

## Fact sheet no.1

# Smoking statistics

This fact sheet includes statistics on tobacco consumption and smoking-related illness and death. November 2018.

## SEE ALSO

- This fact sheet contains key statistics on smoking and smoking-related illnesses among adults in Great Britain (and UK where these are available).
- For information on youth smoking, see [ASH Fact Sheet: Young people and smoking](#).
- For information on use of e-cigarettes see [ASH Fact Sheets: Use of e-cigarettes among adults in Great Britain](#) and [Use of e-cigarettes among children in Great Britain](#).

## TRENDS IN SMOKING

The highest recorded level of smoking among men in Great Britain was 82% in 1948, of whom 65% smoked manufactured cigarettes. At that time, significant numbers of men smoked pipes or cigars as well as, or instead of, manufactured cigarettes. By contrast, women have tended to smoke only cigarettes. Smoking prevalence among women in 1948 was 41% and remained fairly constant until the early 1970's, peaking at 45% in the mid 1960's, according to tobacco industry surveys.<sup>1</sup>

Overall the proportion of adults (aged 16 and over) smoking in Great Britain has been declining since 1974 when national government surveys on smoking among adults first began. The fastest decline was in the 1970s and 1980s. Since then smoking has continued to decline but at a slower rate.<sup>2</sup> The fall in smoking rates is due to a combination of smokers quitting and a growth in the proportion of people who have never smoked.

Various methods have been used to measure smoking rates in Great Britain over the years. There are three Government surveys from which data in this factsheet is sourced: The General Household/General Lifestyle Surveys (GLS), the Opinion & Lifestyle Survey (OPN), and the Annual Population Survey (APS)<sup>2</sup>. Table 3 demonstrates the variance in measurements.

Government targets are set on the basis of the APS data as this has the largest sample size. Please note that due to differences in sample size and methodology overall prevalence figures differ between surveys though the trends are consistent.

**Table 1: Cigarette Smoking Prevalence, Adults Aged 18 and Over, Countries of the UK, 2017<sup>4</sup>**

	England	Wales	Scotland	N. Ireland	UK
Adults	14.9	16.1	16.3	16.5	15.1

There are about about 7.4 million adult cigarette smokers in the United Kingdom.<sup>4</sup> The proportion of the population who have never smoked has increased from 37.4% in 1974 to 58.6% in 2017. In addition, the proportion of cigarette smokers who have quit more than doubled between 1974 and 2017 from 26.7% to 59.5%.<sup>4</sup>

**Table 2: Prevalence of cigarette smoking by sex (GLS/OPN/APS), 1974 to 2017, Great Britain & UK <sup>4</sup>**

%	1974	1978	1982	1986	1990	1994	1998	2002	2006	2010	2014	2015	2016	2017
<b>Men</b>	51	45	38	35	31	28	28	27	23	21	20	19.3	17.7	17.0
<b>Women</b>	41	37	33	31	29	26	26	25	21	20	17	15.3	14.1	13.3
<b>All</b>	45	40	35	33	30	27	27	26	22	20	18.1	17.2	15.8	15.1

NB: Since 2000 data have been weighted. 1974-2010 figures are from the GLS/OPN surveys and are for Great Britain. Data from 2014 onwards is from the Annual Population Survey and is for the UK.<sup>4</sup>

**Table 3: Smoking prevalence by survey, 1974-2016<sup>2,3,4</sup>**

%	1974	1978	1982	1986	1990	1994	1998	2002	2006	2010	2014	2015	2016	2017
<b>OPN/GLS</b>	45.6	40.2	35.3	32.7	30.0	26.8	27.1	25.9	22.0	20.3	18.8	17.8	16.1	16.8
<b>APS</b>										20.1	18.1	17.2	15.8	15.1

NB: The earliest data available from the APS is from 2010.<sup>4</sup>

Overall the proportion of adults (aged 16 and over) smoking in Great Britain has been declining since 1974 when national government surveys on smoking among adults first began.

