

The Smokefree Great Britain Survey 2020¹

Public Opinion in the West Midlands

In 2018, 14.5% of people in the West Midlands continued to smoke.² Smoking killed 24,742 people in the West Midlands from 2016-18³ and remains the leading cause of preventable illness and premature death in England.⁴

In 2020, the West Midlands supported Government action to tackle tobacco

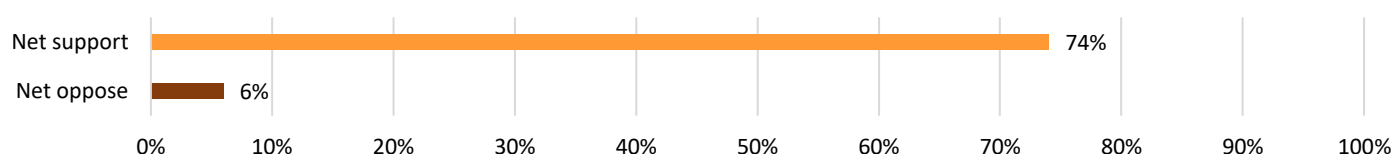
- Three quarters (75%) of adults in the West Midlands support activities to limit smoking or think the government could do more
- 8% of adults in the West Midlands think the Government is doing too much (4%) or far too much (4%)
- In the West Midlands, the proportion of respondents who think the Government could do more to limit smoking has grown substantially from 30% in 2009⁵ to 43% in 2020
- 72% of people in the West Midlands support the Government's ambition to reduce smoking prevalence to 5% or below (fewer than 1 in 20 people) by 2030 with just 8% opposing.

What further action should be taken to tackle tobacco?

A levy on tobacco manufacturers

Adults in the West Midlands 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. 74% of the West Midlands support this, with only 6% opposing it.

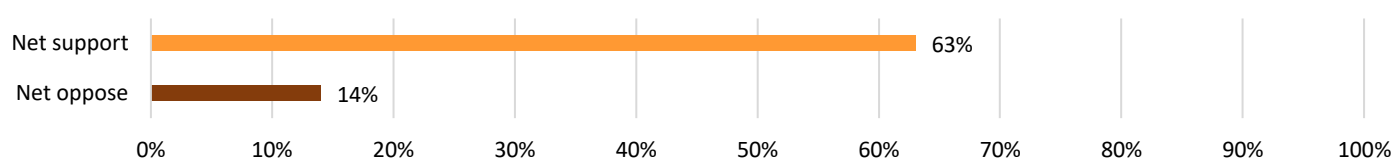
West Midlands support for a tobacco levy paid by tobacco manufacturers to Government



Increasing the age of sale from 18 to 21

The majority of adults in the West Midlands 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.⁶

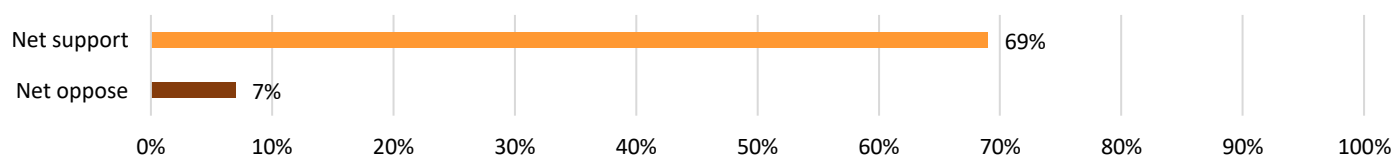
West Midlands support for increasing the age of sale for tobacco to 21



Pack inserts

Over two thirds (69%) of adults in the West Midlands 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,⁷ whilst UK research shows use of such inserts is supported by smokers diverse in age, gender and social grade.⁸

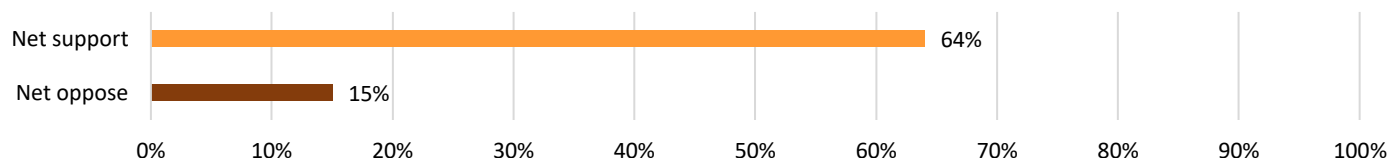
West Midlands support for cigarette packs to include inserts with Government information about quitting



