



1 July 2017

Smokefree: The First Ten Years

Tackling the smoking epidemic in England: the views of the public

research report **ash.**
action on smoking and health

The ASH Smokefree GB and Smokefree England surveys are part-funded by the British Heart Foundation and Cancer Research UK.

The analysis of the data contained in this report was funded by the Association of Directors of Public Health, Yorkshire and the Humber.

Contents

Summary.....	4
Introduction.....	6
Ten years of progress.....	7
The smokefree revolution.....	7
Protecting children.....	8
Putting tobacco out of sight in shops.....	10
Standard packs.....	12
Keeping up the pressure on price.....	14
The next ten years.....	16
A licence to sell tobacco.....	16
Preventing smoking in all cars.....	17
Making the polluter pay.....	19
Conclusion.....	21
Appendices.....	22
Methods.....	22
Data tables for figures.....	23

Summary

July 1st 2017 is the tenth anniversary of the implementation of smokefree legislation in England. This ground-breaking legislation made it illegal to smoke in almost all enclosed work places and public places.

The findings in this report are taken from the ASH Smokefree England surveys conducted annually by YouGov from 2007 to 2017. The primary goal of these surveys has been to describe public attitudes to government measures to reduce the harm of tobacco.

The new smokefree laws were welcomed by the majority of the general public in England. In the survey conducted just before the implementation of the legislation in 2007, 78% of respondents said they supported the law. Ten years later, in 2017, support had risen to 83%.

The growth in support for smokefree legislation over the last decade is entirely due to an increase in support from smokers themselves. In 2007, only 40% of smokers supported the new law. By 2017, this support had reached 55%. This majority support from smokers is a clear indicator of the success of the legislation, which has enjoyed exceptionally high rates of compliance.

Smokefree legislation was the first in a series of major advances for tobacco control over the last decade. Since 2007 public health campaigners have welcomed the ban on smoking in cars carrying children, the removal of tobacco products from view at shop counters, and the advent of standard packaging of all tobacco products. Cigarette vending machines have also disappeared and the age of sale for tobacco products has risen to 18.

Every major tobacco control measure introduced by government has had the support of a majority of the adult population and has gained more support post-implementation:

- In 2012, when displays of tobacco were banned in supermarkets and large shops, 57% of respondents supported the ban. This rose to 72% in 2017.
- In 2015, when smoking in cars carrying children under 18 was banned, 85% of respondents supported the ban. This rose to 89% in 2017.
- In 2016, when standard packs were first introduced, 58% of respondents supported the policy. This rose to 60% in the following year.

A key outcome of smokefree legislation and these subsequent measures has been the denormalisation of smoking in the public realm. Smoking has ceased to be taken for granted as an acceptable part of everyday life. Even in the home, things have changed for the better: a majority (52%) of smokers now keep their homes smokefree.

Public support for government action to limit smoking has grown over the last decade. Despite the many measures that have been introduced during this period, the proportion of respondents who think the government is not doing enough to tackle smoking has risen from 29% in 2009 to 39% in 2017. The proportion of respondents who think that the government is doing too much has fallen from 20% in 2009 to 11% in 2017. Overall, 76% of respondents in 2017 supported further government action to limit smoking.

The tobacco industry will always oppose new measures to limit smoking. In the eyes of the public, however, the tobacco industry lacks credibility. In the 2017 ASH Smokefree England survey, only 6% of respondents felt that tobacco companies could be trusted to tell the truth.

In the ten years since 2007, smoking prevalence in the adult population in England fell from 21% to 15.5%. This is a major achievement but smoking remains a huge burden on the health of the nation: 6.3 million adults still smoke in England. The following proposals for further action are supported by a majority of the public:

- licensing the sale of tobacco products, supported by 76% of respondents in 2017;
- banning smoking in all cars, supported by 62% of respondents in 2017;
- charging tobacco companies a levy to fund stop smoking services and preventive work with young people, supported by 71% of respondents in 2017.

These policy proposals would all have a positive impact on the health of smokers and non-smokers alike. The ambition that has sustained the public health community and transformed the public's experience of tobacco smoke and tobacco products has not diminished.

Introduction

On July 1st 2007, the smokefree transformation of England began. Overnight, all enclosed workplaces and public spaces became free of tobacco smoke. For the first time, people could go to work with the confidence that they would not be exposed to secondhand tobacco smoke indoors during the course of their working day. Likewise, in the evening, people could go out to pubs, clubs and restaurants and not have to worry about the poisons they were breathing on the way to the bar.

Smokefree legislation was a huge achievement for public health in England. It was not, however, the end of the story for tobacco control. It was the beginning of a new phase in the history of tackling the smoking epidemic in which the many organisations that fought for smokefree have sustained their ambition and achieved further radical change. Key milestones in the ten year journey since the enactment of smokefree legislation include the ban on smoking in cars carrying children, the ban on the display of tobacco products at the point of sale, and the removal of all branding from the products themselves. The prominence and attractiveness of the product have been dramatically diminished.

Every step of the way, the general public in England has supported the goals of the public health community. Starting in 2007, the year of smokefree, ASH commissioned YouGov to conduct a representative annual survey of public attitudes to tobacco control policies. The ASH Smokefree England surveys provide a detailed account of public attitudes both before and after proposed policies reached the statute book. So we know that the enactment of smokefree legislation did not exhaust the public's support for tobacco control legislation. On the contrary, on almost every indicator, public support for new measures to tackle the smoking epidemic has increased over the last decade.

This report reviews the results of these surveys from 2007 to 2017 and explores how public attitudes to tobacco control policies have changed over this period. It also looks to the future and describes the extent of public support for further measures to tackle the smoking epidemic over the next ten years.

In 2007, more than one in five (21%) adults in England smoked¹. In 2016, this prevalence had dropped to 15.5%². This is a great achievement but the harm of tobacco in England remains colossal: 6.3 million adults in England still smoke³. The message from the public to the government is as clear today as it was in 2007: don't stop now.

1 ONS: General Lifestyle Survey 2007 (smoking prevalence among adults aged 16 and over)

2 ONS: Annual Population Survey 2016 (smoking prevalence among adults aged 18 and over)

3 ONS: *Adult smoking habits in the UK 2016*

Ten years of progress

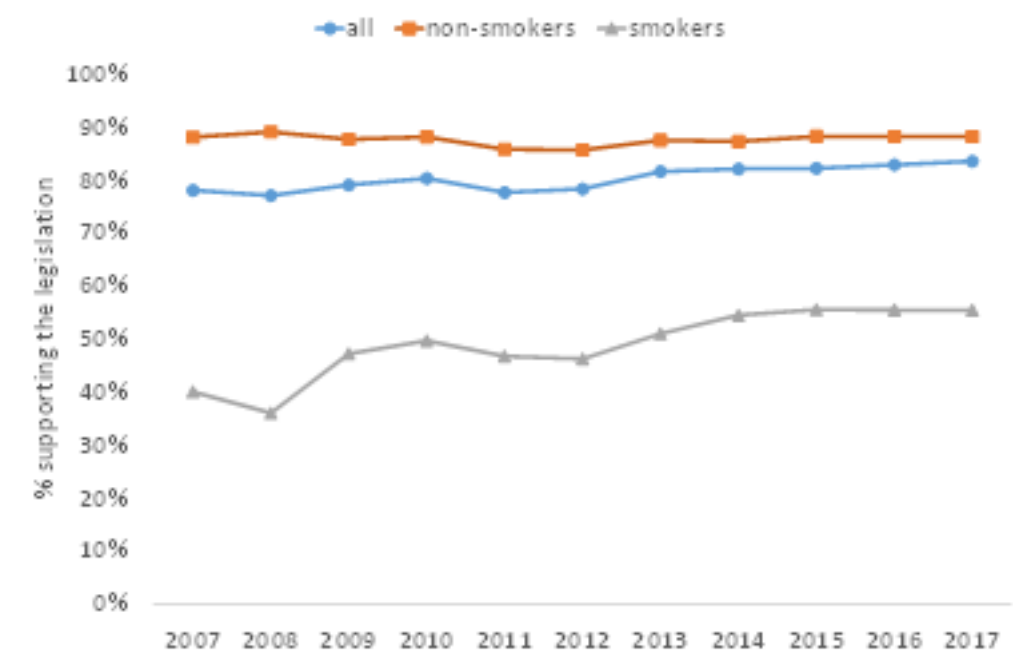
The smokefree revolution

Smokefree legislation came into force in England on July 1st 2007. Three months earlier, in April 2007, three quarters (74%) of all respondents to the ASH Smokefree England survey said that they were bothered by tobacco smoke in enclosed public spaces such as bars and restaurants. This included 85% of non-smokers who were bothered by tobacco smoke. The change was overdue.