## AT A GLANCE

- There are 7.4 million adult cigarette smokers in the United Kingdom.
- Across almost all age groups men are more likely to smoke than women.
- There is a strong link between high rates of cigarette smoking and lower socio-economic status.
- The latest Tobacco Control Plan was released in July 2017.
- Smoking accounts for approximately 96,000 deaths a year in the United Kingdom.
- About half of all life-long smokers will die prematurely.

## Type of tobacco smoked

Across Great Britain, since 1990 there has been a steady increase in the number of smokers using mainly hand-rolled tobacco. In 1990, 18% of male smokers and 2% of female smokers said they smoked mainly hand-rolled cigarettes but by 2011 this had risen to 40% and 26% respectively.<sup>4</sup> The 2017 Opinions & Lifestyle survey revealed that 44.4% of male and 27.9% of female smokers said they smoked hand-rolled cigarettes.<sup>4</sup>

## Targets to reduce smoking

Periodically the Government sets targets to reduce smoking prevalence in the population. Most recently, the Conservative Minority Government published a Tobacco Control Plan for England in July 2017 outlining the steps needed to drastically reduce smoking rates by 2022. Its goals include reducing the number of 15 year olds who smoke regularly from 8% to 3% or below, reducing smoking in adults from 15.5% to 12%, and reducing smoking in pregnancy from 10.7% to 6% or below.<sup>8</sup>

In March 2011 the Coalition Government launched its Tobacco Control Plan for England in which it set out ambitions to reduce adult smoking prevalence to 18.5% or less by 2015 and to reduce smoking among 15 year-olds to 12% or less by 2015.<sup>7</sup>

In its strategy paper launched on 1 February 2010 the Labour Government set new targets to reduce smoking among the general population to 10% of adults and to 1% or less among children by 2020.<sup>6</sup>

In the 1998 White Paper 'Smoking Kills' the Government set a target to reduce adult smoking rates to 21% or less by 2010, with a reduction in prevalence among routine and manual groups to 26% or less.<sup>5</sup> The target for the general population was achieved in 2007 but not for lower socio-economic groups (28% in 2011).

## CIGARETTE SMOKING BY GENDER AND AGE

In general, men are more likely to smoke than women. Since 2010 smoking has become less common across all age groups.<sup>4</sup> Smoking continues to be lowest among people aged 60 and over. Although they are more likely than younger people to have ever been smokers, they are also more likely to have stopped smoking.

## CIGARETTE SMOKING AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC GROUP

There is a strong link between cigarette smoking and socio-economic group. In 2017, 25.9% of adults in routine and manual occupations smoked compared with 10.9% in managerial and professional occupations.<sup>2</sup>

Historically there has been a slower decline in smoking among manual groups, resulting in smoking becoming increasingly concentrated in this population. However, in recent years, smoking rates have fallen by a similar amount across all social groups, so that the differential between non-manual and manual has not changed significantly.

## TOBACCO CONSUMPTION

Since the mid-1970s cigarette consumption has fallen among both men and women, particularly among heavy smokers (defined as those smoking more than 20 cigarettes a day). In 1974, 26% of men and 13% of women were heavy smokers compared with 5% of men and 3% of women in 2012.<sup>2</sup> The average number of cigarettes smoked per day by men and women has seen a general downward trend.

**Table 4: Cigarette smoking by age: Percentage of adult population, Great Britain<sup>4</sup>**

%	Age				
	16-24	25-34	35-49	50-59	60+
<b>1974</b>	44.3	50.9	52.0	50.4	33.3
<b>1984</b>	34.7	37.9	37.1	39.1	25.8
<b>1994</b>	34.2	31.8	29.5	26.7	17.3
<b>2004</b>	28.9	31.2	29.3	24.1	14.2
<b>2014</b>	23.1	24.2	21.0	18.9	11.4
<b>2015</b>	23.5	24.2	20.3	16.0	10.3
<b>2016</b>	16.6	23.0	18.2	15.0	10.6
<b>2017</b>	19.9	21.9	21.1	17.5	8.3

