

Public support for Government action on tobacco: Results of the 2022 ASH Smokefree survey

Summary

Over 10,000 adults aged 18+ in England were surveyed in February/March this year.¹

- 74% support a smokefree 2030 and there is majority support for all key interventions.
- There is no significant difference in support broken down by voting in the 2019 general election (Conservative, Labour, Lib Dem).²
- Support among 18-24 year olds is slightly lower, with a higher proportion saying they neither support nor oppose or don't know. This is particularly true for raising the age of sale to 21, but it is still supported by more than twice as many 18-24 year olds as oppose.
- Support among smokers was significantly lower, and lowest for tax which has a direct financial impact on smokers.

The Government has set a target to end smoking by 2030. This will mean fewer than 5% of people smoking

	All	18-24 ³	Smokers ⁴
Support	74%	71%	43%
Neither support nor oppose/DK	19%	22%	31%
Oppose	7%	7%	26%

Public support for key interventions

Requiring tobacco manufacturers to pay a levy to Government for measures to help smokers quit and prevent young people from taking up smoking

	All	18-24	Smokers
Support	76%	71%	50%
Neither support nor oppose/DN	18%	22%	34%
Oppose	6%	7%	16%

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

	All	18-24	Smokers
Support	83%	78%	65%
Neither support nor oppose/DN	13%	17%	24%
Oppose	4%	5%	10%

Raise the age of sale from 18 to 21 for tobacco

	All	18-24	Smokers
Support	63%	53%	46%
Neither support nor oppose/DK	23%	26%	30%
Oppose	14%	21%	24%

Tax should be used to increase the price of tobacco products 5% above the rate of inflation each year

	All	18-24	Smokers
Support	63%	58%	21%
Neither support nor oppose/DK	21%	25%	24%
Oppose	16%	17%	55%

Banning names of sweets, cartoons, and bright colours on e-cigarette packaging

	All	18-24	Smokers
Support	69%	64%	46%
Neither support nor oppose/DK	24%	26%	38%
Oppose	7%	9%	16%

Require cigarette packs to include inserts with Government information about quitting

	All	18-24	Smokers
Support	68%	67%	43%
Neither support nor oppose/DK	24%	24%	36%
Oppose	8%	9%	21%

Ban on advertising smoking material and accessories (for example brands of rolling papers)

	All	18-24	Smokers
Support	75%	68%	48%
Neither support nor oppose/DK	19%	25%	35%
Oppose	6%	7%	17%

Increased Government investment in public education campaigns on smoking aimed at adults and children

	All	18-24	Smokers
Support	70%	70%	51%
Neither support nor oppose/DK	23%	23%	36%
Oppose	6%	7%	13%

Health warnings printed on cigarette sticks to encourage smokers to quit

	All	18-24	Smokers
Support	67%	68%	36%
Neither support nor oppose/DK	24%	24%	37%
Oppose	9%	9%	27%

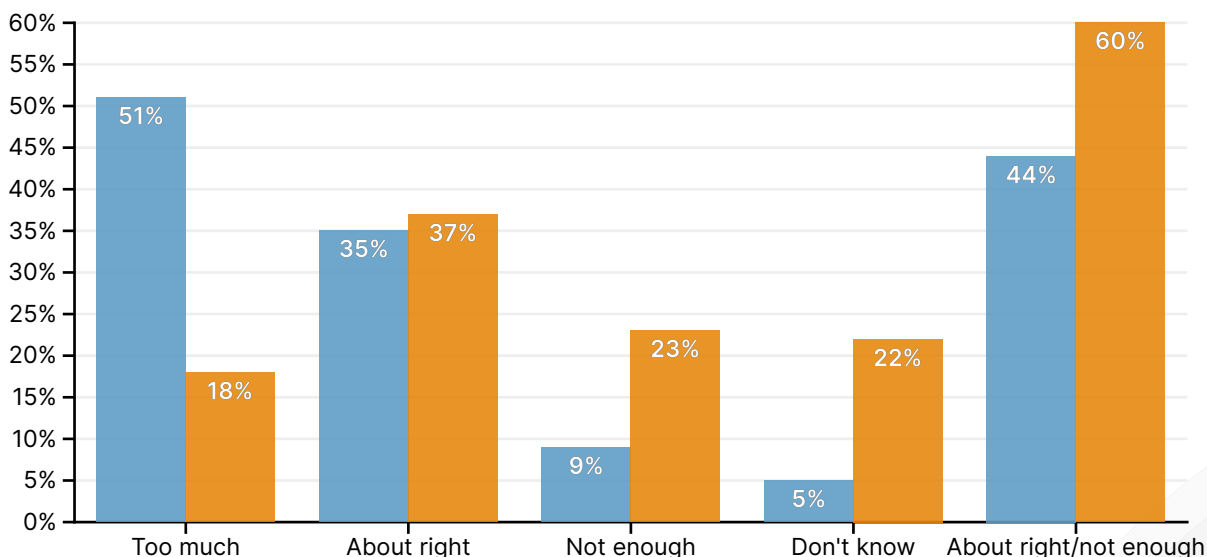
Support for Government intervention has strengthened over time

Public support for government action to limit smoking has strengthened significantly since 2009, when ASH first started monitoring. Despite the many measures that have been introduced since then, the proportion of respondents who think the government is not doing enough to tackle smoking has risen from 29% in 2009 to 46% in 2022. The proportion of respondents who think that the government is doing too much has fallen from 20% in 2009 to 6% in 2022. Three quarters support activities to limit smoking or think Government should do more. The proportion of 18-24 year olds who think government should do more is even higher at 52%.

	2009			2022		
	All	18-24	Smoker	All	18-24	Smoker
Too much	20%	14%	51%	6%	4%	18%
About right	47%	51%	35%	30%	24%	37%
Not enough	29%	28%	9%	46%	52%	23%
About right/ not enough	76%	79%	44%	76%	76%	60%
Don't know	4%	8%	5%	18%	20%	22%

More smokers also think that the Government is not doing enough to limit smoking than those who think they are doing too much (23% not enough vs 18% too much) and 60% support activities to limit smoking, or think government could do more. This has grown significantly since 2009 when half all smokers said the Government was doing too much to limit smoking.

Change in support among smokers for Government action to limit smoking, 2009-2022



1. Total sample size was 10883 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 16/02/2022 - 21/03/2022. The survey was carried out online by YouGov. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all English adults (aged 18+).
2. Results were weighted by age, gender, region, social grade, education level, and ethnicity. Past vote was not included in the sample frame and proportions fell out naturally.
3. N = 1770 for 18-24 year olds
4. N = 1415 for smokers.

Please cite as:

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