Public support for smokefree legislation just before its enactment was high: in April 2007, 78% of adults supported the law to make all enclosed work places, including public places, smokefree. Non-smokers were especially likely to support the legislation: 88% did so. Even among smokers, however, there was some enthusiasm for the new laws: 40% said they supported the change.

In the ten years since enclosed public spaces went smokefree, support for the legislation has remained high, increasing from 78% in 2007 to 83% in 2017 (Figure 1). This increase is entirely due to changing attitudes among smokers themselves. While non-smokers' support for the legislation has remained static, a majority – 55% – of smokers now support the legislation. Only 22% of smokers oppose the law (the remainder neither support nor oppose the law).

Figure 1. Public support for smokefree legislation, England, 2007 - 2017



Support for smokefree legislation has increased in all the regions of England over the past decade with at least four out of five adults in every region now supporting the legislation (Figure 2). The regions where support was lower in 2007 have tended to catch up with the others: the biggest increases have been in the North West, up from 76% in 2007 to 85% in 2017, the East Midlands, up from 76% to 83%, and the South West, up from 77% to 84%.

Figure 2. Public support for smokefree legislation by region, 2007 vs. 2017



One of the impacts of smokefree legislation has been to shift public attitudes to tobacco smoke in other environments, above all in the home. Contrary to those who argued that smokefree workplaces would increase children’s exposure to smoke in the home⁴, there has been a slow but steady rise in the number of people who are choosing to keep their homes smokefree.

In 2009, two years after the implementation of smokefree legislation, 78% of the respondents to the ASH Smokefree England survey said they did not allow anyone to smoke in their home, or they only allowed people to smoke in unenclosed spaces such as a garden or balcony. Six years later, in 2015, 85% reported that smoking was not allowed in enclosed spaces in their home.

In 2015, an alternative question was also asked to describe smokefree homes: 84% of respondents reported that ‘nobody smoked in their home on most days’. This increased to 87% in 2017.

Just as a majority of smokers now support the smokefree legislation, so a majority of smokers now keep their homes smokefree. In 2017, 52% of smokers said that nobody smoked in their home on most days.

Protecting children

The increase in smokefree homes has been of particular benefit to children, given their limited control over the quality of the air they breathe at home. In 2017, 89% of survey respondents who lived with children under 18 said that nobody smoked in their home on most days, compared to 2009 when 83% of respondents with children under 18 said nobody smoked in enclosed spaces in their home.

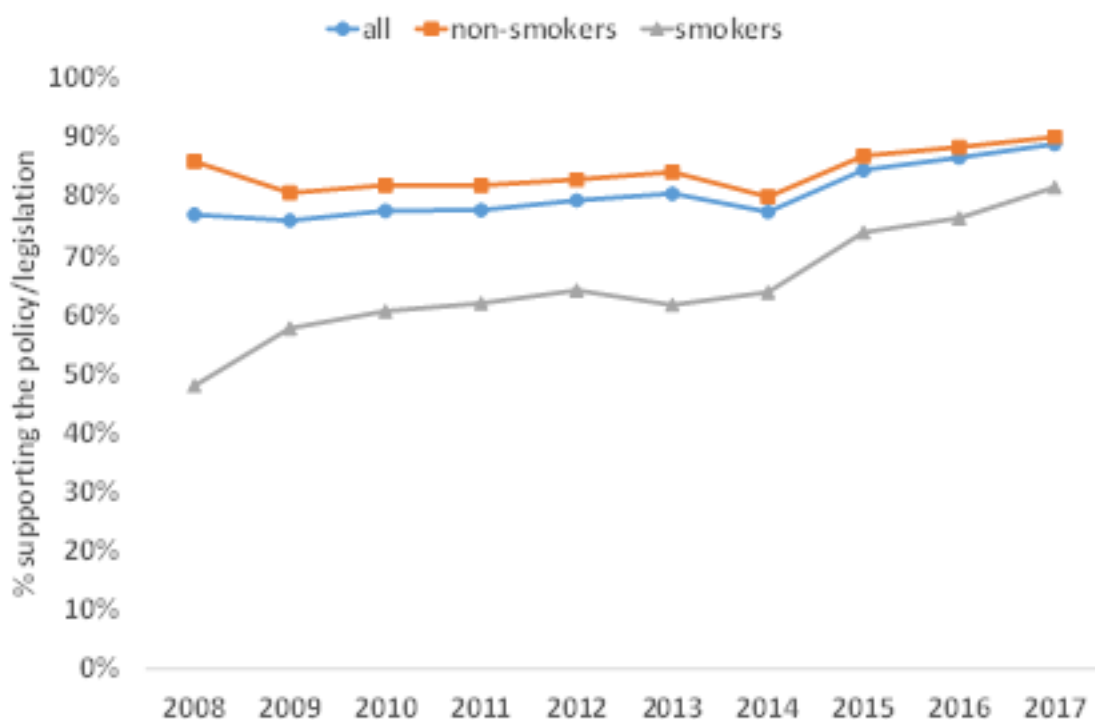
Most of the general public recognise that secondhand smoke is dangerous to children. In 2017, as in 2009 when the question was first asked, 88% of respondents felt that secondhand smoke has either a big impact or some impact on increasing the risk to a child’s health. Attitudes differ markedly between smokers and non-smokers: in 2017, twice as many non-smokers (63%) as smokers (31%) felt that smoking has a big impact on increasing the risk to a child’s health.

⁴ Doctors condemn caution on smoking ban. The Guardian, November 2004. <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2004/nov/16/smoking.politics1>

This understanding of the harm to children of secondhand smoke is likely to have strengthened public support for new legislation banning smoking in cars carrying children that came into force in England and Wales on October 1st 2015. Attitudes to this ban were first tested in the ASH Smokefree England survey in 2008 when 77% of all respondents said that they supported banning smoking in cars that are carrying children younger than 18 years old (Figure 3). However, only 48% of smokers said they supported such a ban compared to 86% of non-smokers. When the survey was conducted in early 2015, prior to the implementation of the ban, support had risen to 85% overall with 87% of non-smokers and 74% of smokers expressing their support.

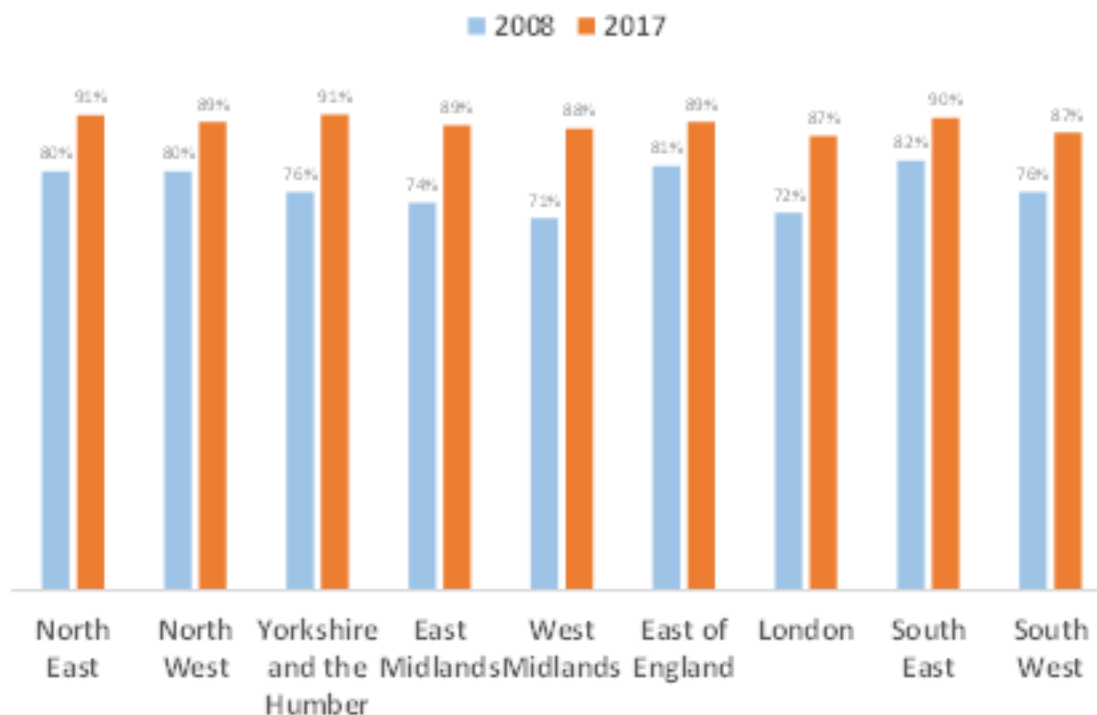
Since its implementation in October 2015, support for the legislation has continued to rise with 89% of respondents in 2017 supporting the law including 90% of non-smokers and 82% of smokers. The biggest change in attitudes over the last nine years has been among smokers themselves. The level of support for the law is now greater among smokers than it was among all respondents in 2008.

