

2024-2025

Let's Make Smoking History

Isle of Wight Council

Annual Report of the Director of Public Health 2024

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Let's Make Smoking History

Foreword

It is a great pleasure to present my annual report for this year, focused on tobacco control. It is difficult to identify a greater contribution to public health. It has been 70 years since the landmark paper confirmed the conclusive link between smoking and cancer changing the course of our public's health, saving millions of lives. Recently, Isle of Wight Council signed the Local Government Declaration on Tobacco Control, a clear signal that we will continue to prioritise smoking as a public health issue. So, what better way

to commemorate this extraordinary contribution than by focusing my Director of Public Health annual report this year on 'Making Smoking History'.

Tobacco is still one of the biggest risks to the public's health that we face, and we know that over the course of the seven decades of smoking history, tobacco has claimed many lives. This report sets out the great strides we are making towards reducing smoking in our communities, however there is still more to do.

Cigarettes are the only legal consumer product on the market that kill two thirds of users. The earlier in life that someone starts cigarette smoking the greater the health risks and harder it can be to quit. Which is why we have to 'stop the start' to create a smokefree generation and make smoking history.



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Looking back

Seventy years ago, smoking was highly prevalent and widely accepted in homes, restaurants, and even hospitals and health conferences. The 1962 'Smoking and Health' report from the Royal College of Physicians first linked smoking to ill health, especially lung cancer, and started a steady change in actions to reduce tobacco consumption. Subsequently, cigarette advertising was banned on television in 1964, and one of the first anti-smoking campaigns launched in 1969, with posters displaying the message 'Why learn about lung cancer the hard way?'

This started the ball rolling and during the 1970s the World Health Organization presented a paper calling to end cigarette advertising and promotion. Alongside the establishment of Action on Smoking and Health (ASH) to inform the public of the negative health effects

**"I started at 12,
I'm now 68. So,
it's 56 years
I smoked
cigarettes.
Now I feel better.
I get up in the
morning and
I don't want a
cigarette."**

