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10 years of the smoking ban in Wales - summary

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

The Headlines

SINCE 2007, SMOKING PREVALENCE IN WALES HAS FALLEN BY 5%

THERE ARE CURRENTLY 94,498 FEWER ADULT SMOKERS IN WALES COMPARED TO 2007



NUMBERS OF TEENAGE BOYS SMOKING HAS REDUCED BY 6%



NUMBERS OF TEENAGE GIRLS SMOKING HAS REDUCED BY 14%

SMOKING RATES AMONG MOST SOCIO-ECONOMIC CLASSES HAS DROPPED BY 5%, EXCEPT AMONG THOSE WHO ARE UNEMPLOYED; HERE THE RATE HAS ACTUALLY INCREASED BY 2%

THIS SHOWS US THAT THE STOP SMOKING MESSAGE STILL ISN'T ENGAGING THESE 'HARD-TO-REACH' PEOPLE AND IT ONLY SEEKS TO PERPETUATE THE HEALTH INEQUALITIES GAP IN OUR NATION



NUMBERS OF THOSE WHO SMOKE IN THE HOME HAS REDUCED FROM 80% TO 46%, SUGGESTING A MASSIVE CULTURAL CHANGE SINCE THE BAN'S IMPLEMENTATION*

“The smoking ban has resulted in the most positive improvement in the nation’s health in decades. The significance of this legislation should not be underestimated. Thousands more children now live in a smokefree home, and hundreds of thousands of people are no longer subjected to the deadly effects of passive smoking.”

– Chief Executive of ASH Wales Cymru, Suzanne Cass



* There is clear evidence that smokers no longer feel as comfortable smoking around others - the number of people smoking in their own home has almost halved since the ban came into place. It is fantastic to see the message about the dangers of smoking, especially around children, is being heard.

Smoking prevalence

In 2007, adult (age 16+) smoking prevalence in Wales was 24%, equating to 586,858 smokers. The most recent smoking prevalence figure among adults (age 16+) in Wales (2015 figures) is 19%, which amounts to 492,360 smokers. Since 2007, therefore, adult (age 16+) smoking prevalence in Wales has fallen by 5%, with there being 94,498 fewer adult smokers in Wales.

In 2006, the percentage of boys aged 15/16 that reported smoking at least once a week was 13%. In 2014 (the most recent year of data available) this figure had fallen to 7%. An even bigger drop is apparent when considering smoking rates among 15/16 year old girls. In 2006, 23% were found to smoke at least once a week, whereas in 2014 the equivalent figure had fallen to 9%.

Socio-economic classification of household reference person	Smoking prevalence	
	2007	2015
Managerial and professional	17	11
Intermediate	21	17
Routine and manual	31	26
Never worked and long-term unemployed	41	43

An alternative story emerges however when considering adult smoking prevalence in Wales in more detail. In contrast to the other socio-economic classifications, which have all experienced a considerable drop, the smoking rate among those in the never worked and long-term unemployed category has actually increased since 2007 from 41% to 43%.

Location

Since 2007 the percentage of adult (age 16+) smokers smoking indoors, including in places not covered by smokefree legislation such as the home, has fallen considerably. By contrast smoking outside among smokers has slightly risen over this period. This suggests the ban on smoking in enclosed public places has not resulted in a displacement of smoking into the home or the car but instead to outside areas.

	Location of smoking				
	Outdoors	At own home	In other people's homes	Whilst traveling by car	Other places indoors
2007	90	80	36	51	49
2015	94	46	20	37	13

Exposure to second-hand smoke

In 2007, 42% of non-smoking adults aged 16+ in Wales reported being regularly exposed to passive smoke. By 2015 this figure had fallen to just 29%.

Since 2007 far fewer non-smokers are regularly exposed to passive smoke indoors.

	% of non-smoking adults (16+) regularly exposed to passive smoke indoors			
	Location of smoking			
	At own home	In other people's homes	Whilst traveling by car	Other places indoors
2007	9	18	5	32
2015	4	11	4	5

In 2014, 3.6% of children aged 10/11 in Wales reported having been in a car where someone was smoking the previous day, whilst this was the case for 6.9% of 10/11 year olds in 2007. (NB it is likely the percentage of children reporting having been in a car where someone was smoking is even lower now given it was made illegal to smoke in a private vehicle when a person under the age of 18 is present in October 2015).

In 2007, 37% of children aged 10/11 in Wales reported that one or more parent figures smoked in the home. In 2014 this figure had reduced to 22%.

Asthma

- 82% of people with asthma say tobacco smoke affects their asthma
- International researchers found there were 10% less asthma-related hospital admissions among children just one year after smokefree-bans were introduced
- This reduction rises to 17% three years after indoor smoking bans were introduced

Smoking legislation

Since the introduction of smokefree legislation in 2007 banning smoking in all enclosed and substantially enclosed public places in Wales a number of other smoking related legislation has been implemented:

2007

- The smokefree legislation is implemented in Wales (2nd April) banning smoking in virtually all workplaces and enclosed public places including pubs and clubs.
- The minimum age young people can purchase tobacco is raised from 16 to 18.

2012

- The display of tobacco in large stores is prohibited.
- Sales of tobacco from vending machines are banned.
- The Tobacco Control Plan for Wales is published, outlining the Welsh Government target of reducing smoking prevalence among adults in Wales to 20% by 2016 and 16% by 2020.

2015

- Legislation making it an offence to smoke in a private vehicle when a person under the age of 18 is present is introduced.
- A ban on displaying tobacco in small shops comes into force throughout the UK.
- Regulations come into force prohibiting the sale of electronic cigarettes to under 18s and the purchasing of tobacco or e-cigarettes by adults for children.

2016

- First beaches in Wales become smokefree at Little Haven in Pembrokeshire and Caswel Bay in Swansea.
- Along with the rest of the UK standardised tobacco packaging regulations are implemented in Wales on 20th May 2016.
- All prisons in Wales become completely smokefree.
- All Local Authorities in Wales implement voluntary smoking bans in their local playgrounds.
- The EU Tobacco Products Directive (TPD) is transposed into domestic law and implemented in Wales.

The future – Smokefree spaces

Smoking in family-friendly areas sends children a message that tobacco is a common part of life rather than a deadly, addictive drug. We believe that children and young people have a right to play, meet their friends, get an education and take part in sports in a clean, smokefree environment.

We know that children and young people copy what goes on around them and this includes seeing adults smoking. It is essential we set positive examples wherever we can. That's why we've campaigned for smokefree playgrounds in Wales to protect our next generation and we can now proudly say that every council in Wales has banned smoking at their children's playgrounds.

Many councils are looking to make schools gates smokefree zones too. Just last week Cardiff and the Vale became the 10th and 11th councils in Wales to ban smoking at their primary school gates.

These bans have all been voluntary. With the upcoming Public Health Bill, currently being reviewed by Welsh Government, this would see smokefree areas become law at; school premises, children's playgrounds and hospital sites.

With regards to the adult population, it's worrying to see that smoking rates have in fact increased among the most socio-economically deprived people in Wales, namely those who are unemployed. Whereby smoking rates have fallen by 5% among the general population since the smoking ban came into effect in Wales, the increase among those most deprived must be tackled. We would like to see better, tailored services for these seemingly 'hard-to-reach' members of our society.