The Smokefree Great Britain Survey 2020
Public Opinion in the South West

In 2018, 13.9% of people in the South West continued to smoke. Smoking killed 24,091 people in the South West from 2016-18 and remains the leading cause of preventable illness and premature death in England.

In 2020, the South West supported Government action to tackle tobacco
- Around four fifths (79%) of adults in the South West support activities to limit smoking or think the government could do more
- 7% of adults in the South West think the Government is doing too much (4%) or far too much (3%)
- In the South West, the proportion of respondents who think the Government could do more to limit smoking has grown substantially from 32% in 2009 to 45% in 2020
- 76% of people in the South West support the Government’s ambition to reduce smoking prevalence to 5% or below (fewer than 1 in 20 people) by 2030 with just 7% opposing

What further action should be taken to tackle tobacco?

A levy on tobacco manufacturers
Adults in the South West strongly support tobacco manufacturers being required to pay a levy to Government for measures to help smokers quit and prevent young people from taking up smoking. 78% of the South West support this, with only 5% opposing it.

Increasing the age of sale from 18 to 21
The majority of adults in the South West support increasing the age of sale for tobacco from 18 to 21, with few opposing it. There is good evidence that raising the age of sale of tobacco to 21 will have a substantial positive impact on public health and save lives.

Pack inserts
Over two thirds (71%) of adults in the South West support requiring cigarette packs to include inserts with Government mandated information about quitting, compared to 7% who oppose it. Research from Canada, where pack inserts are used, shows they have been effective in promoting quitting, whilst UK research shows use of such inserts is supported by smokers diverse in age, gender and social grade.
Smoking in cars
Banning smoking in all cars is supported by 68% of adults in the South West and opposed by just 14%. Smoking in cars results in concentrations of toxins much higher than are normally found elsewhere – up to 11 times higher than you used to find in the average smoky pub.

Tobacco retail licensing
84% of adults in the South West support the introduction of a licence to sell tobacco which can be removed if retailers are caught more than once selling to underage smokers, with only 3% opposing.

In 2020, public belief in tobacco companies offers of help was extremely low in the South West. Tobacco manufacturers increasingly claim they want to help people stop smoking and are trying to influence public health policy, for example by offering funding in exchange for relaxing of advertising regulations on new products. The public understands the tobacco industry are not to be trusted: only 1% of adults in the South West agree with the statement: ‘I believe tobacco companies when they say they want to help people quit smoking’

1 All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc Smokefree Britain Survey 2020. The total sample sizes was 10749 adults in England. The unweighted sample for the South West was 1066. Fieldwork was undertaken between: 17th February 2020 to 11th March 2020. The survey is carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all GB adults (aged 18+).
8 Moodie C. Adult smokers' perceptions of cigarette pack inserts promoting cessation: a focus group study. Tobacco Control 2019;28:72-77
10 YouGov Plc Smokefree Britain Survey 2019. The total sample sizes was 10338 adults in England. The unweighted sample for the South West was 1085. Fieldwork was undertaken between: 12th February 2019 to 10th March 2019. The survey is carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all GB adults (aged 18+).