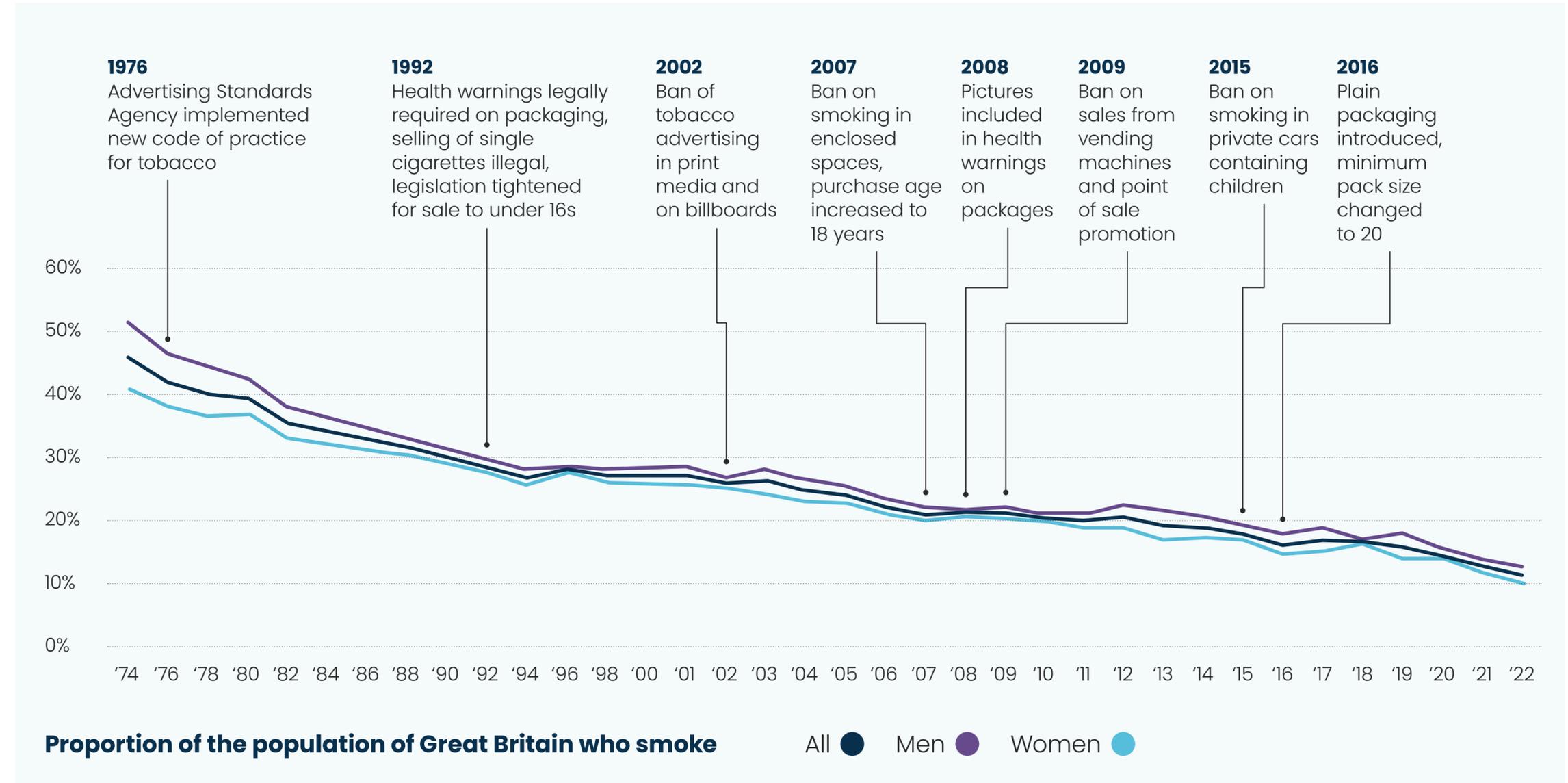
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John



of smoking, the first national smoking survey in 1974 reported that 46% of all adults, aged 16+ smoked. In 1992, 16+ age of sale warnings were introduced, and the first nicotine patch was made available on prescription in the UK.

By 2007 smoking adult prevalence rates had more than halved to 21%, since the initial survey and cigarette use was banned in all enclosed spaces, including workplaces. Today, cigarettes are heavily taxed and, since 2016, have been sold in plain packaging. Public health policies are legally protected from the tobacco industry's commercial interests. These measures have had a significant impact: smoking rates continue to decline, and with ongoing public health advocacy and policy, smoking is expected to soon become history.

Smoking legislation from 1970s – 2000s¹



¹ [ONS GB Smoking Prevalence](#) and [ASH Key Smoking Legislation](#)

Smoking today

Despite these successes, smoking is still the single most preventable cause of ill health, early deaths, and health inequalities on the Island today. Around 11,900 people smoke on the Isle of Wight², and countless more continue to be exposed to secondhand smoke in homes, at work, and in outdoor public places.

Considering factors like productivity, fire hazards, health, and social care, smoking could cost Isle of Wight public services £46.7 million³ and is responsible for more than 600 smoking attributed deaths between 2017 and 2019.⁴

² [Smoking Profile – Data – OHID](#)
³ [ASH – Ready Reckoner 2024](#)
⁴ [Smoking Profile – DATA – OHID](#)

People who smoke are
25 times
 more likely to develop lung cancer than non-smokers

and are also at greater risk of developing **heart disease, stroke, lung disease** and **other cancers**.

If no one smoked,
one in three
 cancer deaths would be prevented.

While lung cancer is difficult to treat, it is easily preventable.



