



YouGov 2020

Attitudes towards tobacco control in Wales



## Attitudes towards tobacco control in Wales 2020

To understand public opinion in Wales relating to tobacco control ASH Wales Cymru conducts an annual opinion poll in conjunction with YouGov. The 2020 survey was undertaken between 17th February and 11th March 2020. The survey questions were asked of a representative sample of 1,034 adults (aged 18+) in Wales, 49% of respondents had smoked at some time, 16% were current smokers. The survey was conducted online.

**ASH Wales** 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

### Legislation: Support for Government action to limit smoking

- **43%** of Welsh adults surveyed think the Government are not doing enough to limit smoking, only 10% believe they are doing too much.
- The majority (**68%**) would support the setting of an Endgame target date, to reduce smoking in Wales to less than 5% of the population by 2030.

### Education, Cessation & Prevention: Support for measures to assist and encourage smokers to quit

- There is strong support to offer all smokers staying in hospital advice and medication to help them quit with **75%** of all Welsh adults supporting the measures, including **64%** of smokers.
- The majority (**68%**) are in favour of **increasing** Government investment in public education campaigns on smoking aimed at adults and children.
- Of the smokers surveyed **81%** said they were **18 or under** when they had their first cigarette.

## Healthy Environments: Smokefree Spaces

- When it comes to protecting children, the majority (**82%**) of people surveyed believe smoking should be banned in outdoor areas where children play sport with **63%** strongly supporting this action.
- **67%** of all adults surveyed would support a **ban on smoking in all cars**.

## Information & Research: Confusion over e-cigarettes

- **41%** of Welsh adults surveyed wrongly believe e-cigarettes to be **as harmful or more harmful** than tobacco cigarettes. Worryingly an increasing number of smokers also hold this opinion, 40% 2020 up from 25% in 2018.

## Regulation: Additional tobacco control policies

- **62%** support a tax rise to increase the price of tobacco products at 5% above the rate of inflation each year.
- **76%** are in favour of requiring tobacco companies to disclose the amount spent on lobbying politicians, front groups, and promoting their products.

## Legislation: Support for Government action to limit smoking

- Despite the measures put in place to limit smoking in Wales, including the enclosed public spaces smoking ban of 2007, smoking is clearly still a persistent presence with **over half of all Welsh adults (53%)** describing smoking as common. When asked about Government actions to limit smoking, **43%** of Welsh adults surveyed still feel the Government are **not doing enough to limit smoking**, with only **10%** of people feeling the Government is doing too much. The majority (**69%**) of people surveyed disapprove of smoking with only 6% approving of smoking.
- There is clear public support (**68%**) for Wales to set an **Endgame date of 2030**: a date by which smoking is less than 5% of the population.
- Support for the Government to raise the age of sale of tobacco from 18 to 21 continues to grow, with over half of people surveyed (**62%**) supporting the move, an increase from 58% in 2019.
- There is strong support for a **tobacco levy**, with **75%** of all adults surveyed and **52%** of smokers in favour of making tobacco manufacturers pay for services to help smokers quit and prevent young people from taking up smoking.

## Education, Cessation & Prevention: Support for measures to assist

- There is considerable support from Welsh adults for measures to help and encourage smokers to quit, with **68%** in favour of increasing Government investment in public education campaigns on smoking aimed at adults and children.
- Public support for smoking related health interventions is high, with the majority (**75%**) in support of offering support and medication to smokers staying in hospital to help them stop smoking.
- There is also significant interest in using cigarettes and packaging to promote health advice to smokers, with **70%** in favour of a requirement for cigarette packs to include inserts with Government information about quitting and **66%** in favour of health warnings printed on cigarette sticks to encourage smokers to quit.
- There remains a clear need for prevention advice and support for **Young People** with **81%** of smokers surveyed saying they were **18 or under** when they had their first cigarettes, and **51% were 16 or under**. Targeted advice and cessation support could help the **64% of current smokers aged 25-34 who had their first cigarette at age 16 or under**.

## Healthy Environments: Smokefree Spaces

- According to the survey **15%** of all Welsh adults live in a home where someone smokes most days, an **increase** from 12% in 2019. The impact of smoking on children appears to be a key concern, with the majority of people surveyed (**82%**) in favour of banning smoking in **outdoor areas where children play sport**.
- **67%** of all adults surveyed would support a **ban on smoking in all cars**, an increase from **63%** in 2019, with **36% of smokers supporting the move** (an increase from 22% in 2019).