Figure 3. Public support for a ban on smoking in cars carrying children under the age of 18, England, 2008 - 2017



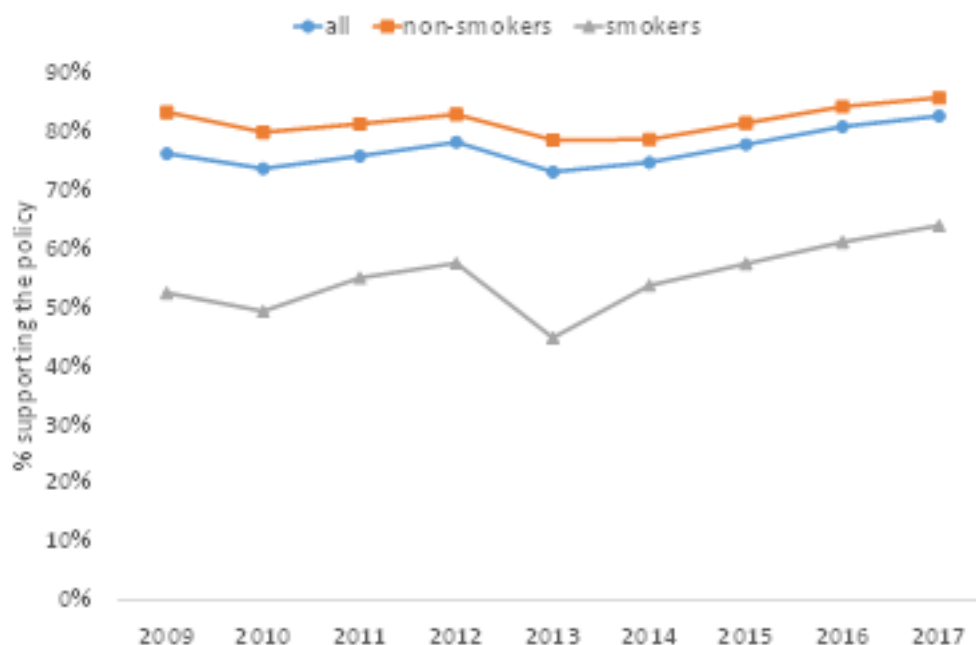
Support for the law banning smoking in cars carrying children under 18 has increased in all regions over the last decade (Figure 4). The variation in support across the regions has narrowed as support for the law has increased. In 2008 there was an eleven percentage point difference between support in the West Midlands at 71% and support in the South East at 82%. By 2017 this gap had narrowed to four percentage points between London at 87% and the North East and Yorkshire and Humber at 91%.

Figure 4. Public support for a ban on smoking in cars carrying children by region, 2008 vs. 2017



A desire to protect children from secondhand smoke, and the role model effect of adult smokers, has motivated some local authorities to introduce voluntary measures discouraging smoking in children’s play areas⁵. In doing so, they have had the support of the public: in 2009, 76% of respondents to the ASH Smokefree England survey agreed that smoking should be banned in children’s play areas, rising to 82% in 2017 (Figure 5). Although there has only been a small change in attitudes among non-smokers over this period – a rise of two percentage points from 83% to 85% – there has been a pronounced rise in support among smokers from 52% to 64%.

Figure 5. Public support for a ban on smoking in outdoor children’s play areas, England, 2009 - 2017



Putting tobacco out of sight in shops

A major achievement of tobacco control over the past decade has been the prohibition of the display of tobacco at shop counters. Before this ban, the tobacco industry invested heavily in

5 E.g. [Nottingham playgrounds to go smoke-free](#), BBC News Leicester 8 November 2011

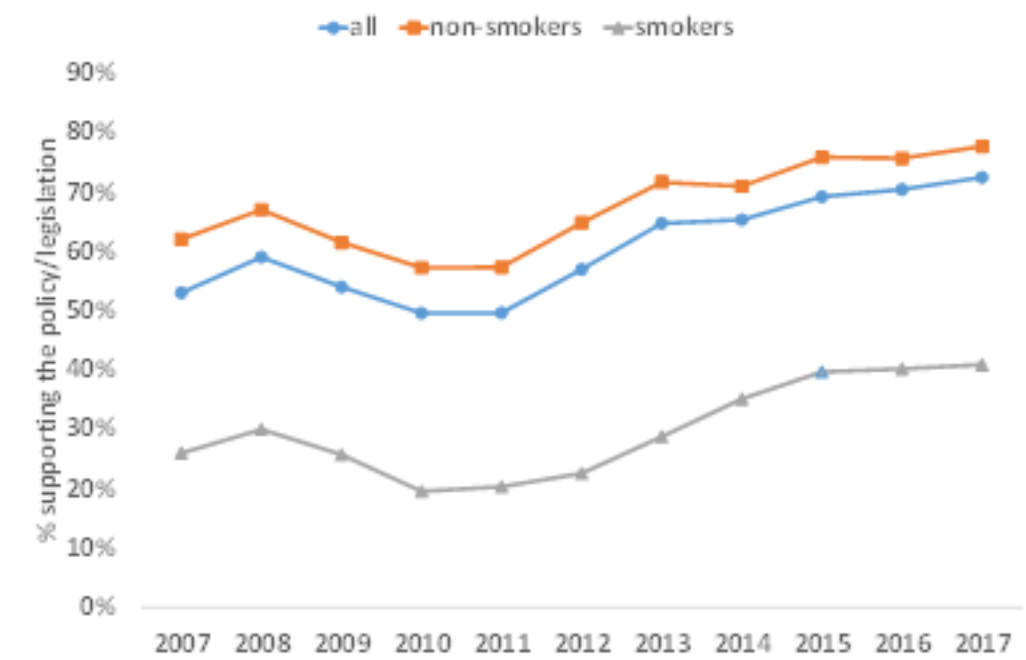
these displays as attractive as possible, not least because they had few other means to promote their products after tobacco advertising had been outlawed. Typically located immediately behind the shop counter, these displays offered smokers and non-smokers alike a constant visual prompt to spend money on tobacco.

Public attitudes to putting tobacco out of sight in shops were first explored in the ASH Smokefree England survey in 2007 (Figure 6). Even then, long before the policy had been debated publicly, a majority (53%) of respondents in England supported 'banning the display of cigarettes in places where they are sold'. The question was repeated each year to 2011, with mixed results, then changed to a different formulation – 'putting tobacco products out of sight in shops' – in 2012. This new question was arguably clearer to respondents and resulted in an increase in support to 57%.

The first phase of the 'point of sale' display ban was introduced in supermarkets and large stores in April 2012. The second phase, extending the ban to small shops and all other outlets where tobacco is sold, was introduced three years later in April 2015. By this time, over two thirds of the population (69%) supported the ban. Support for the law has continued to rise, reaching 72% in 2017.