**Table 5: Prevalence of cigarette smoking by socio-economic classification: Persons aged 16 and over. Great Britain: 2017<sup>4</sup>**

	Employed	Un-employed	Economically Inactive
<b>Smoker</b>	18	27.9	13.4
<b>Ex-Smoker</b>	22.2	12.9	30.2
<b>Never smoked</b>	59.8	59.2	56.4

**Table 6: Average daily consumption of manufactured cigarettes per smoker, GB, 1949-2017<sup>1 2 3 4</sup>**

Year	1949	1959	1969	1979	1990	2000	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
<b>Men</b>	14.1	18.4	18.9	21.6	16.8	15.0	14.0	13.0	12.0	13.0	12.2	11.6	12.0	11.4
<b>Women</b>	6.8	11.0	13.7	16.6	13.9	13.0	12.0	12.0	11.0	11.0	10.5	11.0	11.0	10.3

**Table 7: Average daily cigarette consumption per smoker by qualification level, GB, 2016, OPN<sup>9</sup>**

	Degree	A-level	GCSE (D-G)	No formal qualification
<b>Avg. # of daily cigarettes</b>	8.1	10.1	11.1	14.6

### Cigarette consumption and socio-economic group

Higher cigarette consumption is associated with lower socio-economic status. A YouGov survey commissioned by ASH found that 32% of current smokers in higher social groups (AB) smoked 6 or fewer cigarettes per day compared to 16% in the lower social group (E). People in social group E are more likely to be heavy smokers: 13% reported smoking 21 to 30 cigarettes a day compared with 9% in the highest social group.<sup>8</sup> OPN data finds similar trends: as Table 7 notes, smokers with a degree smoke on average 6.5 fewer cigarettes a day than those with no formal qualifications.

### Dependence on cigarette smoking

There are several ways of measuring dependence on smoking including the desire to quit amongst those who nevertheless continue to smoke. Other ways of measuring dependence include how soon the first cigarette of the day is smoked after waking. OPN data shows 42.9% of current smokers in Great Britain had their first cigarette within the first 30 minutes of waking.<sup>4</sup>

60.8% of current smokers said they wanted to stop smoking, and only 18.9% said that they don't want to ever stop smoking.<sup>4</sup>

## ILLNESS AND DISEASE

Smoking is the primary cause of preventable illness and premature death, accounting for approximately 77,900 deaths a year in England.<sup>11</sup> Smoking harms nearly every organ of the body and dramatically reduces both quality of life and life expectancy. Smoking causes lung cancer, respiratory disease and heart disease as well as numerous cancers in other organs including the lip, mouth, throat, bladder, kidney, stomach, liver and cervix. The 2010 US Surgeon General report, 'How Tobacco Smoke Causes Disease', concludes that "*there is no risk-free level of exposure to tobacco smoke, and there is no safe tobacco product.*"<sup>12</sup>

It is estimated that the global yearly death toll as a result of tobacco use is currently 7 million (including exposure to secondhand smoke).<sup>13</sup> On current smoking trends this is expected to rise to around 10 million a year by 2030.<sup>14</sup> It is predicted that by the end of the 21st century, tobacco will have killed one billion people within the century.<sup>15</sup>

For every death caused by smoking, approximately 20 smokers are suffering from a smoking related disease.<sup>12 15</sup> In England it is estimated that in 2015-16, among adults aged 35 and over, around 474,300 NHS hospital admissions were attributable to smoking, accounting for 4% of all hospital admissions in this age group.<sup>16</sup> The cost of smoking to the National Health Service in England is estimated to be £2.5 billion a year.<sup>17</sup>

## DEATHS CAUSED BY SMOKING

Smoking is the leading cause of preventable death and disease in the UK. About half of all life-long smokers will die prematurely, losing on average about 10 years of life.<sup>18</sup> Smoking kills more people each year than the following preventable causes of death combined. [figures for England except HIV which is for UK and traffic accidents for Great Britain]

