

# Facts at a glance - key smoking statistics

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## GLOBAL SUMMARY

Tobacco is the leading cause of preventable death in the world.<sup>1</sup> Tobacco kills more than 7 million people each year, more than 6 million of those deaths are the result of direct tobacco use while around 890,000 are the result of non-smokers being exposed to secondhand smoke.<sup>2</sup> Around 80% of the world's 1.1 billion smokers live in low and middle-income countries.<sup>2</sup>

## ADULT (18+) SMOKERS IN THE UK

Fewer than 1 in 5 adults (15.1%) in the United Kingdom now smoke: 17% of men and 13.3% of women. This equates to around 7.4 million people in the population.<sup>3</sup> This is a significant reduction from the 46% adult smoking rate in 1974 (this rate is for 16+ in Great Britain).

## ADULT SMOKING RATES (2017)<sup>3</sup>

**England:** 14.9%

**Wales:** 16.1%

**Scotland:** 16.3%

**Northern Ireland:** 16.5%

## UK SMOKING STATISTICS (2017)

Brits aged 25 to 34 make up the highest proportion of current smokers (19.7%).<sup>3</sup> In the UK, around 1 in 4 (25.9%) people in routine and manual occupations smoke, compared with just 1 in 10 people (10.2%) in managerial and professional occupations.<sup>3</sup> In England, 10.8% of mothers are smokers at the time of delivery of their baby (2017/18).<sup>4</sup>

Smoking is more prevalent among people with mental health conditions: it's estimated a third of all tobacco smoked in England is smoked by people with some kind of mental health condition.<sup>5</sup>

## DEATHS ATTRIBUTED TO SMOKING IN THE UK (2016)<sup>3</sup>

**England:** 78,000

**Wales:** 5,500

**Scotland:** 10,000

**Northern Ireland:** 2,300

## WHAT ARE IN CIGARETTES?

Of the more than 7,000 chemicals in tobacco smoke, at least 250 are known to be harmful, including hydrogen cyanide, carbon monoxide, and ammonia. At least 69 of these chemicals can cause cancer (which include arsenic, benzene and cadmium).<sup>6</sup>

## HEALTH EFFECTS

- Around half of all life-long smokers will die prematurely and on average, cigarette smokers die 10 years younger than non-smokers.<sup>7</sup>
- Smokers are almost twice as likely to have a heart attack compared with people who have never smoked.<sup>8</sup>
- Smoking was directly responsible for around 95,800 of deaths in the UK, in 2016<sup>3</sup>. Tobacco (smoking and environmental tobacco smoke) causes 3 in 20 (15%) cancer cases in the UK.<sup>9</sup>
- Tobacco smoking is the most important risk factor for lung cancer: 72% of lung cancer cases in the UK are caused by smoking.<sup>10</sup>
- It is estimated that for lifelong smokers, each cigarette will take roughly 11 minutes off their life.<sup>11</sup>
- Smoking is associated with an increased risk of early natural menopause in women.<sup>12</sup>
- Smoking is a major risk factor for impotence in men.<sup>13</sup>
- Smoking increases significantly the risk of impairment of olfactory function, negatively affecting smokers' sense of smell and taste.<sup>14</sup>
- Even ostensibly 'low' levels of smoking can be harmful. One long-term study concluded that people who smoke between 1 and 4 cigarettes a day have a significantly higher risk of dying early than non-smokers.<sup>15</sup>

## THE COST TO ENGLAND FROM SMOKING

ASH has estimated in an interactive online tool that each year, smoking costs England £12.6bn.<sup>16</sup> The breakdown of this is as follows:

**Healthcare:** Annual cost to NHS across England from smoking is around £2.5bn.

**Productivity:** Smoking leads to huge productivity losses: smokers take more sick-leave and are at higher risk of premature death. Smoking breaks cost businesses time and money. Overall the productivity cost to England from smoking is around £8.4bn.

**Social care:** Many current/former smokers require extra care in later life as a result of smoking-related illness. The estimated cost each year is £1.4bn.

**House fires:** The annual cost of smoking-related house fires is around £329.7m.

Additionally, it is estimated that smokers in England spend roughly £14.1bn on tobacco products each year, around £2,050 per smoker. Of the total expenditure on tobacco, £7bn is collected in taxes in England.

## BRITISH TOBACCO COMPANIES

Two of the largest tobacco companies in the world are headquartered in the UK.

**British American Tobacco (BAT)** is the UK's largest tobacco company and it is headquartered in London. The total revenue in 2017 was £20.2bn.<sup>17</sup> It is currently the second largest publicly traded tobacco company in the world.

**Imperial Brands** plc, formerly Imperial Tobacco Group plc, is a British multinational tobacco company headquartered in Bristol, United Kingdom. It is the world's fourth-largest international cigarette company measured by market share after Philip Morris International, British American Tobacco, and Japan Tobacco.<sup>18</sup>

The most popular brands of cigarette in the UK are Sterling and Mayfair, both produced by Japan Tobacco International.<sup>19</sup>

## MAJOR UK TOBACCO CONTROL MILESTONES

**1965:** All television adverts for cigarettes banned

**1986:** Tobacco adverts banned in cinemas

**2002:** Tobacco Advertising and Promotion Act given Royal assent.

# MAJOR UK TOBACCO CONTROL MILESTONES (CONTINUED)

**2003:** Ban of print media and billboard advertising, tobacco direct marketing (promotions), industry sponsorship of events within the UK

**2005:** UK tobacco company sponsorship of global events, including Formula 1 and snooker tournaments is banned

**2006/7:** Smoking ban in all enclosed workplaces, including offices/shops/restaurants/bars

Scotland: March 2006, Wales/Northern Ireland: April 2007, England: July 2007

**2007/8:** Legal age for purchasing tobacco raised from 16 to 18 across the UK

England, Wales and Scotland: October 2007; Northern Ireland: September 2008

**2011-13:** Cigarette vending machines banned

England: October 2011, Wales: February 2012, Northern Ireland: March 2012, Scotland: April 2013

**2012-15:** Tobacco point of sale display ban

In large shops (>280 m<sup>2</sup>): England: April 2012, Northern Ireland: October 2012, Wales: December 2012, Scotland: April 2013 The ban was then extended to small retailers across all jurisdictions in April 2015.

**2015-16:** Smoking ban in cars (with passengers under 18 years old)

England & Wales: October 2015, Scotland: December 2016, not yet in place in Northern Ireland

**May 2017:** Mandatory plain packaging for cigarettes and tobacco comes into force across the UK.

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