

To determine public opinion in Wales relating to tobacco control ASH Wales Cymru conducts an annual opinion poll in conjunction with YouGov. The 2015 survey was undertaken between 26th February and 12th March 2015. The survey questions were asked of a representative sample of 1,002 adults (aged 18+) in Wales. The survey was conducted online.

Smoking ban

There continues to be strong support for the smoking ban in Wales, with 81% of the respondents in support of the legislation to make all enclosed public places and workplaces smokefree. Interestingly 50% of smokers support the smoking ban with just 28% of smokers opposed.

Smokefree spaces

Support exists for extending the current scope of the smoking ban to include additional places. For instance, 54% of respondents to the survey agree that smoking should be banned in communal recreational spaces such as parks and beaches. Similarly, 61% of respondents are in favour of banning smoking in mental health units in Wales, with 60% agreeing that smoking should be banned in all cars.

Tobacco control legislation

When asked about the government's activities to limit smoking 39% of respondents felt they were not doing enough, with 16% 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 valid licence to sell tobacco which can be removed if they are caught more than once selling to underage smokers. 83% of respondents are in support of this measure.

70% of those surveyed are in favour of putting tobacco products out of sight in shops.

Opinion is mixed among respondents with regards to the NHS/ Stop Smoking Wales giving incentives (e.g. tokens) to pregnant women to help them quit smoking. 30% support this measure with

49% opposed. Interestingly, compared to the sample as a whole, slightly more respondents who are smokers back the policy (33%), with slightly fewer against (46%). The contrast between the views of respondents who smoke and those who don't is most stark when they were asked whether they would support or oppose putting an additional 25 pence on a packet of cigarettes, with the money being used to help smokers quit and discourage young people from taking up smoking. Unsurprisingly, a higher proportion of smokers were against this policy (62%) compared to non-smokers (10%).

Illegal tobacco

79% of current smokers surveyed reported no illicit purchases of cigarettes, with 14% reporting making some illicit purchases and 6% making only illicit purchases of cigarettes.

Youth smoking cessation service

At present there is no Wales wide 'quit smoking service' targeted at young people aged 11 to 25. When asked whether they would support or oppose the introduction of such a service 78% of respondents were in support with just 4% opposed.

Electronic cigarettes

As many as 95% of respondents had heard of electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes), with 17% having tried them at least once. Interestingly, the proportion of respondents who reported use of e-cigarettes was much higher among smokers (61%) than non-smokers (8%).

When questioned on their reasons for using e-cigarettes, the answer provided by 38% of those surveyed was to help them stop smoking tobacco entirely, with 20% of respondents claiming they used e-cigarettes to help them reduce the amount of tobacco they smoke, but not stop completely.

Views on whether e-cigarettes will be good or bad for the health of the public appears mixed. 35% of those surveyed who have heard of e-cigarettes, consider e-cigarettes to be good for health on balance, with 27% considering the opposite to be the case. Respondents were also asked whether they thought e-cigarettes were more, less or as harmful as tobacco cigarettes. 55% believed them to be less/not harmful with just 2% considering them to be more harmful than tobacco cigarettes.

There is strong support for controls on the sale/advertising of e-cigarettes. 74% of respondents who have heard of e-cigarettes, agree with the introduction of measures making it illegal to sell e-cigarettes to people under 18 years of age, whilst 51% of those surveyed are in favour of banning the advertising of e-cigarettes in the same way as tobacco advertising is banned.

Respondents were asked whether e-cigarettes are allowed in their workplace. For those for whom this question applied, 36% reported that e-cigarettes could be used in some places with 46% reporting that e-cigarettes are not allowed anywhere.