

Smokefree England factsheet

PUBLIC OPINION RESEARCH

The Department of Health undertook a series of surveys looking at public awareness of the smokefree law, levels of public support, its impact on public behaviour and knowledge of what the legislation encompasses.

The latest wave of research was carried out in May 2008, with a total of three waves carried out prior to July 1st, in February, April and June 2007. All research was carried out on ICM's telephone omnibus amongst a representative sample of c.1,700 adults aged 18+ in England. Interviews were conducted across the country and results were weighted to the profile of all English adults.

96% awareness

- General awareness of the legislation has remained high throughout the research, reaching 96% in May 2008 (2007 figures: 89% in February, 93% in April and 95% in June).
- Prior to the law being introduced, unprompted awareness of the date for the introduction of smokefree law rose dramatically from just 33% in February to 55% in April and 83% in June. This followed the launch of public information advertising in mid-May 2007.

76% support

- Support for smokefree law has remained consistent at around three-quarters of the adult population, standing at 76% in May 2008 (2007 figures: 74% in February, 76% in April and 78% in June).

Positive health impact

- The May 2008 research found that seven out of ten adults believe that going smokefree will have a positive effect on health. (2007 figures: 75% in February, 76% in April and 78% in June).
- The top reason given for the legislation has consistently been that secondhand smoke is harmful to health, standing at 65% in May 2008 (2007 figures: 65% in February and April and 69% in June).

Benefits experienced

- Many respondents interviewed in May 2008 said they'd experienced personal benefits since England became smokefree, with the most popular answers including:
 - Cleaner environment (22%).
 - Don't smell of smoke (22%).
 - Health benefits (12%).
 - Going out is more pleasurable (12%).

Business impact

- 75% of regular pub goers interviewed in May 2008 expressed their support for the law (2007 figures: 70% in February, 71% in April and 73% in June).
- 62% of adults interviewed in May 2008 said the legislation hasn't affected how often they go to the pub and 13% say they go more often.
- 74% of regular pub goers said they go to the pub the same amount as they did prior to smokefree legislation and 15% said they go more often.

Enforcement

- 87% of adults interviewed in May 2008 believe that smokefree legislation is being obeyed and 91% of those in work said that their employer was enforcing the law.
- This is consistent with findings prior to the introduction of smokefree law, where 90% of the adults interviewed in June 2007 thought the legislation would be enforced.