New data shows smoking in England cost £12.5 billion in 2018

The figures are in. Smoking in England cost society at least £12.5bn in 2018, according to calculations carried out for Action on Smoking and Health (ASH) [1].

Last year there were 6.4 million smokers in England and 77,800 deaths from smoking with many more people suffering disease and disability [2].

The £12.5 billion cost to society breaks down as follows:
- £2.4 billion fell to the NHS
- £720 million fell to local authorities in the cost of social care
- £4.6 billion to employers in smoking breaks, sickness and absenteeism
- £4.3 billion fell to wider society due to lost economic activity from early deaths and unemployment due to smoking

Additional costs included:
- £325 million from the cost of house fires caused by smoking
- £164 million in self-funded social care
- 2,768 tonnes of litter, 1,164 tonnes discarded on the street with local authorities having to pay for it to be collected.

An online tool has been developed by ASH which gives a breakdown of the full cost of smoking by geographical region, local authority and ward. ASH Chief Executive Deborah Arnott said:

“Smoking takes a heavy toll on communities, local services and society at large. Disease and disability from smoking harms current smokers, ex-smokers and those exposed to secondhand smoke, often young children and those yet to be born.

If the Government succeeds in ending smoking in England by 2030, this can be stopped. But to achieve such an ambitious goal needs funding. The tobacco industry does the damage, the Government must make it pay to put things right. “

ENDS

Notes to the editor:

About Action on Smoking and Health (ASH)
Action on Smoking and Health (ASH) is a health charity working to eliminate the harm caused by tobacco use. ASH receives funding for its programme of work from Cancer Research UK and the British Heart Foundation.

Media Contact
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References