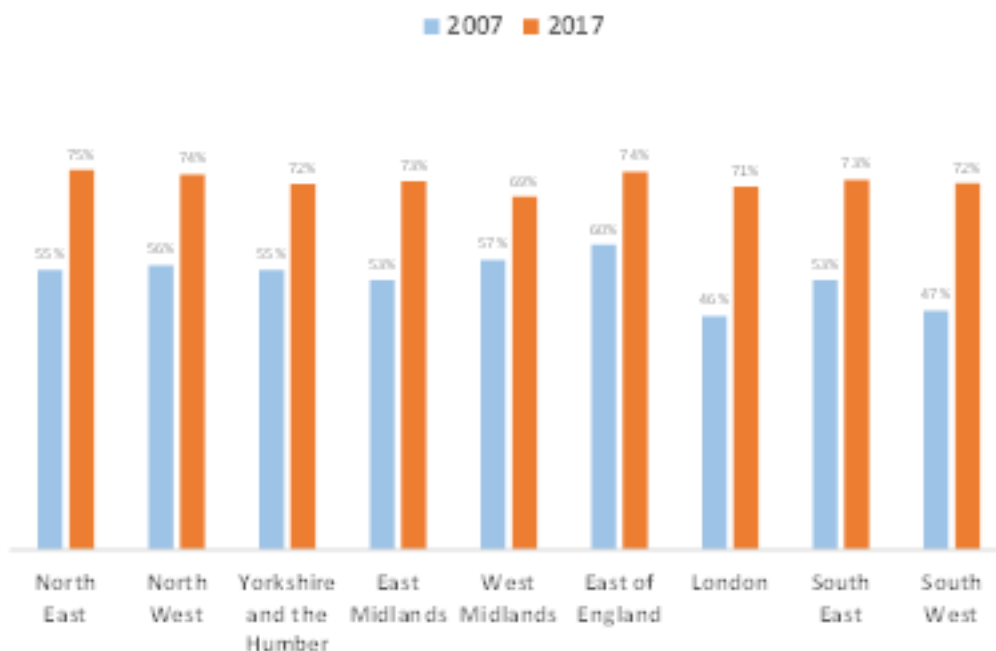
The change in support for the point of sale ban over the last decade reflects changing attitudes among both smokers and non-smokers. In 2007, 62% of non-smokers and 26% of smokers supported banning the display of cigarettes in places where they are sold. By 2017, 78% of non-smokers and 41% of smokers supported putting tobacco products out of sight in shops. Although less than half of smokers actively support the ban, only 28% who actively oppose the ban (the remainder, 28%, neither support nor oppose the ban).

Figure 6. Public support for a ban on displays of tobacco products at the point of sale, England, 2007 - 2017



Support for the point of sale display ban has increased in all the regions of England over the last ten years. The overall increase in support for the policy has reduced the differences between the regions in 2017 compared to 2007. In 2017, support for putting tobacco products out of sight in shops ranged from 69% of respondents in the West Midlands to 75% in the North East (Figure 7).

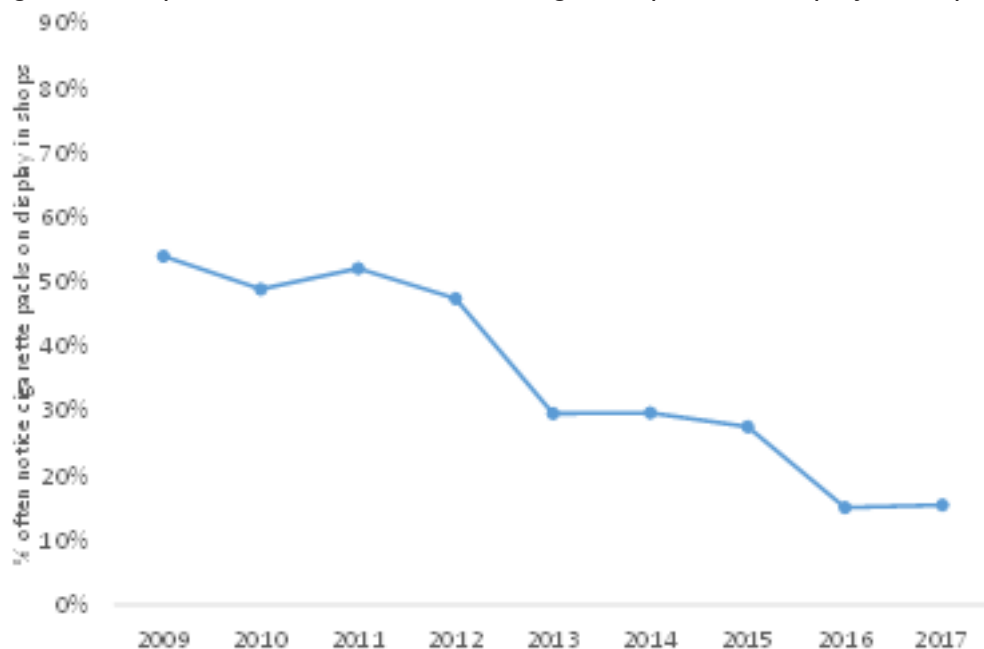
Figure 7. Public support for a ban on displays of tobacco products at the point of sale by region, 2007 vs. 2017⁶



From 2009 respondents to the ASH Smokefree England surveys have also been consistently asked whether they 'often notice cigarette packs on display in shops'. In 2009, 54% still did so. By 2017, after full implementation of the point of sale ban, this had fallen to 15% (Figure 8).

There are two distinct downward turns in Figure 8. The first is in 2013, following the implementation of the first phase of the ban in 2012, and the second is in 2016, following the implementation of the second phase of the ban in late 2015. The ban has demonstrably been effective in getting tobacco products out of sight for the great majority of shoppers.

Figure 8. Respondents who often noticed cigarette packs on display in shops, England, 2009-17



Standard packs

Once retail displays of tobacco products had disappeared from shops and supermarkets, tobacco companies had only one significant opportunity left to promote their products: the packs themselves.

⁶ From 2007 the survey asked people for their support for 'banning the display of cigarettes in places where they are sold'. The question was repeated each year to 2011. From 2012 the question was changed to 'putting tobacco products out of sight in shops'.



This too was denied them in April 2016 when the phased introduction of standard packs began. The industry was given a year's grace to run down their stocks such that by April 2017 all tobacco products were sold in drab green packaging with the brand name in a standard font and prominent picture warnings.

The campaign for standard packs was hard fought. However, by the time of the full implementation of the policy in 2017, three fifths (60%) of the respondents to the ASH Smokefree England survey supported the policy.

Attitudes to the policy were recorded by the annual ASH Smokefree England survey in every year from 2007 to 2017 (Table 1). In the first five years of the survey, standard packs were simply described to respondents, who were asked whether they supported or opposed a policy 'requiring tobacco to be sold in plain packaging with the product name in standard lettering'. Over this period support for the policy rose from 42% in 2007 to 47% in 2011.

In 2012 standard packs were introduced in Australia, the first country in the world to make the move. In this year, the question in the ASH Smokefree England survey was augmented with a picture of the Australian standard pack. This immediately pushed up support for the policy among survey respondents by 15 percentage points to 62%. In 2015 and 2016 the survey sample was split with half of respondents being shown the Australian pack and half being shown a mock-up of the proposed UK pack. There was little difference in the results: around three fifths of all respondents supported the policy (Table 1).

Table 1. Support for standard packs 2007-2017

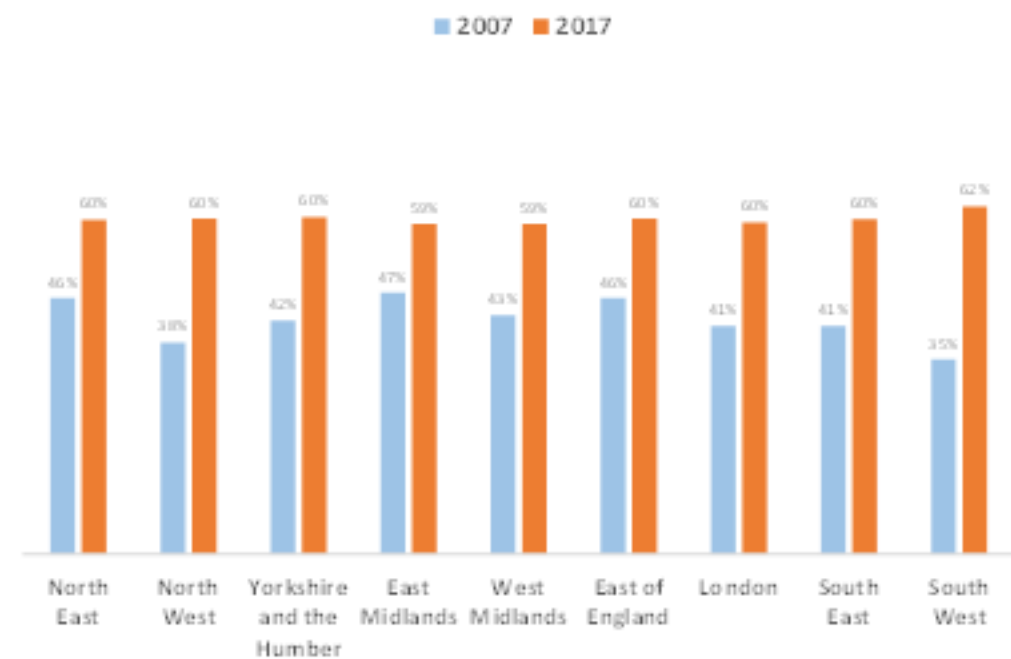
Year	Percentage of respondents supporting the following: Requiring tobacco to be sold in plain packaging with the product name in standard lettering		
	No picture	Australian plain pack	UK proposal for plain pack
			
