

ash wales
cymru

action on smoking and health



YouGov[®]
Survey
2024

ASH WALES 2024 ANNUAL YOUNG GOV SURVEY

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

The 2024 survey was undertaken between 29 February 2024 and 18 March 2024. The survey questions were asked of a representative sample of 1,112 adults (aged 18+) in Wales and was conducted online.

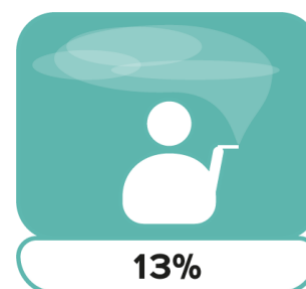
ASH Wales Cymru is recognised as the leading organisation for tobacco control in Wales. Our work brings together experts in population health, behavioural studies, and smoking cessation to secure support for ambitious tobacco control plans for Wales.

Summary of Findings

Behaviours and Attitudes

Smoking Prevalence:

- **13%** were current smokers
- **34%** were ex-smokers
- **53%** had never smoked
- Only **9%** of homeowners currently smoke compared to **18%** of private renters, rising to **30%** amongst those who live in social housing ²
- **13%** of those living in the highest social grade (AB) smoke, compared to **20%** of those in the lowest social grade (DE)



Current Smokers:

- **54%** said they want to quit smoking
- **71%** of smokers said that if they had to do it over again, they would not have started smoking
- **10%** said they never wanted to quit
- **46%** of Welsh adult smokers smoke, on average, 10 or fewer cigarettes (both ready-made and hand-rolled) each day
- **16%** of Welsh adult smokers smoke, on average, 21 or more cigarettes (both ready-made and hand-rolled) each day



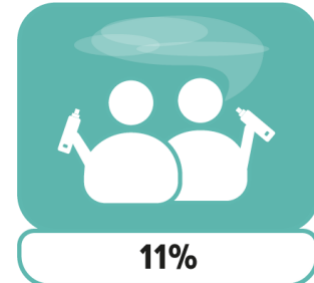
¹ This survey is part of a wider Smokefree GB survey, commissioned by ASH (UK). ASH Wales Cymru commissions the Welsh dataset.

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

- **46%** of smokers in Wales, who don't currently use vapes, would be interested in trying them if they were given free by a health professional (e.g. GP, nurse, pharmacist)

Vaping Prevalence:

- **11%** of respondents said they currently use a vape
- **45%** of current vape users say the main reason is to help them quit or reduce their tobacco consumption
- **27%** of all Welsh adults have tried vapes
- **74%** of current smokers have tried a vape
- **3%** of never smokers are current vape users
- **37%** of those who currently vape say they use "ice" e-liquids or vapes



Vapers:

- **47%** of current vapers and those who used to smoke but have given up now expressed a desire to quit vaping, only **15%** said they never wanted to quit
- **25%** of current vapers say the reason they vape is to help them stop smoking entirely, **20%** say they vape because they enjoy the experience and **13%** think it helps them cope with stress or mental health
- **76%** of current or ex-vapers use/used vapes that contain nicotine in the device that they use most often.
- **75%** of people who vape or used to vape, only use one main device
- **31%** of adults who vape or used to vape, most often use disposable vapes
- **53%** of adults who vape or used to vape, most often use rechargeable vapes, with a refillable tank or reservoir
- **53%** of current vapers said that the vape they currently use most often contains 'fruit' flavoured liquid
- **48%** of current vapers buy vapes in-person from a retail setting
- **42%** of all adults in Wales who currently vape buy from the internet ³.
- **12%** of current or ex-vapers use or have used vapes for more than 5 years, and up to 10 years ⁴

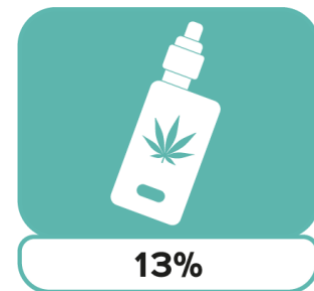


³ This excludes those who have only used an e-cigarette once or twice or don't know the frequency of their use

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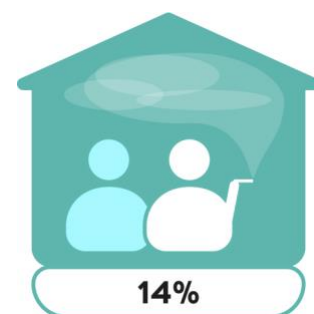
Smoking and cannabis use:

- **32%** of Welsh adults said they had ever used cannabis, including **32%** of 18–24-year-olds, and **44%** of 35-44-year-olds
- **7%** of Welsh adults had used cannabis in the last 12 months, with **1%** 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)
- **13%** vaped it in liquid form through a vape or other vaping device



Exposure to second-hand smoke:

- **14%** of all Welsh adults surveyed said that someone smokes most days in the home they live in, rising to **26%** 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, **47%** of private renters said yes, compared to **15%** of those who reside in social housing ⁶



Policies and Actions

Support for Welsh Government action:

- **79%** support a smoke free generation, and **7%** oppose this
- **52%** of those surveyed think Welsh and UK governments* are not doing enough to limit smoking, up from 43% in 2022. In 2024, almost a quarter of smokers (**24%**) also feel not enough is being done
- **9%** of all those surveyed believe government is doing too much, compared to 13% in 2016
- **80%** support a ban on the sale and import of disposable vapes. **7%** oppose this.
- **80%** support a ban on advertising and promotion of e- cigarettes at point of sale, compared to 75% in 2023
- **86%** support a requirement for businesses to have a valid licence to sell tobacco products, which can be removed if they are caught more than once selling to underage smokers. Only **4%** oppose this



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

⁶ Ibid.

