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Coverage
Great Britain
Theme
Health and Care

Majority back curbs on smoking in public places

Seventy-seven per cent of people agree with legislation to ban smoking in enclosed public places, according to a report* published today by the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

When questioned in 2006, 53 per cent of people strongly agreed with the legislation and 24 per cent agreed. Fifteen per cent of people disagreed.

Eight per cent of adults in England and Wales said they would visit pubs less often when the ban is in force, but 15 per cent said they would go more often.

Legislation banning smoking in most public enclosed spaces comes into force in England on 1 July. Similar legislation is already in force in Scotland and Wales.

The survey also found that 90 per cent of people favoured smoking restrictions in restaurants, 85 per cent favoured restrictions in work places and 66 per cent in pubs – similar to the level of support in 2004 and 2005.

As in previous years, nearly all those interviewed (93 per cent) agreed that there should be smoking restrictions in places where there are, or are likely to be, children under 16.

Nearly three-fifths (58 per cent) of people who were in work said that smoking was not allowed at all on the premises where they worked – an increase from 51 per cent in 2005 and 40 per cent in 1996.

Today's report presents the results of the 11th survey of smoking behaviour and attitudes, carried out by ONS for the Information Centre for health and social care.

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Other key findings for 2006 include:

Smoking behaviour and habits

Fifteen per cent of smokers said they smoked their first cigarette of the day within five minutes of waking up.

Giving up smoking

The percentage of smokers who said they would like to give up smoking (72 per cent) was similar to figures for previous years.

Eighty-five per cent of smokers who wanted to give up mentioned at least one health-related reason. The most common (mentioned by 69 per cent) was that it would be better for their health in general. About a quarter of smokers (26 per cent) said they wanted to give up because they could not afford to smoke or considered smoking a waste of money.

Seventy-eight per cent of current smokers had tried to give up smoking in the past, and 58 per cent had made a serious attempt in the previous five years.

Twenty-one per cent of ex-smokers had given up within the past five years.

Fifty-one per cent of smokers had sought advice or help for stopping smoking in the last year and 54 per cent had received advice from a medical professional in the past five years.

Awareness of health risks associated with smoking

Forty-six per cent of people thought that smoking was the most common cause of premature death (before the age of 65) in the UK.

Awareness of the effects of second-hand smoking was widespread. Respectively, 91 per cent and 86 per cent of people thought that a child's risk of getting chest infections and asthma were increased by second-hand smoking. The percentages were the same as those found in 2005.



Over 80 per cent of people thought that second-hand smoking would increase a non-smoking adult's risk of lung cancer, bronchitis and asthma, similar proportions to 2005.

Attitudes related to smoking

About three-fifths (61 per cent) said that smoking was not allowed in their home, around a quarter (26 per cent) said it was allowed in some rooms or at some times and only 13 per cent said there were no restrictions at all on smoking in their home.

Sixty per cent of non-smokers said they would mind if other people smoked near them.

Sixty-eight per cent of smokers said they did not smoke when they are in a room with a child and 23 per cent said they would smoke fewer cigarettes in the presence of a child.

The majority of smokers said they would modify their smoking in the company of adult non-smokers – 44 per cent would not smoke and 33 per cent would smoke fewer cigarettes.

Background Notes

1. Details of the policy governing the release of new data are available from the press office.
2. **National Statistics** are produced to high professional standards set out in the National Statistics Code of Practice. They undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure that they meet customer needs. They are produced free from any political interference. © Crown copyright 2007.