2007	42%		
2008	43%		
2009	43%		
2010	43%		
2011	47%		
2012		62%	
2013		63%	
2014		64%	
2015		62%	60%
2016		61%	58%
2017	60%		

In 2017 the survey reverted to using the description of the standard pack only with no illustrations. The level of support for the policy did not fall back but remained at 60%, indicating a real shift in public attitudes over the decade.

Smokers, however, remain opposed to standard packs. In 2017, only 26% supported the policy compared to 40% who opposed it (the remainder neither supported nor opposed it or did not know). Although the policy was principally designed to deter young people from starting smoking, existing smokers' dislike of the redesigned packs is an additional benefit of the policy.

By 2017 support for standard packs was at or near 60% in all the regions of England (Figure 9). The consistency of support contrasts with the more diverse picture in 2007 where support ranged from only 35% in the South West to 47% in the East Midlands.

Figure 9. Public support for standard packs by region, 2007 vs. 2017



Keeping up the pressure on price

Price remains one of the most effective ways of deterring people from smoking. Over the last ten years, annual tax increases above the rate of inflation have progressively reduced the affordability of tobacco products in England.

The ASH Smokefree England surveys over this period reveal consistent majority support for this approach to taxing tobacco products (Table 2). In 2007, 58% of respondents supported a policy of 'increasing the price of tobacco products faster than the rate of inflation', rising slightly to 60% in 2013. Since 2014, the survey question has tested the proposal to increase the annual increment above inflation from 2% to 5%. Although this initially caused a drop in support, the level of support for the policy in 2017 was back at three fifths (61%) of all respondents.

Not surprisingly, smokers are not keen on a policy of increasing the price of tobacco products above the rate of inflation: only 16% supported it in 2017 compared to 69% of non-smokers. Compared to other tobacco control policies, there is greater variation in support for this policy across the regions. In 2017, 55% of respondents in London supported the policy compared to 64% in the North East and South West (Figure 10).

Table 2. Support for increasing the tax on tobacco products above the rate of inflation 2007-2017

Year	Percentage of respondents expressing support:		
	How strongly, if at all, do you support or oppose increasing the price of tobacco products faster than the rate of inflation?	How strongly, if at all, do you support or oppose using tax to increase the price of tobacco products 5% faster than the rate of inflation each year?	Currently tax on cigarettes and tobacco is set at 2% above the rate of inflation (e.g. if the annual rate of inflation is 1%, tax on cigarettes is 3%). How strongly, if at all, do you support or oppose increasing tax on cigarettes and tobacco by 5% above the annual rate of inflation (e.g. if the annual rate of inflation is 1%, tax on cigarettes would increase by 6%)?
2007	58%		
2008	61%		
2009	55%		
2010	58%		
2011	Not asked		
2012	59%		
2013	60%		
2014		53%	
2015	Not asked		
2016		56%	
2017			61%

Figure 10. Public support for increasing the price of tobacco products above the rate of inflation, by region, 2007 vs. 2017



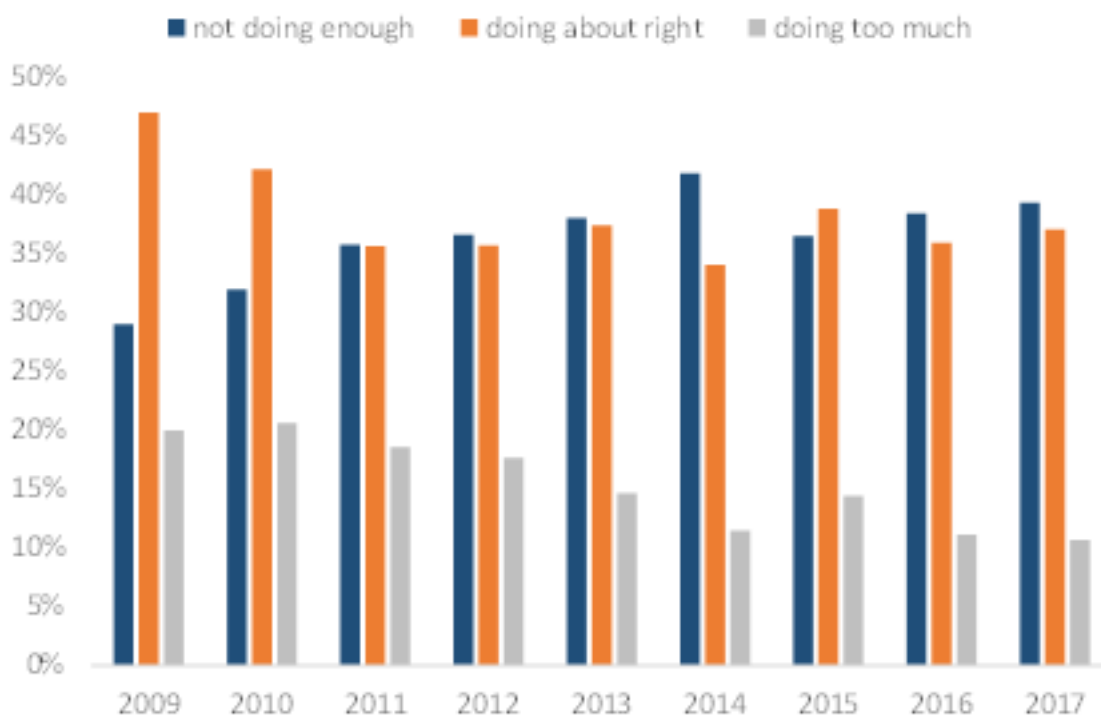
The next ten years

Over the last decade, smoking in public has been denormalised. For most people, it is no longer perceived to be acceptable behaviour. In the 2017 ASH Smokefree England survey, 79% of respondents said that they felt people in general disapproved of people smoking cigarettes. Yet, despite the decline in smoking prevalence over this period, 15.5% of adults still smoked in 2016⁷, half of whom will go on to die prematurely as a result of smoking if they do not quit. There is still more to do.

The appetite of the general public for new measures to reduce smoking is strong. In fact, public support for government action to limit smoking has grown. Despite the many measures that have been introduced during this period, the proportion of respondents who think the government is either not doing enough to tackle smoking or doing about right has risen from 29% in 2009 to 39% in 2017. The proportion of respondents who think that the government is doing too much has halved from 20% in 2009 to 10% in 2017. Overall, 76% of respondents in 2017 supported government action to limit smoking (Figure 11).

The tobacco industry will always oppose new measures to limit smoking. In the eyes of the public, however, the tobacco industry lacks credibility. In the 2017 ASH Smokefree England survey, only 6% of respondents felt that tobacco companies could be trusted to tell the truth.

Figure 11. Public perceptions of how much the government is doing to limit smoking, 2009-2017



A licence to sell tobacco

Despite being a lethal drug, tobacco products can be sold by anyone in England, almost anywhere. Unlike the sale of alcohol, a licence is not needed to sell cigarettes. Local authorities can close down shops mis-selling tobacco products, but they have to take legal action to do so. There is a strong case for licensing the sale of tobacco products in order that local authorities and the police can act swiftly against those who abuse current regulations, especially in relation to underage sales.