- obesity (34,100)<sup>19</sup>
- alcohol (6,813)<sup>20</sup>
- road traffic accidents (1,730)<sup>21</sup>
- drug misuse (2,479)<sup>22</sup>
- HIV infection (613)<sup>23</sup>

Most smoking-related deaths arise from one of three types of disease: lung cancer, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD which incorporates emphysema and chronic bronchitis) and coronary heart disease (CHD). In 2015, 16% (79,000) of all deaths of adults aged 35 and over in England were estimated to be attributable to smoking.<sup>16</sup>

Of these smoking caused:

- 37,400 (27%) of all cancer deaths
- 23,200 (35%) of all respiratory deaths
- 16,400 (13%) of all circulatory disease deaths

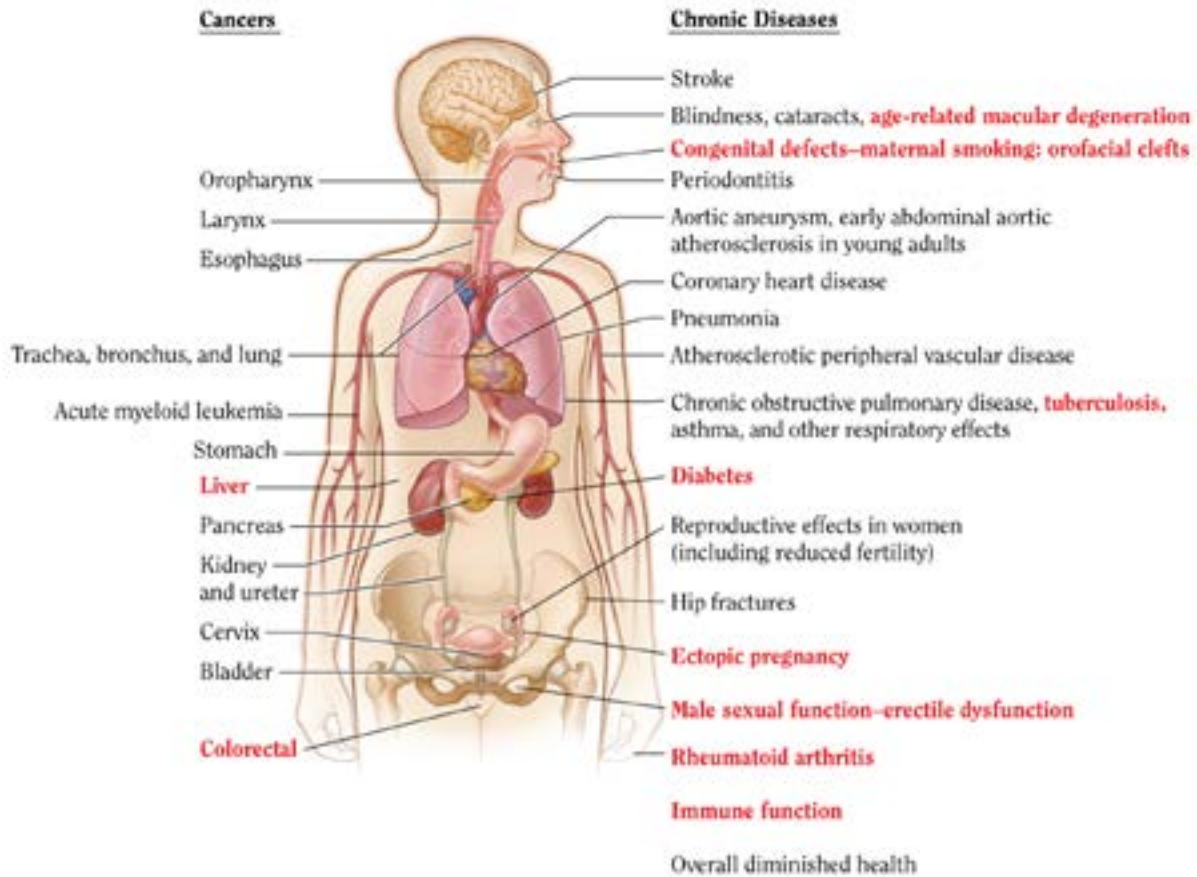
**Table 8: Estimated percentages and numbers of deaths attributable to smoking in England by cause among adults aged 35 and over, 2015<sup>16</sup>**

