

YOUNGOV SURVEY 2021



ash wales
cymru
action on smoking and health

YouGov Survey 2021:

To understand public opinion in Wales relating to tobacco control ASH Wales Cymru conducts an annual opinion poll in conjunction with YouGov. The 2021 survey was undertaken between 18th February and 18th March 2021. The survey questions were asked of a representative sample of 1015 adults (aged 18+) in Wales, 32% of respondents had smoked at some time, 15% were current smokers. The survey was conducted online.

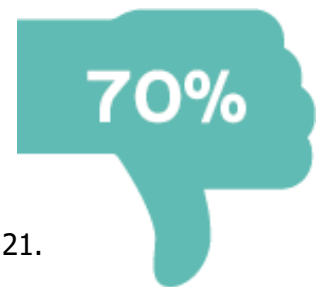
ASH Wales is recognised as the leading organisation for tobacco control in Wales. Our work brings together experts in population health, behavioural studies, and smoking cessation to secure support for ambitious tobacco control plans for Wales.



Summary of findings

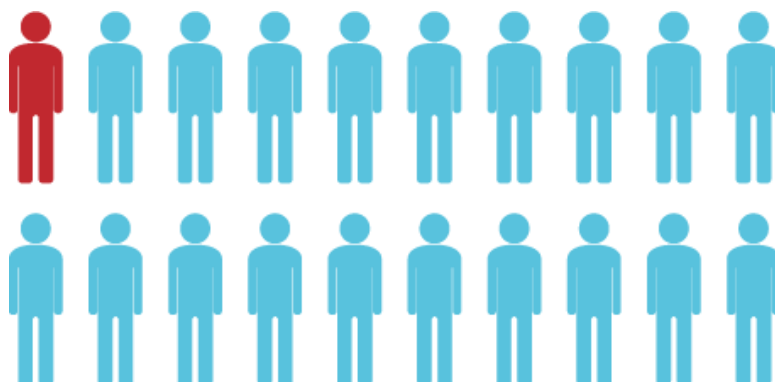
Attitudes towards smoking

- **52%** viewed smoking as common compared **67%** in 2016.
- When asked whether in general people, approved or disapproved of smoking, **70%** said they thought they disapproved and only **5%** approved.
- Of the smokers surveyed who had ever smoked **76%** said they were under 18 when they tried their first cigarette. Only **8%** of smokers tried their first cigarette over the age of 21.



Support for Government action

- **43%** including **19%** of current smokers surveyed think the Government are not doing enough to limit smoking. Only **9%** believe they are doing too much.
- The majority (**73%**) would support the setting of an Endgame target date, to reduce smoking in Wales to less than 5% of the population by 2030, a significant increase from **68%** in 2020.



Additional Smokefree Spaces

- **67%** would support banning smoking in outdoor eating areas, up from **63%** in 2019.
- **62%** would support banning smoking in town centres, up from **59%** in 2019 and **67%** would support a ban on smoking in all cars up from **63%** in 2017.
- When it comes to protecting children, the vast majority (**81%**) believe smoking should be banned in outdoor areas where children play sport, **63%** strongly support this action.



Support for the following measures. Banning smoking in.....	2021	2019	2017
Outdoor areas where children play sport	81%	-	-
Outdoor seating areas of all restaurants, pubs and cafes	67%	63%	-
All cars	67%	63%	63%
University campuses and Colleges	64%	-	-
Beaches	64%	-	61%*
Parks	62%	-	61%*
Town Centres	62%	59%	-

*2017 question was communal areas such as parks or beaches

Additional Regulation

- **63%** support raising the age of sale from 18 to 21, only **16%** oppose this move.
- **65%** support a tax rise to increase the price of tobacco products – an increase from **61%** in 2020.
- **71%** are in favour of requiring tobacco companies to print health warnings on cigarette sticks to encourage smokers to quit compared to **66%** in 2020.



Cessation & Prevention

- There is strong support to offer all smokers staying in hospital advice and medication to help them quit with **78%** of all Welsh adults supporting the measure, **75%** supported this in 2020.
- The majority (**71%**) are in favour of increasing Government investment in public education campaigns on smoking aimed at adults and children.



Confusion over e-cigarettes

- **33%** of Welsh adults surveyed wrongly believe e-cigarettes to be as harmful or more harmful than tobacco cigarettes an increase from **25%** in 2018 and just **14%** in 2017.



Smoking and other conditions

- **21%** of the adult population in Wales identified as having a problem with their mental health, drugs, alcohol and or gambling.
- **14%** said they suffer from depression and **23%** of these said they were currently smokers
- **12%** said they suffered from anxiety and **25%** of these said they were current smokers



Smoking and cannabis

- **27%** said they had ever used cannabis and 7% had used it in the last 12 months.
- **70%** 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)



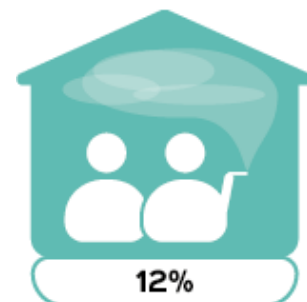
Analysis of Findings

Attitudes toward Smoking

Encouragingly there has been a fall in the number of adults in Wales who view smoking as 'common' from **67%** in 2016 to **52%** in 2021.