11,900
smokers
 Isle of Wight

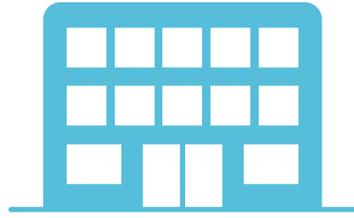


£46.7
million
 cost to public services



600
deaths
 2017–2019

The huge harms caused by smoking continue to place a significant burden on the NHS, social care and on the local economy. People who smoke often require access to assisted care ten years earlier than people who do not smoke, and on the Isle of Wight over 1,300 hospital admissions are caused by smoking each year.⁵



Isle of Wight

1,300
hospitalisations annually

Tooth decay and gum disease

Infertility

Stomach ulcers

Rheumatoid arthritis

Cataracts

Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)

Type 2 Diabetes



Dementia

Cancer

“Stopping smoking after my heart attack meant more family time and a healthier life.”

Lucille

⁵ [Fingertips | Department of Health and Social Care \(phe.org.uk\)](https://www.phe.org.uk)

Who smokes on the Isle of Wight?

Similar to the national picture, smoking rates vary across the populations of the Isle of Wight (see graph figure 1), with smoking rates higher among those not in employment, on low incomes and people experiencing homelessness.

Nationally, higher smoking rates are observed in LGBTQ+ communities, individuals from ethnic groups other than White British, people in routine and manual occupations, people who are accessing support for their drug and/or alcohol use, and people living with mental health conditions.⁶

