we will share the impact of the experience and the results of the work by producing a good practice guide in smoking prevention.

European project: Come Join Us!



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

ASH Wales is one of a group of five partners working together to develop methods and communications tools on how to reach disengaged young people age 13 – 22. Led by Sweden, the project includes France, Germany and Finland. Together we are exchanging experiences, sharing practical activities, skills and knowledge to increase and strengthen the training paths of educators, teachers and youth workers.

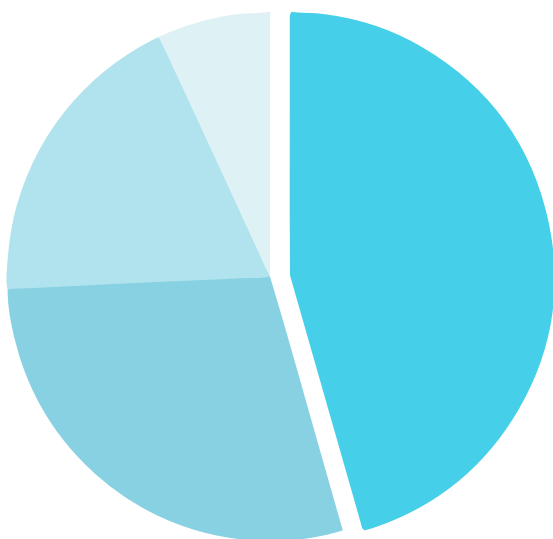
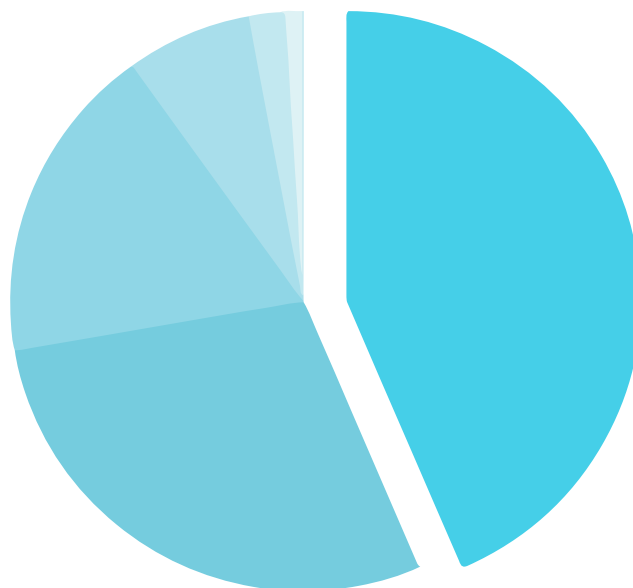
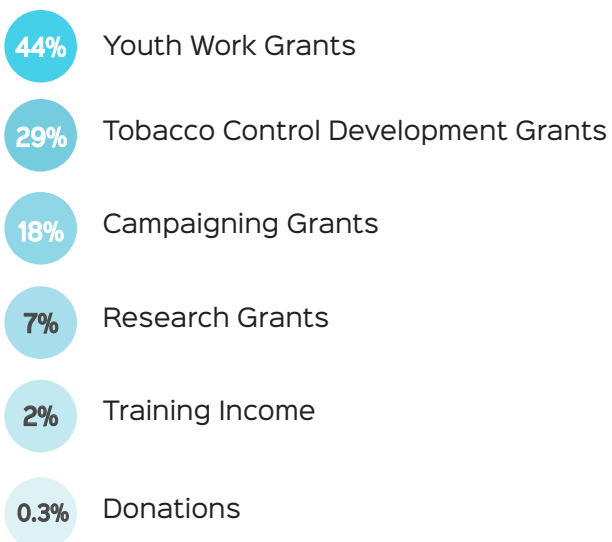
By the end of the project youth workers, staff and young volunteers will have access to a range of communication tools and new methods of teaching non formal based education which will reflect what has been learnt from the project. Alongside all of this we will produce an on-line guide with methods and working tools for youth workers and teachers.

Working alongside other European countries is a unique opportunity to share best practice with our colleagues and to work together to tackle the problem of young people smoking. Two thirds of smokers start before the age of 18, so it is more important than ever to give them the tools that will enable them to be independent and make positive choices in their lives.

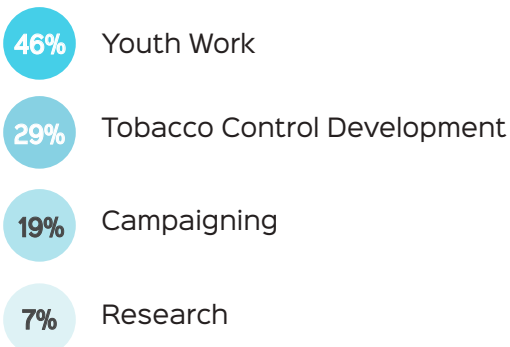


How we raised our money and how it made a difference

What we raised - **£491,793**



What we spent - **£485,571**



Our plans for the future

With the support of our partners Cancer Research UK, The British Heart Foundation, and Welsh Government we remain steadfastly committed to helping create a healthier Wales.

OUR SMALL BUT DEDICATED TEAM ARE DETERMINED TO



RAISE AWARENESS OF AND CAMPAIGN FOR MORE ROBUST TOBACCO CONTROL POLICIES



ENSURE TOBACCO CONTROL MEASURES ARE EVIDENCE-BASED, SUFFICIENTLY FUNDED AND ARE BEING DELIVERED



REDUCE THE NUMBERS THAT SMOKE AND EXPOSURE TO SECOND-HAND SMOKE BY BUILDING ON THE INFRASTRUCTURE, SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE IN WALES



FIGHT FOR SUPPORT FOR THE DISADVANTAGED AND DISENGAGED TO GIVE THEM THE SMOKING CESSATION AND PREVENTION SUPPORT THEY NEED



PROVIDE THE PUBLIC WITH THE OPPORTUNITY TO DEMONSTRATE THEIR SUPPORT FOR A TOBACCO-FREE GENERATION THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA AND SURVEYS.



WORK IN PARTNERSHIP TO HELP TACKLE THE EMERGING ISSUES IN WALES SUCH AS ILLEGAL TOBACCO AND EVER INCREASING HEALTH INEQUALITIES.

TO MAKE THIS HAPPEN WE WILL



LEAD, LOBBY, CAMPAIGN, RESEARCH, SUPPORT, DELIVER AND DO OUR UTMOST TO ENSURE THE NEXT GENERATION GROW UP IN A WORLD FREE FROM TOBACCO.



Smokefree Me
Fi di-fwg

Looking for advice and support to help you quit smoking?
Visit Smokefree Me - our new smokefree community.

smokefreeme.org



[@smokefreeme_](https://twitter.com/smokefreeme_)



[/smokefreemewales](https://www.facebook.com/smokefreemewales)

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