	Number of deaths				% of deaths	
	All deaths	Deaths estimated to be caused by smoking			Men	Women
		Men	Women	Total		
<b>Cancers</b>						
Lung, Trachea and Bronchus	28,535	13,400	9,100	22,6500	86	71
Oesophagus	6,520	3,000	1,200	4,200	68	57
Bladder	4,404	1,300	400	1,700	42	28
Pancreas	7,811	800	900	1,700	20	23
Upper respiratory sites	2,396	1,100	400	1,500	70	46
Stomach	3,627	600	200	700	24	12
Kidney & renal pelvis	3,768	700	100	900	32	7
Larynx	670	400	100	500	80	72
Myeloid leukaemia	2,302	300	100	400	21	10
Cervical	636	-	100	100	-	10
Unspecified site	7,764	1,900	800	2,600	51	19
<b>All Cancer</b>	<b>68,433</b>	<b>23,500</b>	<b>13,200</b>	<b>36,900</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Respiratory</b>						
Chronic obstructive lung disease*	26,349	10,700	9,600	20,400	82	78
Pneumonia, Influenza	27,375	2,700	1,800	4,300	23	12
<b>All Respiratory</b>	<b>61,744</b>	<b>12,300</b>	<b>10,800</b>	<b>24,600</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Digestive</b>						
Stomach and duodenal ulcer	1,732	500	300	800	49	40
<b>Circulatory</b>						
Ischaemic heart disease	53,668	5,000	2,200	7,200	15	11
Aortic aneurysm	4,912	1,800	1,000	2,800	61	51
Cerebrovascular disease (stroke)	30,319	1,500	1,100	2,700	12	5
Other heart disease	23,512	1,700	1,200	2,900	16	9
Other arterial disease	2,634	200	200	400	14	15
Atherosclerosis	57	0	0	0	25	9
<b>All Circulatory</b>	<b>115,002</b>	<b>10,400</b>	<b>6,000</b>	<b>16,400</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>All Deaths</b>	<b>481,280</b>					
<b>Total caused by smoking</b>		<b>47,500</b>	<b>30,400</b>	<b>77,900</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>12</b>

NB: The estimated attributable number of deaths is rounded to the nearest 100. Numbers may not all total due to rounding.

\*ICD codes J40-J44 which includes bronchitis, emphysema and other chronic obstructive lung disease. The proportion of deaths attributable to smoking is the median (mid-point) between the highest and lowest estimates for this group of diseases.