People who smoke on the Isle of Wight

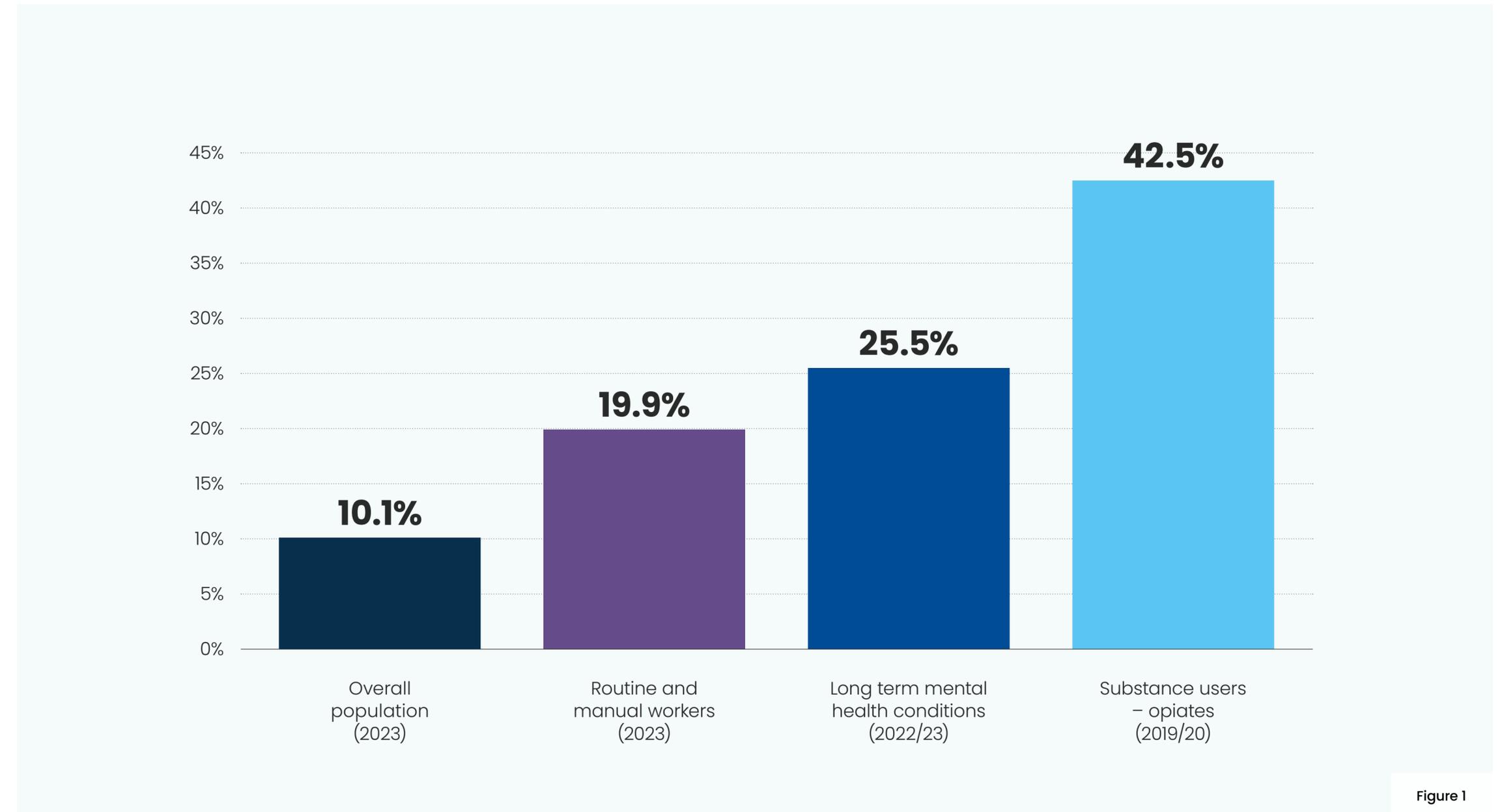


Figure 1

⁶ [Smoking Profile - Data | Fingertips | Department of Health and Social Care \(phe.org.uk\)](#)

People in these groups not only have higher smoking rates, but also face greater challenges in accessing support. This is partly due to higher daily tobacco usage and more peer use in social networks, which in turn increases the risk of relapse approximately one month after quitting smoking.⁷

Additionally, within the context of mental health, smoking rates increase with severity of illness. People with mental health conditions who do seek support to quit smoking often find it more difficult to quit and require longer and more personalised cessation programmes.

“I sleep better, my chest is clearer, and I have more energy and money since quitting.”

Barry



⁷ [Predictors of smoking relapse by duration of abstinence: findings from the International Tobacco Control \(ITC\) Four Country Survey – PMC \(nih.gov\)](#)