*Respondents were asked about governments in general, not separately about Welsh or UK governments.

Support for UK Government action:

- **73%** support a goal to make Britain a place where no-one smokes. **10%** oppose
- **67%** said they support legislation which would raise the age of sale for tobacco products by one year every year, making it unlawful for anyone born after 1 January 2009 to be legally sold cigarettes. **14%** oppose this
- If this age of sale legislation was passed, **72%** support retailers checking the IDs of all customers to determine their age. **12%** oppose this
- **73%** support raising the age of sale for tobacco from 18 to 21, compared to 68% in 2023. **10%** oppose this move
- **82%** of adults in Wales support a ban on using the names of sweets, cartoons and bright colours on vapes, compared to 76% in 2023
- More than three quarters of respondents, **78%**, 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
- Seven in ten, **70%**, support the requirement of including inserts with government information about quitting on cigarette packs
- **68%** are in favour of requiring tobacco companies to print health warnings on cigarette sticks to encourage smokers to quit



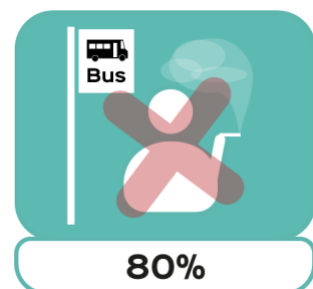
Support for regulation:

- The vast majority of respondents (**84%**) support the banning of cigarette butts that contain plastic to protect the environment
- **80%** support banning advertising and the promotion of vapes at point of sale (at the till, in store and as people enter shops), compared to 75% in 2023
- **78%** believe that all government health policy should be protected from the influence of the tobacco industry and its representatives



Additional Smoke-free Spaces:

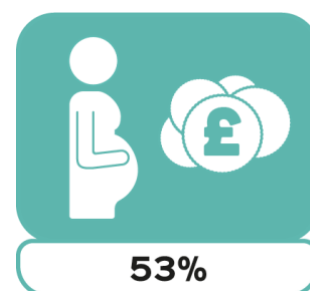
- **80%** would support banning smoking in public transport waiting areas
- **72%** would support banning smoking in further education colleges
- **69%** would support banning smoking on university and college campuses
- **67%** would support a ban on smoking in all cars
- **64%** would support banning smoking in outdoor eating areas of all restaurants, pubs and cafes



Support for the following measures. Banning smoking in...	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Children's play areas		-	89%	-	-	-
Public transport waiting areas	80%					
Outdoor areas where children play sport		-	80%	81%	82%	-
Further education colleges	72%					
All cars	67%	65%	64%	67%	67%	63%
Outdoor seating areas of all restaurants, pubs and cafes	64%	61%	62%	67%	-	63%
University and college campuses	69%	63%	59%	64%	-	-
Beaches		59%	58%	64%	-	-
Parks		58%	59%	62%	-	-
Town centres		-	54%	62%	-	59%
Sports grounds and stadiums		76%				

Cessation and Prevention:

- **53%** 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, compared to 46% of adults in support in 2022



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.

In 2024, **18%** of people in the 25–34-year-old group are smokers, with **12%** prevalence among 18–24-year-olds.

Smoking continues to drive discrepancies, and inequalities are evident when comparing smoking prevalence of those living in different areas of deprivation. Those in the lowest social grade (DE) are nearly twice as likely to smoke as those in the highest social grade (AB) (**20% vs 13%**).

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 2024, **30%** of social housing tenants said they were current smokers, consistent with 28% in 2023.

Among those who privately rent, **18%** report that they currently smoke, compared to **9%** of homeowners.

Smokers:

The percentage of people who are smoking tobacco in Wales remains stable. **54%** said they would like to give up smoking at some point. **10%** said that they never wanted to quit.

Vaping prevalence:

Those who report as currently using vapes is now at **11%**, compared to 8% in 2022. The proportion of current vaping prevalence is **19%** in the 25-34 years age category and **10%** among 18–24-year-olds.

Over a quarter of people (**27%**) had tried vapes, up from 15% in 2018.

In contrast to the inequalities observed in smoking prevalence, vaping prevalence across social grades is fairly stable, with **10%** in ABC1 and **12%** in C2DE.

Vapers:

Vapes remain a significant and popular smoking cessation tool, with **46%** of current vape users say the main reason they do so is to help them quit or reduce their tobacco consumption. Although this has dropped from 57% in 2023.

47% of current vapers, and those who used to smoke but have given up now, expressed a desire to quit at some point, only **15%** said they never wanted to quit.