⁷ ONS: *Adult smoking habits in the UK 2016*

There has long been public support for licensing tobacco sales. In 2007, two thirds (67%) of the respondents to the ASH Smokefree England survey supported a policy proposal requiring businesses to have a licence to sell cigarettes. Ten years later, in 2017, three quarters (76%) of respondents supported a similar proposal requiring businesses to have a licence before they can sell tobacco.

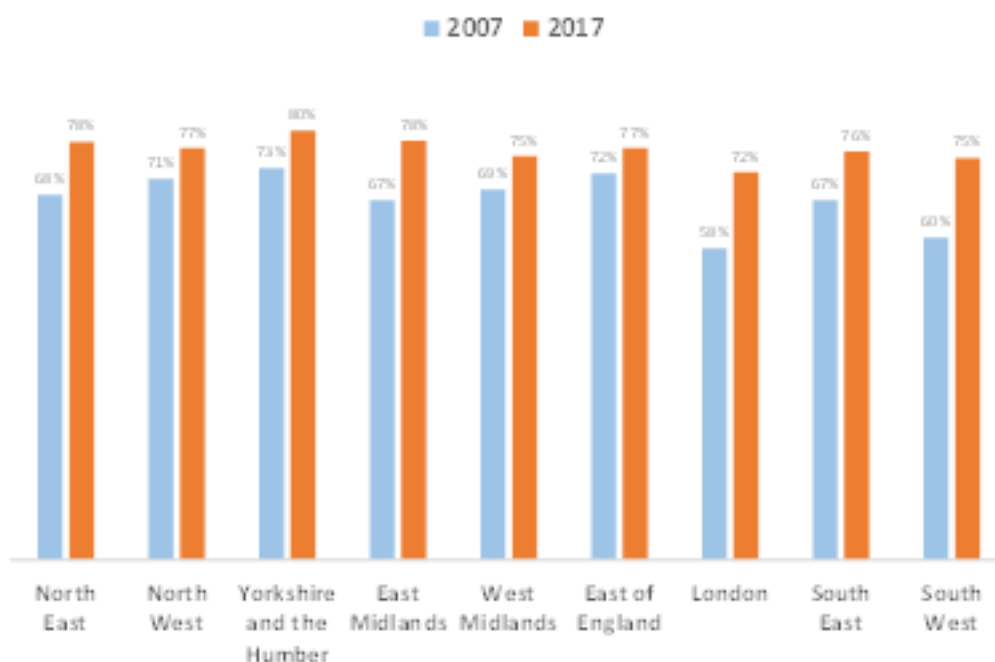
In the intervening years, the proposal put to respondents was elaborated to make clear the purpose of licensing tobacco sales. This had the effect of significantly pushing up support for the policy:

- In 2009, 87% of respondents supported a proposal ‘requiring business to have a valid licence to sell tobacco which can be removed if they are caught selling to underage smokers’.
- Between 2010 and 2016, respondents were asked if they supported or opposed a proposal ‘requiring business to have a valid licence to sell tobacco which can be removed if they are caught more than once selling to underage smokers.’ Support for this ranged from 86% in 2010 to 81% in 2016.

Among smokers, support for introducing a licence to sell tobacco products has increased from 44% in 2007 to 55% in 2017.

Across the regions of England there is fairly consistent support for licensing the sale of tobacco products, ranging from 72% in London to 80% in Yorkshire and the Humber (Figure 12).

Figure 12. Public support for businesses to have a licence to sell tobacco products, by region, 2007 vs. 2017



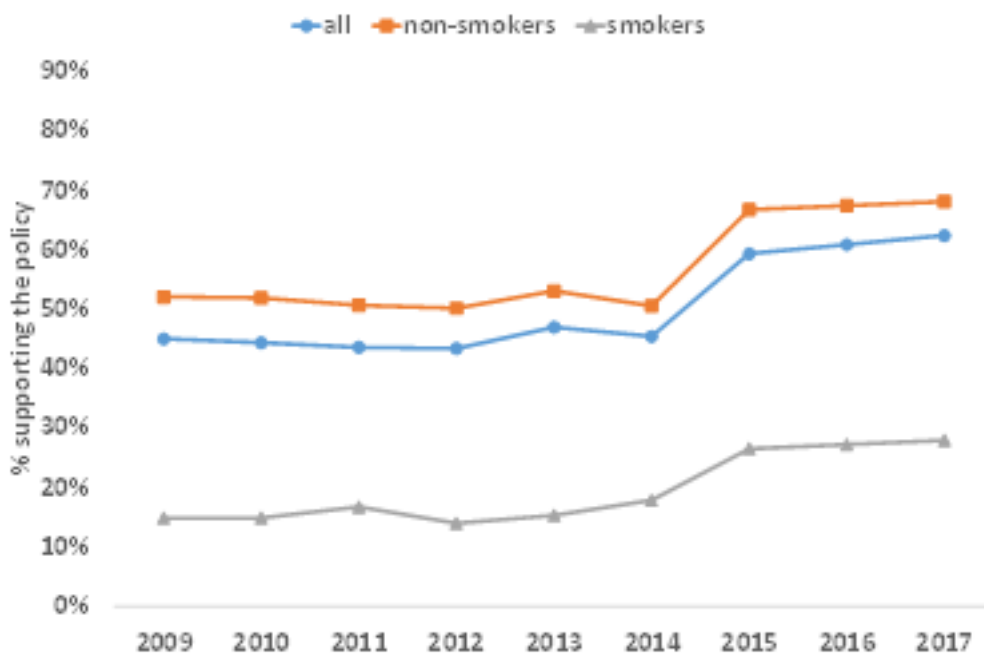
Preventing smoking in all cars

The 2015 legislation banning smoking in cars carrying children under 18 was an important step in protecting children and young people from the harm of tobacco. There are, however, many other people who continue to be harmed by tobacco smoke in cars, not least older people with raised risks of cardiovascular and pulmonary disease. The concentrations of tobacco smoke in vehicle cabins are exceptionally high, even when windows are open, so drivers and passengers alike cannot avoid significant risk when someone chooses to light up.

A ban on smoking in all cars would address this universal risk while also eliminating the risks caused by the distraction of smoking while driving. The distraction of mobile phone use in cars is widely recognised; the risks involved in finding and lighting up cigarettes while driving also need to be addressed.

Public support for a ban on smoking in all cars has grown since the policy was first presented to respondents of the ASH Smokefree England survey in 2009. Then, overall support stood at 45%. Ten years later, this had increased to 62% (Figure 13). As might be expected, smokers are far less likely to support this policy than non-smokers. Overall, 28% of smokers supported the policy in 2017, compared to 68% of non-smokers.

Figure 13. Public support for a ban on smoking in all cars, England, 2009 - 2017



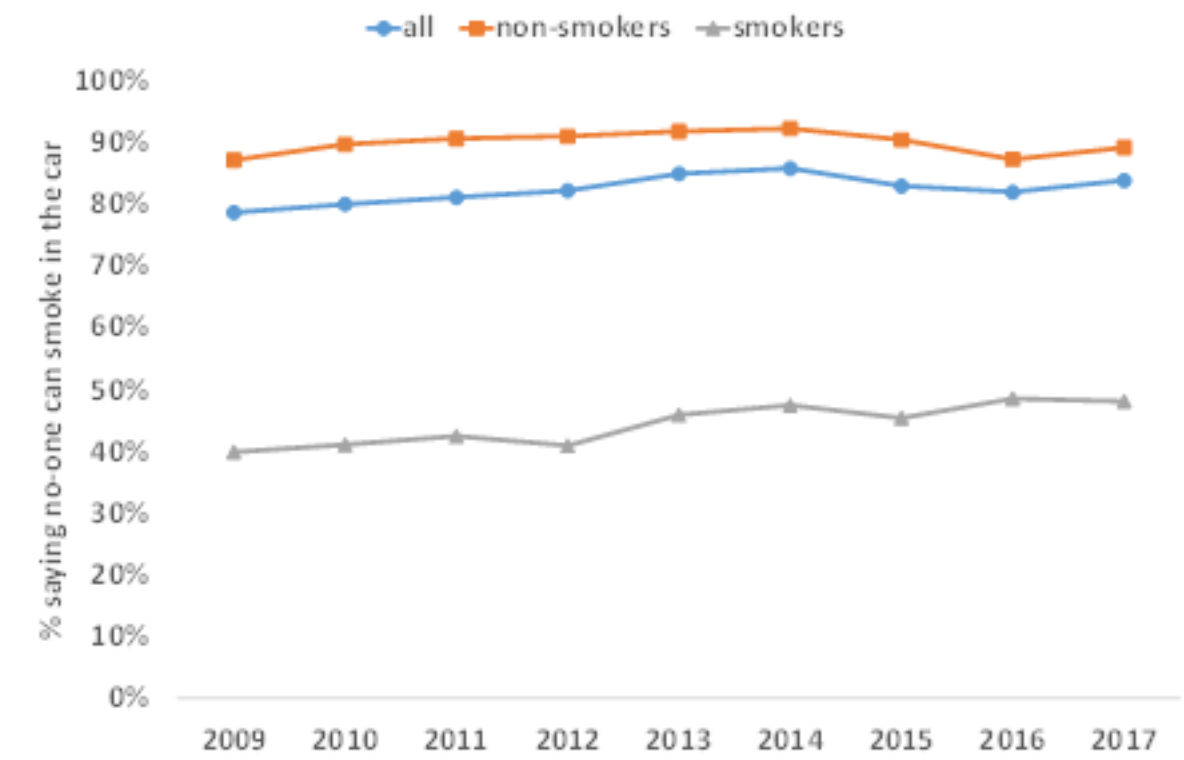
Support for banning smoking in all cars was above 60% in all the English regions in 2017 except London where it stood at 55% (Figure 14). Unlike other policies examined in this report, the variability in support for this policy across the regions has not diminished over time.