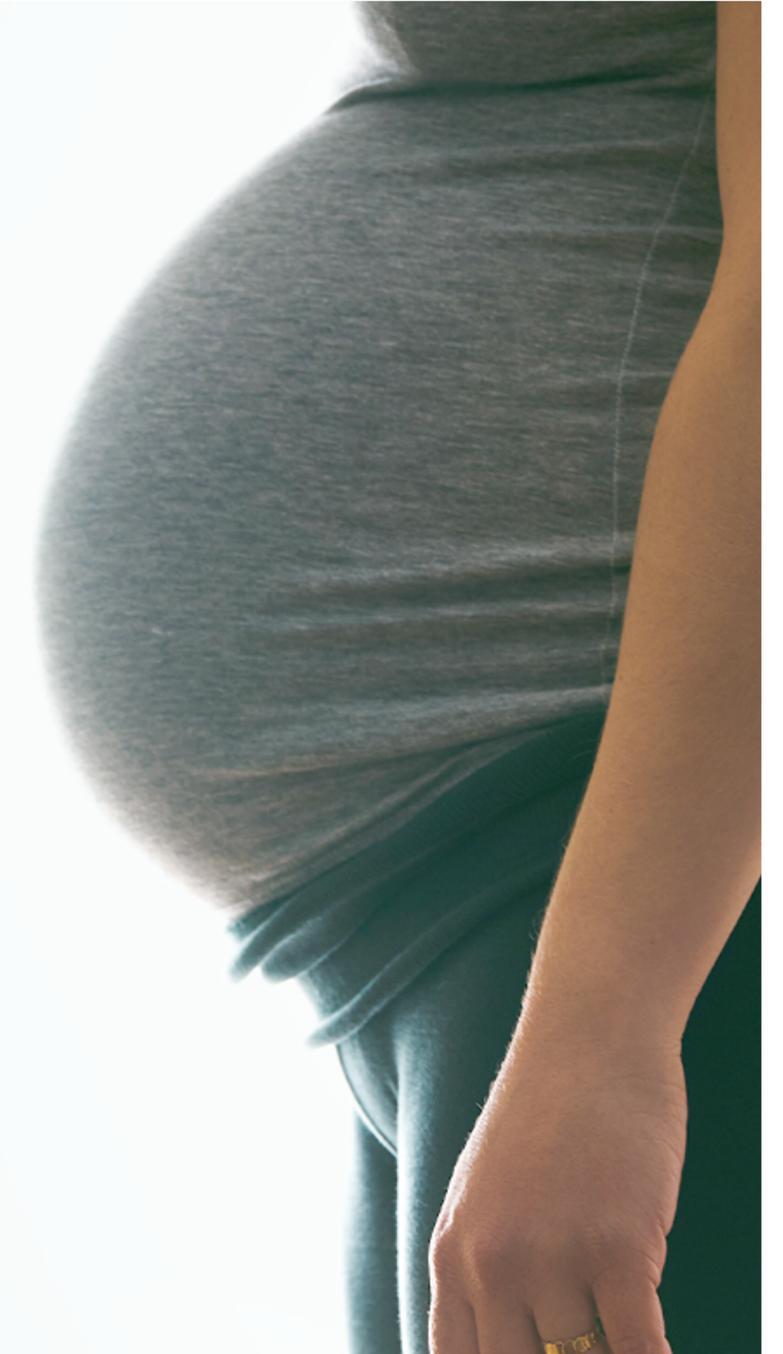
Smoking in pregnancy

Although the smoking rate among pregnant women at the time of delivery is declining, it remains a key focus for the Isle of Wight, with a current prevalence of 7.9%.⁸ Evidence shows that women who are pregnant are more likely to try and quit during their pregnancy.⁹ This is so important, as smoking can cause many health problems for both mother and baby. These include a higher risk of miscarriages, poor foetal growth leading to low birth weight, and preterm birth. It can also make it more difficult for a woman to conceive and affect the success rates of fertility treatments, such as in vitro fertilisation (IVF).

After birth, exposure to secondhand smoke can result in serious health issues for the baby, including sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), bronchitis and pneumonia. Additionally, children living with someone who smokes are more likely to develop asthma and experience more severe asthma attacks.

Reducing secondhand smoke exposure requires a family-led approach, highlighting the importance of everyone's role in creating a smoke-free environment. is crucial.

Isle of Wight
7.9%
of mothers
smoking
at delivery



⁸ [Fingertips | Department of Health and Social Care \(phe.org.uk\)](https://www.phe.org.uk)
⁹ [Smoking, Pregnancy and Fertility – ASH](#)

Secondhand smoke

Non-smokers can still be affected by exposure to secondhand smoke, which poses significant health risks to children, individuals with existing respiratory conditions and family pets. There is no safe level of exposure. Household and outdoor air pollution from secondhand smoke can increase the risk of asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), and lung cancers by 20–30% in non-smokers.

Evidence shows that since indoor restrictions and workplace policies have been implemented, more people have been encouraged to quit smoking. In places where smokefree legislation is in effect, secondhand smoke exposure is reduced by around 85%.¹⁰

¹⁰ [Secondhand Smoke – ASH \(ash.org.uk\)](https://www.ash.org.uk)



“My little boy is so proud of me [for quitting].”

Kirsty

Turning the page on addiction

Our journey towards a smokefree Isle of Wight is complicated by the challenge of addiction. While most people who smoke are aware of the harmful effects of smoking, quitting tobacco is difficult due to the addictive nature of nicotine, often starting in youth. Withdrawal symptoms can be tough to manage as the body adjusts to life without nicotine.