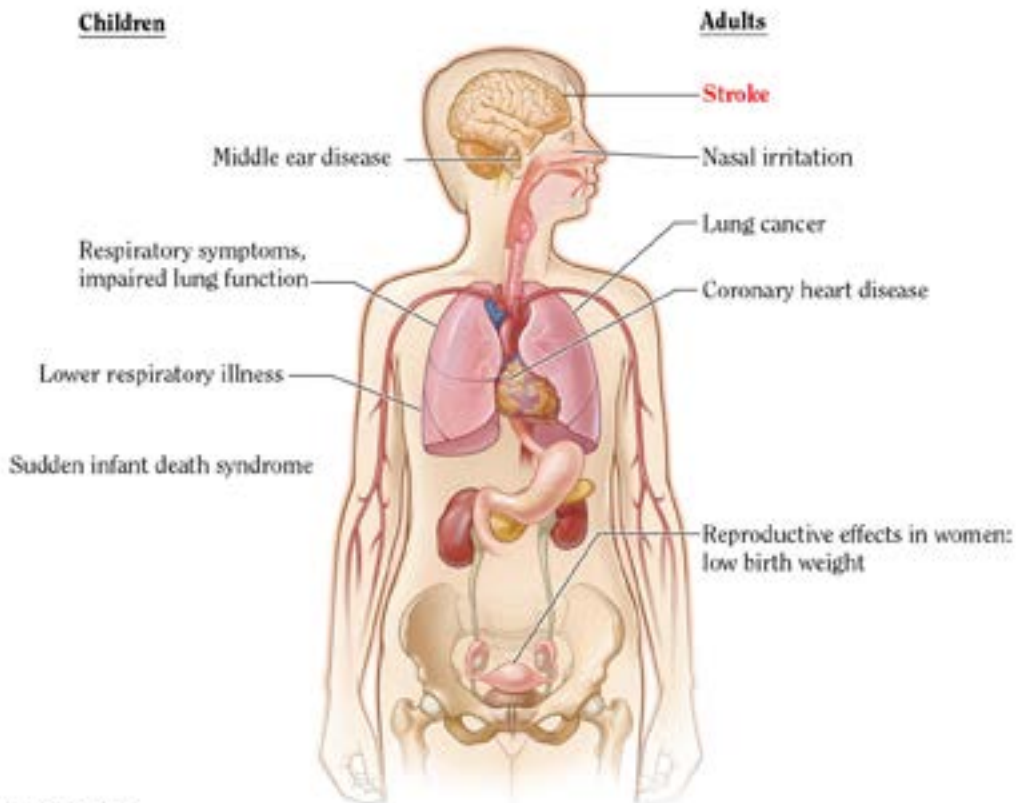
# THE HEALTH CONSEQUENCES OF ACTIVE SMOKING



Source: USDHHS 2004, 2006, 2012.

Note: The condition in **red** is a new disease that has been causally linked to smoking in the report: *The Health Consequences of Smoking—50 Years of Progress, A Report of the US Surgeon General*

# THE HEALTH CONSEQUENCES OF PASSIVE SMOKING



Source: USDHHS 2004, 2006.

Note: The condition in **red** is a new disease that has been causally linked to smoking in the report: *The Health Consequences of Smoking—50 Years of Progress, A Report of the US Surgeon General*

## NONFATAL DISEASES

There are many medical conditions associated with or aggravated by smoking, which may not be fatal but still cause years of debilitating illness. These include:<sup>24 25</sup>

<b>Heart and circulation:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Angina, Buerger's Disease (severe circulatory disease), Peripheral vascular disease</li> </ul>
<b>Respiratory:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asthma, Common cold, Chronic rhinitis (inflammation of nose), Influenza, Tuberculosis</li> </ul>
<b>Stomach/digestive system:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Colon polyps, Crohn's disease (chronic inflamed bowel), Duodenal ulcer, Stomach ulcer</li> </ul>
<b>Mouth:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gingivitis &amp; Periodontitis (gum disease), Tooth loss, Tooth discolouration</li> </ul>
<b>Ligaments, muscles and bones:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ligament, tendon and muscle injuries, Neck and back pain, Osteoporosis (in both sexes), Rheumatoid arthritis</li> </ul>
<b>Eyes:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cataract, Macular degeneration, Nystagmus (abnormal eye movements), Optic neuropathy (loss of vision), Ocular histoplasmosis (fungal eye infection), Tobacco Amblyopia (loss of vision), Diabetic retinopathy, Optic neuritis</li> </ul>
<b>Skin:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Psoriasis, Skin wrinkling</li> </ul>
<b>Reproductive functions:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Female fertility (30% lower), Menopause (onset 1.74 years earlier on average), Male fertility (Impotence, Reduced sperm count and motility, sperm less able to penetrate the ovum, increased shape abnormalities)</li> </ul>
<b>Other:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Depression, Hearing loss, Multiple sclerosis, Type 2 Diabetes</li> </ul>

## PERCEPTIONS OF HEALTH

Smoking has an impact on people's perceptions of health, with smokers in some age groups twice as likely as non-smokers of a similar age to feel that they are not in good health.