Figure 14. Public support for a ban on smoking in all cars, by region, 2009 vs. 2017



The ASH Smokefree England surveys have also monitored respondents' behaviour in relation to their own vehicles. From 2009 to 2017 respondents were asked what rules they applied to smoking in the vehicle in which they usually travelled (Figure 15). In every year, the great majority of respondents who regularly use a vehicle stated that people cannot smoke in the vehicle at all. In 2017, this was true of 84% of all respondents who regularly use a vehicle and 48% of smokers who regularly use a vehicle (up from 40% in 2009). Hence although only a minority of smokers support a ban on smoking in all cars, half would not be affected by it. As with the 2007 smokefree legislation, smokers' support for legislation banning smoking in all cars would be likely to grow post-implementation.

Figure 15. Respondents who do not allow anyone to smoke in their car (among those who regularly drive), England, 2009-17



Making the polluter pay

Over the past three years there have been major cuts to English local authority budgets for stop smoking services and tobacco control work. Budgets for stop smoking services, which offer smokers their best chance to quit, were cut in three fifths (59%) of local authorities in 2016/17, following cuts in two fifths (39%) of local authorities the year before. In some areas, specialist stop smoking services have been decommissioned altogether. These budget cuts are principally due to reductions in the public health grant and to wider central government cuts to local authority budgets⁸.

At the same time, the tobacco industry continues to make huge profits from the sale of its products to smokers in England. This industry is exceptional in that it is permitted to make and sell a lethal drug which, if brought to the market today as a new product, would never get past the first regulatory hurdle and would be banned outright.

In these circumstances, it is reasonable to demand that the polluter should pay the costs to the state of enabling people to overcome their dependence on the harmful products that it sells. An additional levy on the tobacco industry, based on market share, would ensure that smokers who want to quit can access the best means available to do so.

8 Cancer Research UK and ASH: Cutting Down: The reality of budget cuts to local tobacco control, 2016

A levy would also support the wider preventive work of tobacco control and so reduce the number of children and young people who grow up to become smokers. Only by tackling these two sides to the smoking epidemic can we hope to bring the epidemic as a whole to an end in the long run.

The levy is a relatively new idea and was only tested out in the 2017 ASH Smokefree England survey. Respondents were asked whether they would support or oppose a measure 'requiring tobacco manufacturers to pay a levy or licence fee to Government for measures to help smokers quit and prevent young people from taking up smoking'. Overall, 71% of respondents in England supported this measure. Only 9% opposed it (the remainder neither supported nor opposed it). The policy proposal was supported by 75% of non-smokers and 43% of smokers.

There is support for the levy across the English regions, ranging from 67% of respondents expressing support in London to 74% in Yorkshire and the Humber (Figure 16).

Figure 16. Public support for tobacco manufacturers to pay a levy to help smokers quit and prevent young people from taking up smoking, by region, 2017



Conclusion

Ten years after the implementation of smokefree legislation in England in July 2007, there is much to celebrate. Smokefree workplaces and public environments have transformed not only the health risks that people face in their everyday lives but also their attitudes to smoking. 'Denormalisation' is a clumsy word but it captures the reality of what has happened: a behaviour that used to be taken for granted almost everywhere is now marginalised and can no longer be assumed to be socially acceptable. The further achievements of the tobacco control community over the past ten years, especially the point of sale ban and standard packs, have ensured that tobacco products as well as tobacco smoke are largely hidden from view.

The general public has consistently supported new government measures to reduce the harm of tobacco. Their enthusiasm has not diminished over time. The denormalisation of smoking may have raised expectations. The public understand the harm of smoking and are unlikely to tire of further intervention until the epidemic is fully brought under control.

The support of the public cannot, however, be taken for granted. In several cases reported here new measures did not have majority support when first tested by the ASH Smokefree England survey but achieved majority support by the time legislation was enacted. Although public views often lead those of politicians, it is always important to make the case for new measures, create a public debate, and secure public support before the political process takes over.

Prior to July 2007, the Smokefree Action Coalition lobbied hard for robust and comprehensive legislation. In practice, the law has proved to be a great success with exceptionally high compliance. Above all, the legacy of the law will be the better health and longer lives of hundreds and thousands of people in England, for years to come.

Appendices

Methods

Each of the ASH Smokefree England surveys was conducted by YouGov using a representative sample of the population of England. The responses were weighted to ensure an accurate match with population demographics. Tables 3 and 4 describe the sample sizes in each year by region and by smoking status respectively.

Table 3. ASH Smokefree England survey unweighted sample sizes 2007-2017 by region

	England	North East	North West	Yorkshire and the Humber	East Midlands	West Midlands	East of England	London	South East	South West
4/2007	1562	70	205	177	134	151	191	204	254	176
8/2007	1532	76	185	154	152	134	184	210	287	150
2008	1056	41	149	124	105	90	119	116	198	114
2009	10895	593	1444	1119	972	1004	1272	1363	1927	1201
2010	10276	506	1442	1088	833	975	1180	1385	1793	1074
2011	10238	629	1426	1080	857	951	845	1140	2072	1238
2012	10000	577	1437	1162	860	1003	845	1063	1833	1224
2013	10023	607	1428	1114	929	1004	973	1002	1715	1251
2014	10012	592	1487	1176	937	1025	955	973	1774	1193
2015	10017	597	1365	1107	859	1006	838	1164	1970	1111
2016	10058	577	1224	1123	866	975	895	1224	2014	1160
2017	10488	579	1315	1066	910	999	926	1224	2195	1274

Table 4. ASH Smokefree England survey unweighted sample sizes 2007-2017 by smoking status

	England	Non-smoker	Smoker
4/2007	1562	1222	340
8/2007	1532	1167	365
2008	1056	809	247
2009	10895	8655	2240
2010	10276	8414	1862
2011	10238	8350	1888
2012	10000	83529	1670
213	10023	8504	1519
2014	10112	8660	1452
2015	10017	8333	1684
2016	10058	8644	1414
2017	10488	9137	1351

Fieldwork dates were as follows:

- 17th – 19th April 2007
- 22nd – 28th August 2007
- 20th – 22nd February 2008
- 25th – 30th March 2009
- 17th – 22nd March 2010

- 3rd – 15th March 2011
- 27th Feb – 16th March 2012
- 1st – 19th February 2013
- 5th – 14th March 2014
- 26th February – 12th March 2015
- 2nd – 23rd March 2016
- 16th February – 19th March 2017

Not all questions explored in this report were asked every year. In order to maintain a consistent date axis in the Figures, the following data points have been interpolated from years before and after using simple linear interpolation:

- Figure 1: data for 2016
- Figure 5: data for 2015
- Figure 13: data for 2016

Data tables for figures

Table 5. Public support for smokefree legislation, England, 2007 – 2017 (Figure 1)