Recognising smoking as an addiction rather than a habit is important for bringing about effective change. This powerful narrative shift – from shaming and blaming to empowering and supporting individuals, is paving the way for healthier communities. It is contributing to a significant reduction in tobacco-related illnesses and building a smokefree future for the Isle of Wight.

“I quit smoking because I'd had enough of the constant emotional battle and wanted a healthier life.”

Aaron



Vaping

While vaping is not without risks, it is considered safer than smoking and can be an effective tool for those looking to quit tobacco, especially when paired with expert support. People who smoke and switch to vaping are exposed to significantly fewer toxins in much lower levels, leading to notable health improvements.¹¹

Addressing the rise in youth vaping

Youth vaping has tripled in the last three years, emerging as a significant public health concern due to unknown long-term effects and the risk of addiction. Additional risks include exposure to toxic chemicals from e-liquids and nicotine which can negatively impact

adolescent brain development. Big tobacco company marketing strategies are targeting children with enticing flavours, adopting exciting colourful packaging, trendy device names and social media promotions. The UK government's proposed Tobacco and Vapes Bill aims to address some of these issues.

Beyond the health risks linked with youth vaping, disposable vapes pose a significant environmental threat. Most disposable vapes are not recyclable and in the UK nearly 1.3 million single-use vapes are discarded each week, with the batteries and plastic components often ending up in landfills. National efforts are underway to support a ban on single-use vapes, to address this rising concern.

¹¹ [E-cigarettes and harm reduction executive summary \(rcp.ac.uk\)](#)

The key message is

If you smoke consider switching to vaping.



If you don't smoke, don't start vaping.

Key successes

On the Isle of Wight, we support on average 1,000 people per year to quit smoking, through face-to-face programmes, telephone support and digital applications. By partnering with healthcare and community organisations, we adopt a collaborative approach to combatting tobacco use and developing smokefree places.

Our efforts include providing specialist stop smoking services and promoting key initiatives such as delivering cessation training to the wider workforce and establishing on-site quit clinics for staff.



“I have more time with my daughter, more energy, and my skin looks better since quitting.”

Natalyia

Our stop smoking services are designed to offer targeted support to people living in areas of significant deprivation, people working in routine and manual occupations, pregnant women, those living with respiratory conditions, individuals from ethnic groups other than White British, and to people living with serious mental illness or mental health conditions.

Our local stop smoking service employs a combination of behaviour change techniques and stop smoking aids, such as patches and vape starter kits, to help all individuals quit smoking.

We are continually increasing quit rates by embedding smokefree policies across the Island and deploying smokefree advisors to areas with the highest smoking rates.

We work collaboratively with Trading Standards, who play a key role in enforcing age-restricted sales legislation, including the sale of tobacco and vape products, and tackling illicit trade. Additionally, we liaise with schools to increase awareness about identifying and reporting illegal vapes and underage sales.

While stopping smoking can be hard, people who receive support from a stop smoking service are

three times

more likely to remain smokefree than those who try to quit on their own.¹²

¹² [Stop smoking services: increased chances of quitting \(ncsct.co.uk\)](https://www.ncsct.co.uk)



So, let's make smoking history

Inspired by the groundbreaking work from 70 years ago that first confirmed the impact of tobacco on health, it is time to envision a future where tobacco use is no longer the norm across the Island. Achieving a smokefree generation requires our collective effort. This includes promoting local and national campaigns, providing accessible cessation services and empowering young people to imagine and embrace a tobacco-free future.

Together, we can cultivate smokefree cultures, enhance quitting opportunities and work towards achieving the smokefree 2030 ambition of bringing down the Isle of Wight smoking prevalence to 5% and below.

Let's make smoking history.



2024-2025

Director of Public Health Annual Report