## Information & Research: Confusion over e-cigarettes

- Current attitudes towards vaping and e-cigarettes highlights the need for greater clarity about their role as a smoking cessation tool, with **41%** of Welsh adults surveyed wrongly believing them to be as harmful or more harmful than tobacco cigarettes.
- Although **68%** of current vapers are mainly using e-cigarettes to **help reduce the amount they smoke or quit entirely**, of those who had a workplace, **46%** said that e-cigarettes are not allowed to be used anywhere at work, highlighting the need for clear guidance for employers and the public.



## Regulation: Additional tobacco control policies

- There is clear public support for **robust tobacco regulation** with strong support for measures including monitoring of tobacco sale licensing, tobacco advertising bans, scrutiny of tobacco companies lobbying work and restriction of use in entertainment.
- The majority (**84%**) of Welsh adults surveyed are in favour of requiring businesses to have a valid licence to sell tobacco, which can be removed if they are caught more than once selling to underage smokers. **74%** support a ban on advertising smoking material and accessories (for example brands of rolling papers).
- Protecting **young people** from smoking related harm is a high concern, with the majority (**69%**) agreeing that smoking should not be included in entertainment media aimed at young people, such as films for under 18s or music videos.
- Support for more focus on the tobacco industry continues to grow, **with 62%** (an increase from 60% in 2019) supporting a tax rise to increase the price of tobacco products, at 5% above the rate of inflation each year.
- There is also a high level of public interest in the lobbying power of tobacco companies, with **76%** of adults in favour of requiring tobacco companies to disclose the amount spent on lobbying politicians, front groups and promoting their products.

YouGov questions	2020		2019		2018		2017		2016	
	All	Smokers	All	Smokers	All	Smokers	All	Smokers	All	Smokers
Think the Government are doing too much to limit smoking	10%	33%	8%	31%	8%	31%	11%	42%	13%	43%
Think the Government are not doing enough to limit smoking	43%	20%	47%	14%	39%	17%	42%	9%	40%	10%
Support increasing tax on cigs and tobacco by 5% above the annual rate of inflation	62%	20%	60%	11%	-	-	65%	24%	59%	10%
Support for raising the age of sale for tobacco from 18- 21	62%	40%	58%	31%	-	-	58%	33%	58%	42%
Agree that smoking should not be included in entertainment media aimed at young people, such as films for under 18s or music videos	69%	44%	67%	40%	-	-	66%	41%	-	-
Consider people in general approve of people smoking tobacco cigarettes	6%	13%	5%	9%	-	-	4%	10%	4%	11
Consider people in general disapprove of people smoking tobacco cigarettes	69%	47%	69%	47%	-	-	72%	56%	74%	60%
Would support a ban on smoking in all cars	67%	36%	63%	22%	62%	24%	63%	28%	61%	23%
Think smoking tobacco cigarettes is common	42%	-	-	-	44%	-	45%	-	49%	-
Think smoking tobacco cigarettes is uncommon	19%	-	-	-	18%	-	13%	-	10%	-

YouGov questions	2020		2019		2018		2017		2016	
	All	Smokers	All	Smokers	All	Smokers	All	Smokers	All	Smokers
Current e-cigarette user	7%	20%	7%	16%	5%	13%	6%	23%	5%	16%
Tried e-cigarette at least once	19%	67%	19%	66%	15%	61%	16%	63%	17%	68%
Tried e-cigarette to stop smoking tobacco entirely	42%	-	26%	-	26%	-	-	-	-	-
Tried e-cigarettes to reduce the amount of tobacco they smoke	14%	-	6%	35%	11%	21%	-	-	-	-
The number of e-cigarette users who are now ex-smokers	55%	-	65%	-	57%	-	49%	-	60%	-
The number of e-cigarette users who also smoke	42%	-	32%	-	37%	-	49%	-	43%	-
Believe e-cigarettes to be equally or more harmful than tobacco cigarettes	41%	40%	27%	18%	24%	25%	25%	14%	24%	21%
Believe e-cigarettes to be less or not harmful	37%	33%	45%	47%	50%	48%	47%	58%	50%	49%
Heard of heat not burn tobacco	10%	23%	9%	24%	7%	15%	7%	4%	-	-
Tried heat not burn tobacco	1%	4%	2%	5%	1%	4%	2%	2%	-	-