In the 2021 survey the vast majority (**70%**) think people in general disapprove of smoking with only **5%** thinking people in general approve of smoking.

According to the survey **12%** of all Welsh adults live in a home where someone smokes most days, a decrease from **15%** in 2020.



Support for Welsh Government action

When asked about Government actions to limit smoking, **43%** of Welsh adults surveyed including **19%** of smokers still feel the Government are not doing enough to limit smoking. Only **9%** think the Government is doing too much this compares to **13%** in 2016.

There is clear public support (**73%**, including **40%** of smokers surveyed) for Wales to set an Endgame date of 2030: a date by which smoking is less than 5% of the population. This is an increase from **68%** in 2020. Only **9%** of adults oppose the setting of an Endgame target.

Support for UK Government action

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 (**63%**) supporting the move including **46%** of smokers. This is an increase from **58%** in 2016. Only 16% of adults oppose the move.

There is strong support for a tobacco levy, with **77%** of all adults surveyed in favour of making tobacco manufacturers pay for services to help smokers quit and prevent young people from taking up smoking compared to **75%** in 2020 and **5%** not in favour of a levy.

Additional Smokefree Spaces

There is strong public support for additional smokefree spaces with **67%** of all adults and **18%** of smokers supporting banning smoking in the outdoor seating areas of all restaurants, pubs and cafes. **19%** of adults do not support this.



62% of adults and **24%** of smokers are in favour of banning smoking in all town centres with 43% of adults strongly in favour of this move. **20%** of adults do not support banning smoking in town centres.

67% of all adults surveyed would support a ban on smoking in all cars with **30%** of smokers supporting the move. **16%** of adults do not support a ban.

The impact of smoking on children appears to be a key concern, with the majority of people surveyed (**81%**) in favour of banning smoking in outdoor areas where children play sport. **7%** oppose a ban.

64% of adults are in favour of banning smoking in all beaches and **62%** think smoking should be banned in all parks.

Regulation

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 (**86%** and **76%** of smokers) 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. There has been little change in this level support over 5-year period. **3%** of adults oppose this. **78%** support a ban on advertising smoking material and accessories (for example brands of rolling papers) compared to **74%** in 2020.



Protecting young people from smoking related harm is a high concern, with the majority (**73%**) and **52%** of smokers agreeing that smoking should not be included in entertainment media aimed at young people, such as films for under 18s or music videos – an increase from **66%** in 2017.

Support for more focus on the tobacco industry continues to grow, with **65%** (an increase from **62%** in 2020) supporting a tax rise to increase the price of tobacco products, at 5% above the rate of inflation each year and **16%** opposing this.

There is also a high level of public interest in the lobbying power of tobacco companies, with **72%** supporting the idea that all Government health policy should be protected from the influence of the tobacco industry and its representatives. **3%** oppose this.

Cessation & Prevention

There is considerable support from Welsh adults for measures to help and encourage smokers to quit, with **71%** of adults and **53%** of smokers in favour of increasing Government investment in public education campaigns on smoking aimed at adults and children, an increase from **68%** in 2020. 8% are not in favour.

Public support for smoking related health interventions is high, with **78%** of adults and **68%** of smokers in support of offering support and medication to smokers staying in hospital to help them stop smoking compared to **75%** of adults in 2020. Just **5%** of adults do not support this proposal.



There is also significant interest in using cigarettes and packaging to promote health advice to smokers, with **72%**

in favour of a requirement for cigarette packs to include inserts with Government information about quitting and **71%** in favour of health warnings printed on cigarette sticks to encourage smokers to quit compared to **66%** in 2020.



There remains a clear need for prevention advice and support for young people with **76%** of smokers surveyed saying they were 18 or under when they had their first cigarettes including **52%** were 16 or under.

There was strong support for the roll out of a scheme offering financial incentives to pregnant women to encourage them to stop smoking with **57%** of adults and **56%** of smokers in favour of this proposal. **19%** of adults oppose such a scheme.

Confusion over e-cigarettes

7% use e-cigarettes, however, worryingly **33%** of Welsh adults surveyed wrongly believe e-cigarettes to be as harmful or more harmful than tobacco cigarettes an increase from **25%** in 2018 and just **14%** in 2017.

45% of current vapers are mainly using e-cigarettes to help reduce the amount they smoke or quit entirely.

Smoking and other conditions

A total of **21%** of the adult population in Wales identified as having a problem with their mental health, drugs, alcohol and or gambling.

14% said they suffer from depression and **23%** of these said they were currently smokers compared to **15%** of all of the Welsh adults who answered the survey. **12%** said they suffered from anxiety and **25%** of these said they were current smokers.

Smoking and cannabis

27% of Welsh adults have ever used cannabis. **7%** have used it in the last 12 months. **70%** of the adults who have smoked cannabis in the last 12 months said they had smoked it with tobacco (in a joint or spliff) or in a blunt (cigar).