**Table 9: Perceived health by age and smoking status, UK, January to December 2014** <sup>26</sup>

Age Group	In good health - %	
	Current Smoker	Never Smoker
18 - 24	83.0	91.9
25 - 34	79.9	90.7
35 - 49	69.5	85.2
50 - 64	56.3	76.0
65+	48.8	62.3
<b>TOTAL</b>	68.3	80.9

Integrated Household Survey, January to December 2014<sup>16</sup>

## RESOURCES

For information about tobacco use and related harm at local level in England, please refer to Public Health England's [Local Tobacco Control Profiles for England](#). For more statistics on deaths from smoking in the UK and worldwide see [Deaths from Smoking](#).

# REFERENCES

1. Wald, N. and Nicolaides-Bouman, A. UK Smoking Statistics. 2nd edition, Oxford University Press, 1991
2. [Adult smoking habits in the UK 2017](#). [Internet]. Office for National Statistics. 2017 [cited 13 September 2018].
3. [General Lifestyle Survey](#) [Internet]. Ons.gov.uk. 2011 [cited 13 September 2018].
4. [Adult smoking habits in Great Britain 2017](#). Office for National Statistics. 2017. [cited 13 September 2018].
5. [PSA Delivery Agreement 18: Promote better health and well-being for all](#). The Treasury, Oct 2007.
6. A Smokefree Future. A comprehensive tobacco control strategy for England. Department of Health, 2010.
7. [Healthy Lives, Healthy People: A Tobacco Control Plan for England](#). HM Government, March 2011
8. Department of Health. [Towards a smoke-free generation: tobacco control plan for England](#) [Internet]. 2017.
9. [Supplementary Data Tables](#). Office for National Statistics. 2017. [cited 13 September 2018].
10. YouGov. Total sample size was 12,696. Fieldwork was undertaken between 16th February and 19th March 2017. All surveys were carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all GB Adults (aged 18+).
11. Estimated premature deaths for each jurisdiction are as follows: England – 77,900; Scotland – 10,000; Wales – 5,500; N. Ireland – 2,300. Sources: [Statistics on Smoking: England, 2018](#); [ASH Scotland Smoking and Tobacco Statistics Fact Sheet 2016](#); [Welsh Government - Health Improvement NIdirect - smoking](#)
12. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. [How Tobacco Smoke Causes Disease: The Biology and Behavioral Basis for Smoking-Attributable Disease](#): A Report of the Surgeon General. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2010.
13. [Factsheet 339. Tobacco](#). WHO, July 2015
14. Jha P. [Avoidable deaths from smoking: a global perspective](#). PublicHealthReviews. 2012; 33: 569-600.
15. Smoking-attributable morbidity – United States, 2000. MMWR Weekly Report. 5 Sep. 2003
16. [NHS Digital \(2017\). Statistics on Smoking: England: 2017. \[online\] Available at: http://content.digital.nhs.uk/catalogue/PUB24228/smok-eng-2017-rep.pdf \[Accessed 18 Sep. 2017\]](#).
17. [Local costs of smoking](#), 2015 Action on Smoking and Health
18. Doll R, Peto, R, Boreham & Sutherland I. [Mortality in relation to smoking: 50 years' observations on male British doctors](#). BMJ 2004; 328: 1519
19. [Statistics on obesity, physical activity and diet: England, 2015](#) HSCIC, 2015
20. [Statistics on Alcohol: England, 2015](#). Information Centre for Health and Social Care, 2015
21. [Reported Road Casualties in Great Britain: Main Results 2014](#) Dept for Transport, 2015
22. [Statistics on Drug Misuse, England - 2014](#) Health and Social Care Information Centre, 2014.
23. [HIV New Diagnoses, Treatment and Care in the UK 2015 Report](#). Public Health England, Oct 2015
24. [Cigarettes: what the warning label doesn't tell you](#). American Council on Science and Health, 2003.
25. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. [The Health Consequences of Smoking—50 Years of Progress](#): A Report of the Surgeon General. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2014.
26. [Integrated Household Survey, January to December 2014](#) ONS, Oct. 2015