

## Smokefree England factsheet

### BUSINESS RESEARCH

The Department of Health undertook a series of surveys to measure businesses' awareness of smokefree law, levels of support and understanding of the details of the legislation as well as the expected impact on their business. To date, there have been seven waves of research conducted in August 2006, in January, February, May, June and August 2007, and in May 2008. All research was conducted by Continental Research.

The most recent wave was conducted on Continental Research's regular telephone omnibus amongst small, medium and large businesses, amongst a sample of 451 businesses, similar to August 2007 (455) and June 2007 (462). In May 2007, 700 businesses were interviewed on an adhoc basis, with the sample matched to the profile achieved in February 2007 (692), which included booster interviews in Manufacturing, Transport & Communications and Pub sectors. The research in January was on Continental's regular business omnibus among a sample of 449 and the research in August 2006 included booster interviews in the hospitality sector, with a sample of 501.

The sample composition is thus slightly different each wave, but all waves are weighted to be representative of the 1,084,000 companies in England with a turnover of £50,000+ as estimated by the DTI.

#### Key findings:

##### 9 out of 10 businesses are aware of smokefree law

- Awareness of the smoking legislation increased steadily from just over half (57%) of the business population in August 2006 up to 73% in January 2007, 77% in February 2007, then levelled out in the months immediately preceding and following smokefree law: 89% in May 2007, 96% in June 2007, 92% in August 2007 and 89% in May 2008.
- Prior to the law being introduced, businesses' awareness of the July 1st date for the introduction of the law also increased dramatically, standing at 93% spontaneous awareness in the June (up from 68% in May 2007, 44% in Feb 2007 and 35% in Jan 2007).

##### 81% support smokefree

- 81% of businesses interviewed in May 2008 said they think the smokefree law is a 'good idea' – only 11% said it was a 'bad idea' (up from 78%/11% in June 2007 and 78%/7% in August 2007).
- This is consistent with August 2006 research, when 79% of businesses said they would support a law which made all workplaces smokefree.
- Overall 40% of businesses interviewed in May 2008 reported a positive impact on the company, and only 3% a negative impact.
- 38% of licensed premises interviewed in May 2008 reported a positive impact on the company, outnumbering those reporting a negative impact by three to one (12% reported a negative impact).

- 59% of businesses and 62% of licensed premises interviewed in May 2008 reported that staff reactions to the law were positive (4% and 15% respectively reported negative reactions).
- The research in August 2006 asked businesses about their attitude to smokefree and found:
  - 91% of businesses said they agreed with the statement “people at work have the right not to breathe in other workers’ smoke”.
  - 91% said they agreed that other people’s cigarette smoke harms non-smokers.
  - 71% agreed that secondhand smoke can cause heart disease in non-smokers.
- Fewer businesses predicted a positive impact on staff health in May compared with Aug 2006, with more saying there would be no change. This is likely to be due in part to the increased number of businesses to have introduced a no-smoking policy over this period of time. Only 2% predicted a negative impact.
- When asked about the effect on the company of creating a smokefree workplace, the general pattern of responses throughout all waves of research was around a quarter saying it would have a positive impact, two thirds saying it would make no difference and a small minority saying it would have a negative impact.

#### **94% said enough information was made available to help prepare for smokefree**

- In May 2008, 94% of businesses said they felt that enough information had been made available to help them prepare for smokefree law (up from 93% in August 2007 and 86% in June 2007).
- In June 2007, 81% of businesses had “no concerns” about the legislation, including 88% of the hospitality trade. This is consistent with expectations in August 2006, when 89% of businesses said they thought implementing smokefree legislation would be easy.
- By June 2007, the vast majority of businesses understood that enclosed workplaces (87%) and enclosed public places (84%) would be affected by the new law – a slight increase from 81% in May 2007.

#### **98% say they are fully compliant**

- In May 2008, 98% of businesses said they were fully compliant with the law and 91% thought that law was being obeyed (both results are consistent with August 2007 results).
- 87% of businesses and 93% of licensed premises interviewed in May 2008 stated that implementation had gone well or very well.
- Almost half (45%) of businesses interviewed in May 2008 that operate licensed premises and one in six (17%) businesses overall said they had been checked for compliance by their local authority.
- In June 2007, 95% of businesses believed they were already compliant, or would be by July 1st 2007 (similar to February and May 2007 results).
- Over 79% of businesses said they were displaying the new no-smoking signs in August 2007, compared with a third of companies in June 2007.
- 97% of businesses with work vehicles and 95% with company cars said, in August 2007, that either all vehicles or those used by more than one person are smokefree.
- In August 2007, over three quarters of businesses said they had taken specific action to comply with the legislation, with over half having informed or trained staff.