	All	Non-smokers	Smokers
4/2007	78%	88%	40%
2008	77%	89%	36%
2009	79%	88%	47%
2010	80%	88%	50%
2011	78%	86%	47%
2012	78%	86%	46%
2013	82%	87%	51%
2014	82%	87%	54%
2015	82%	88%	55%
2016	83%	88%	55%
2017	83%	88%	55%

Table 6. Public support for smokefree legislation by region, 2007 vs. 2017 (Figure 2)

		England	North East	North West	Yorkshire and the Humber	East Midlands	West Midlands	East of England	London	South East	South West
4/2007	Base	1562	70	205	177	134	151	191	204	254	176
	Support	78%	83%	76%	80%	76%	75%	79%	76%	81%	77%
2017	Base	10488	579	1315	1066	910	999	926	1224	2195	1274
	Support	83%	86%	85%	83%	83%	81%	84%	82%	84%	84%

Table 7. Public support for a ban on smoking in cars carrying children under the age of 18, England, 2008 – 2017 (Figure 3)

	All	Non-smokers	Smokers
2008	77%	86%	48%
2009	76%	81%	58%
2010	78%	82%	61%
2011	78%	82%	62%
2012	79%	83%	64%
2013	81%	84%	62%
2014	77%	80%	64%
2015	85%	87%	74%
2016	87%	88%	76%
2017	89%	90%	82%

Table 8. Public support for a ban on smoking in cars carrying children by region, 2008 vs. 2017 (Figure 4)

		England	North East	North West	Yorkshire and the Humber	East Midlands	West Midlands	East of England	London	South East	South West
2008	Base	1056	41	149	124	105	90	119	116	198	114
	Support	77%	80%	80%	76%	74%	71%	81%	72%	82%	76%
2017	Base	10488	579	1315	1066	910	999	926	1224	2195	1274
	Support	89%	91%	89%	91%	89%	88%	89%	87%	90%	87%

Table 9. Public support for a ban on smoking in outdoor children's play areas, England, 2009 – 2017 (Figure 5)

	All	Non-smokers	Smokers
2009	76%	83%	52%
2010	73%	80%	49%
2011	76%	81%	55%
2012	78%	83%	57%
2013	73%	78%	45%
2014	75%	78%	54%
2015 (interpolated)	78%	81%	57%
2016	81%	84%	61%
2017	82%	85%	64%

Table 10. Public support for a ban on displays of tobacco products at the point of sale, England, 2007 – 2017 (Figure 6)

	All	Non-smokers	Smokers
8/2007	53%	62%	26%
2008	59%	67%	30%
2009	54%	61%	26%
2010	50%	57%	20%
2011	50%	57%	20%
2012	57%	65%	23%
2013	65%	72%	29%
2014	65%	71%	35%
2015	69%	76%	40%
2016	70%	76%	40%
2017	72%	78%	41%

Table 11. Public support for a ban on displays of tobacco products at the point of sale by region, 2007 vs. 2017 (Figure 7)

		England	North East	North West	Yorkshire and the Humber	East Midlands	West Midlands	East of England	London	South East	South West
8/2007	Base	1532	76	185	154	152	134	184	210	287	150
	Support	53%	55%	56%	55%	53%	57%	60%	46%	53%	47%
2017	Base	10488	579	1315	1066	910	999	926	1224	2195	1274
	Support	72%	75%	74%	72%	73%	69%	74%	71%	73%	72%

Table 12. Respondents who often noticed cigarette packs on display in shops, England, 2009-17 (Figure 8)

	All	Non-smokers	Smokers
2009	54%	53%	56%
2010	49%	49%	50%
2011	52%	51%	54%
2012	47%	47%	48%
2013	30%	31%	25%
2014	30%	30%	29%
2015	28%	28%	25%
2016	15%	16%	11%
2017	15%	16%	15%

Table 13. Public support for standard packs by region, 2007 vs. 2017 (Figure 9)

		England	North East	North West	Yorkshire and the Humber	East Midlands	West Midlands	East of England	London	South East	South West
8/2007	Base	1532	76	185	157	152	134	184	210	287	150
	Support	42%	46%	38%	42%	47%	43%	46%	41%	41%	35%
2017	Base	10488	579	1315	1066	910	999	926	1224	2195	1274
	Support	60%	60%	60%	60%	59%	59%	60%	60%	60%	62%

Table 14. Public support for increasing the price of tobacco products above the rate of inflation, by region, 2007 vs. 2017 (Figure 10)

		England	North East	North West	Yorkshire and the Humber	East Midlands	West Midlands	East of England	London	South East	South West
8/2007	Base	1532	76	185	154	152	134	184	210	287	150
	Support	58%	62%	59%	58%	59%	63%	61%	54%	59%	54%
2017	Base	10488	579	1315	1066	910	999	926	1224	2195	1274
	Support	61%	64%	63%	63%	60%	58%	62%	55%	63%	64%

Table 15. Public perceptions of how much the government is doing to limit smoking, 2009-2010, 'don't know' responses not shown (Figure 11)

		England	North East	North West	Yorkshire and the Humber	East Midlands	West Midlands	East of England	London	South East	South West
2009	base	10895	593	1444	1119	972	1004	1272	1363	1927	1201
	Not doing enough	29%	28%	29%	26%	29%	30%	31%	26%	29%	32%
	About right	47%	28%	45%	49%	48%	45%	45%	51%	46%	43%
	Doing too much	20%	21%	22%	21%	19%	20%	20%	18%	20%	22%
2017	Base	10488	579	1315	1066	910	999	926	1224	2195	1274
	Not doing enough	39%	41%	43%	44%	37%	35%	41%	36%	38%	41%
	About right	37%	37%	36%	35%	37%	38%	36%	39%	38%	37%
	Doing too much	11%	11%	10%	10%	13%	11%	11%	11%	10%	10%

Table 16. Public support for businesses to have a licence to sell tobacco products, by region, 2007 vs. 2017 (Figure 12)

		England	North East	North West	Yorkshire and the Humber	East Midlands	West Midlands	East of England	London	South East	South West
8/2007	Base	1532	76	185	154	152	134	184	210	287	150
	Support	67%	68%	71%	73%	67%	69%	72%	58%	67%	60%
2017	Base	10488	579	1315	1066	910	999	926	1224	2195	1274
	Support	76%	78%	77%	80%	78%	75%	77%	72%	76%	75%

Table 17. Public support for a ban on smoking in all cars, England, 2009 – 2017 (Figure 13)

	All	Non-smokers	Smokers
2009	45%	52%	15%
2010	44%	52%	15%
2011	44%	51%	17%
2012	43%	50%	14%
2013	47%	53%	15%
2014	45%	51%	18%
2015	59%	67%	27%
2016	62%	67%	29%
2017	62%	68%	28%

Table 18. Public support for a ban on smoking in all cars, by region, 2009 vs. 2017 (Figure 14)

		England	North East	North West	Yorkshire and the Humber	East Midlands	West Midlands	East of England	London	South East	South West
2009	Base	10895	593	1444	1119	972	1004	1272	1363	1927	1201
	Support	45%	47%	44%	48%	46%	47%	46%	39%	45%	45%
2017	Base	10488	579	1315	1066	910	999	926	1224	2195	1274
	Support	62%	67%	65%	67%	63%	61%	64%	55%	62%	64%

Table 19. Respondents who do not allow anyone to smoke in their car (among those who regularly drive), England, 2009-17 (Figure 15)

	All	Non-smokers	Smokers
2009	79%	87%	40%
2010	80%	90%	41%
2011	81%	91%	42%
2012	82%	91%	41%
2013	85%	92%	46%
2014	86%	92%	47%
2015	83%	90%	45%
2016	82%	87%	49%
2017	84%	89%	48%

Table 20. Public support for tobacco manufacturers to pay a levy to help smokers quit and prevent young people from taking up smoking, by region, 2017 (Figure 16)

		England	North East	North West	Yorkshire and the Humber	East Midlands	West Midlands	East of England	London	South East	South West
2017	Base	10488	579	1315	1066	910	999	926	1224	2195	1274
	Support	71%	72%	73%	74%	70%	68%	72%	67%	70%	70%

ASH

[e enquiries@ash.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@ash.org.uk)

www.ash.org.uk



Health & care
information
you can trust

The Information Standard

✓ Certified
Member