

24 September 2001

**Coverage**

Great Britain

**Theme**

Health and Care

# Smoking related behaviour and attitudes

Support for smoking restrictions in public places has been increasing according to a survey report\* published today by National Statistics. Since 1996, the percentage in favour of restrictions at work rose from 81 per cent to 86 per cent in 2000, in restaurants, from 85 per cent to 88 per cent, in pubs, from 48 per cent to 53 per cent, and in other public places from 82 per cent to 86 per cent.

This report presents the results of a survey on smoking behaviour and attitudes carried out in 2000. The survey is the latest in a series of surveys carried out as part of the ONS Omnibus Survey for the Department of Health. The surveys in the series were designed to explore views on passive smoking, smoking restrictions and giving up smoking.

Other key findings are outlined below.

## Giving up smoking

- Seventy-one per cent of current smokers said they would like to give up smoking – this was not significantly different to the 1999 figure (72 per cent).
- About nine out of ten smokers who wanted to give up mentioned at least one health-related reason for doing so. Forty-one per cent said they wanted to give up because they could not afford to smoke or considered smoking a waste of money.
- Nearly half (48 per cent) of smokers said that they intended to give up smoking within the next 12 months. These smokers tended to be younger, light smokers and aware of the effect of passive smoking.

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***Smoking Related Behaviour and Attitudes, 2000***  
**Series OS no.17. ONS £10. ISBN 1 85774 451 9.**



- Over two-fifths (41 per cent) of current smokers who intended to give up in the next 12 months thought they would have actually done so.
- Over three-quarters (78 per cent) of current smokers had tried to give up smoking in the past, and a half (50 per cent) had made a serious attempt in the past five years. A fifth (20 per cent) of ex-smokers had given up within the past five years.

### **Knowledge and views about passive smoking**

- People had a high level of knowledge about the effect of passive smoking. Ninety per cent of respondents thought that a child's risk of getting chest infections was increased by passive smoking and over 80 per cent thought that passive smoking would increase a non-smoking adult's risk of lung cancer, bronchitis and asthma. The percentages were similar to those found in 1999.

### **Non-smokers' attitudes towards people smoking near them**

- Over half (50 per cent of men and 60 per cent of women) who did not smoke said they would mind if other people smoke near them. This was similar to the percentages found in 1999 (54 per cent) and 1997 (56 per cent).

### **Smokers' behaviour in the company of non-smokers**

- Sixty-seven per cent of smokers said they do not smoke at all when they are in a room with a child and 25 per cent said they would smoke fewer cigarettes in the presence of a child.
- A statistically higher proportion of smokers said they do not smoke at all in front of children in 2000 than in 1999 (67 per cent and 60 per cent respectively)
- Smokers said they would modify their smoking in the company of adult non-smokers – 50 per cent would not smoke at all and 34 per cent would smoke fewer cigarettes. This was similar to the proportions found in 1999 (49 per cent and 34 per cent respectively).

## Views on smoking restrictions

- Over two-fifths of respondents (44 per cent) who were in work said that smoking was not allowed at all on the premises where they worked – slightly lower than the 48 per cent reported in 1999, and nearer the 1997 figure of 42 per cent.
- Over four fifths agreed that there should be restrictions on smoking at work (86 per cent), in restaurants (88 per cent) and in other public places such as banks and post offices (86 per cent). A smaller percentage of respondents, 53 per cent, thought that smoking should be restricted in pubs.
- Forty-five per cent considered whether or not a place has a non-smoking area as an important factor when deciding where to go for a meal.
- Twenty-two per cent said they would take account of whether a place has a non-smoking area when selecting a place to go for a drink. This was a small but statistically significant increase from 1999 (18 per cent).

## BACKGROUND NOTES

1. The Omnibus Survey is a multi-purpose survey carried out by the ONS each month on behalf of a range of government departments and other public and non-profit making bodies.
2. Details of the policy governing the release of new data are available from the press office.
3. 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 2001.