76% 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, **46%** of them who don't currently use vapes, would be interested in trying them if they were given free by a health professional (e.g. GP, nurse, pharmacist).

48% of adults in Wales who currently vape, buy their products face-to-face from a shop and **42%** buy from the internet ⁷.

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

Worryingly, there is a sizeable proportion of adults in Wales who believe that vapes are just as harmful, or more harmful than tobacco cigarettes. The percentage who feel this way has grown from 25% in 2017 to **46%** in 2024. This is consistent among smokers, with **43%** who felt this way, again a significant increase from 14% of smokers in 2017.

It's also important to note that almost a quarter of current smokers, **23%**, said they did not know whether vapes were more harmful, less harmful or just as harmful as regular cigarettes.

Smoking and Cannabis use:

The prevalence of daily cannabis use is at **1%** in 2024, compared to 3% 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 a vape or other vaping device. Both these last two figures show no change from either 2022 or 2023.

Exposure to second-hand smoke:

14% of Welsh adults surveyed said that someone smokes most days in the home they live in, rising to **26%** 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. **47%** of people living in private rentals saying their tenancy agreement includes a rule that you must not smoke in your home, compared to just **15%** of those who live in social housing ⁹. In 2022, these figures were 40% and 9% respectively.

Policies and Actions

Support for Welsh Government action:

79% of those questioned support a smokefree generation, **7%** oppose this.

In the past 12 months, there has been a great deal of public and political debate around tobacco control. In particular the Tobacco & Vapes Bill 2024, which includes proposals to raise the age of sale of tobacco, to further regulate vapes and to ban disposable vapes. Interestingly, during this period, public appetite for governments to do more has strengthened.

52% of those surveyed think governments* are not doing enough to limit smoking, a significant rise from 39% in 2018.

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

⁹ Ibid.

*Respondents were asked about governments in general, not separately about Welsh or UK governments.

Only **9%** of all those surveyed believe governments are doing too much.

80% of those surveyed support a ban on the sale and import of disposable vapes in Wales. **7%** oppose. **53%** of those who reported as current vapers also supported the disposable vapes ban.

80% of adults questioned in Wales support a ban on advertising and promotion of vapes at point of sale – compared to 75% in 2023. This is supported by **47%** of current vapers, with **19%** of current vapers opposed.

Support for UK Government action:

73% of those surveyed support a goal to make Britain a place where no-one smokes. **10%** oppose.

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

Two thirds, **67%** of adults said they support legislation which would raise the age of sale of tobacco products by one year every year, making it unlawful for anyone born after 1 January 2009 to ever be sold tobacco. **14%** oppose.

When smokers were asked the same question about raising the age of sale, **40%** of smokers who were questioned supported the proposed legislation. **30%** of smokers opposed.

Adherence to any new age of sale law appears important to consumers, with **72%** supporting a measure which would require retailers to check the IDs of all customers to determine their age. **12%** oppose. **48%** of the smokers also supported this.

However, there does remain even stronger public support for an alternate proposal to raise the age of sale from, 18 to 21. Almost three quarters of those questioned (**73%**) supported this in 2024. This compares to 63% in 2023 and is an increase from 58% in 2016. These measures are also backed by **45%** of smokers in 2024, compared to 31% of smokers in 2019.

When it comes to vaping, there is significant general support for proposals to ban names of sweets, cartoons and bright packaging on vape products, with **82%** of people in Wales we surveyed expressing support. More than half of all current vapers we asked this question also agreed (**57%**).

Support for regulation:

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

86% support a requirement for businesses to have a valid licence to sell tobacco products, which can be removed if they are caught more than once selling to underage smokers. Only **4%** oppose.

The majority of current smokers questioned also supported this idea of retail licensing (**65%**) and almost three quarters of current vapers do too (**74%**).

There is also majority interest in using cigarettes and packaging to promote health advice to smokers. **70%** of adults were in favour of a requirement for cigarette packs to include inserts with government information about quitting and **32%** of smokers support this.

There is also a steadily growing level of public interest in the lobbying power of tobacco companies, with **78%** supporting the idea that all government health policy should be protected from the influence of the tobacco industry and its representatives – an increase from 71% in 2022.

In environmental concerns, **84%** of respondents support the banning of cigarette butts that contain plastic, with **69%** of current smokers in support of this too.

Additional Smoke free spaces:

There is majority support for additional smokefree spaces, with spaces centred on learning continuing to show high support.

An important addition to the 2024 survey was a question about banning smoking in public transport waiting areas. This now shows the highest level of support.

- **80%** would support banning smoking in public transport waiting areas
- **72%** would support banning smoking in in further education colleges
- **69%** would support banning smoking on university and college campuses
- **67%** would support a ban on smoking in all cars
- **64%** would support banning smoking in outdoor eating areas of all restaurants, pubs and cafes

Cessation and Prevention:

There is steadily growing support for help for pregnant smokers in Wales to quit. NICE guidance for the NHS recommends financial incentives to pregnant women to encourage them to stop smoking.

53% of Welsh adults surveyed supported the rollout of this policy, compared to sees 48% in 2023 and 46% of adults in support in 2022.