Smoking in cars

Banning smoking in all cars is supported by 64% of adults in the West Midlands and opposed by just 15%. 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.⁹

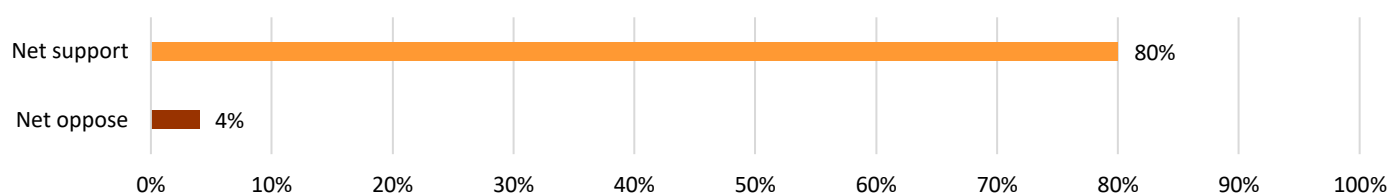
West Midlands support for a ban on smoking in all cars



Tobacco retail licensing

80% of adults in the West Midlands 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 4% opposing.

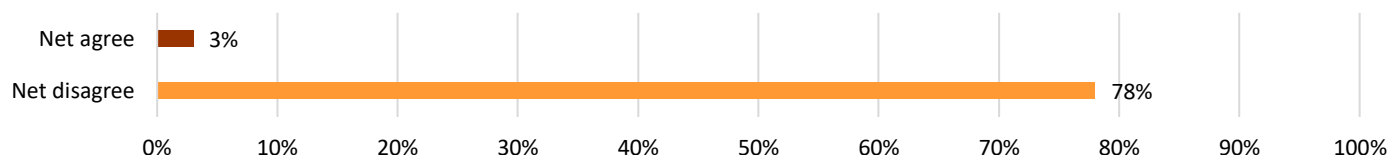
West Midlands support for tobacco retail licencing in England



In 2019, public belief in tobacco companies offers of help was extremely low in the West Midlands¹⁰

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.¹¹ The public understands the tobacco industry are not to be trusted: only 3% of adults in the West Midlands agree with the statement: 'I believe tobacco companies when they say they want to help people quit smoking'.

West Midlands: '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 West Midlands was 1071. 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+).

2 Public Health England, Local Tobacco Control Profiles: West Midlands smoking prevalence in adults: <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/tobacco-control/data#page/4/gid/1938132886/pat/15/par/E92000001/ati/6/are/E12000005/iid/92443/age/168/sex/4>

3 Public Health England, Local Tobacco Control Profiles: West Midlands smoking attributable mortality: <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/tobacco-control/data#page/4/gid/1938132887/pat/15/par/E92000001/ati/6/are/E12000005/iid/92443/age/168/sex/4>

4 NHS Digital. 'Health Survey for England 2014 Trend Tables Commentary'. 2015. Page 20.

5 Smokefree: The First Ten Years, Tackling the smoking epidemic in England: the views of the public, ASH 2017: <http://ash.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/170107-Smokefree-the-first-ten-years-FINAL.pdf>

6 IOM (Institute of Medicine). Public health implications of raising the minimum age of legal access to tobacco products. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. 2015. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK310412/>

7 Thrasher JF, Swayampakala K, Cummings KM, et al. [Cigarette package inserts can promote efficacy beliefs and sustained smoking cessation attempts: A longitudinal assessment of an innovative policy in Canada](#). Prev Med 2016;88:59–65

8 Moodie C. [Adult smokers' perceptions of cigarette pack inserts promoting cessation: a focus group study](#). Tobacco Control 2018;27:72-77

9 Sendzik T, Fong GT, Travers MJ, Hyland A. An experimental investigation of tobacco smoke pollution in cars. Nicotine Tob Res. 2009;11(6):627–634. doi:10.1093/ntr/ntp019

10 YouGov Plc Smokefree Britain Survey 2019. The total sample sizes was 10338 adults in England. The unweighted sample for the West Midlands was 1048. 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+).

11 The Guardian. [Philip Morris drew up plan for £1bn tobacco transition fund](#). February 2020 [accessed April 2020]