**Public Health England**

**Better Health – Stoptober 2021**

**Opinium online survey summary**

[Opinium](https://www.opinium.com/), a leading online polling and strategic insight agency based in London, conducted an online survey with a nationally representative sample of 2,000 English smokers aged 18 and over. The online survey ran from 20to 31 August 2021.

The survey consisted of 20 questions, asking about English people’s smoking habits, how lockdowns have affected these habits, as well as barriers and motivations to quitting smoking.

The survey was designed to provide attitudinal insights to support the launch of the Stoptober Campaign. The following statistics were featured in the national and regional press release for the campaign.

**Topline survey results:**

1. Just under half of smokers (45%) have been smoking more since lockdowns began in March 2020 (Table 2)
2. Of those that have been smoking more since March 2020, 43% have smoked more as they have been bored due to the lockdowns, whilst a similar amount (42%) indicated that the pandemic has made them more anxious (Table 3)
3. Many smokers are concerned about the effect that the easing of restrictions will have on their smoking habits; around half (47%) say seeing their friends and socialising more will make them more likely to want to smoke (Table 4)
4. Over half of smokers (54%) want to quit (Table 5)
5. Over half of smokers (55%) want to quit for their physical health and to save money (52%) (Table 6)
6. Over two-fifths (43%) of English smokers believe that the strength of addiction / craving is the biggest obstacle to quitting, followed by the stress of everyday life (42%) (Table 7)
7. Three-quarters (75%) of smokers would never have started smoking if they could go back in time (Table 8)

**Survey questions and results:**

The survey consisted of multiple-choice questions to gain insight into smoker’s habits, how lockdown affected these habits and motivations and barriers to quitting smoking.

**Table 1: Demographics of survey sample by age**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Category | Demographic | Number of People Surveyed |
| Overall |  | 2,000 |
| Age | 18-34 | 602 |
| 35-54 | 631 |
| 55+ | 768 |

**Table 2: Results from the question ‘The pandemic began in early 2020 with the first lockdown beginning in March 2020. Since March 2020, how has the amount that you smoke changed, if at all?’.**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Answer selected | Overall % of respondents | Answer selected | Overall % of respondents |
| I have been smoking less since March 2020 | 11% | I have been smoking more since March 2020 | 45% |

**Table 3: Results from the question ‘You said that you have smoked more since the pandemic began in March 2020. Why is this the case? Please select all that apply’   
To note: this question was only asked to those who had smoked more since March 2020.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Multiple choice answer selected | Overall % of respondents |
|
| The pandemic has made me more anxious | 42% |
| I have been bored due to lockdowns | 43% |
| I have been more stressed with my home life | 32% |
| I am less busy so I fill my time with smoking | 32% |
| I have been more stressed due to financial concerns | 29% |
| I have been more stressed at work | 19% |
| I just chose to smoke more often | 15% |
| Other | 1% |
| Prefer not to say | 0% |

**Table 4: Results from the question ‘Restrictions that were once in place are now being eased or removed. Thinking about the following scenarios as result of the easing of restrictions, are they more or less likely to make you want to smoke?’**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Multiple choice answer selected | Overall % of respondents | |
| More likely | Less likely |
| Seeing friends & socialising more often | 47% | 9% |
| Going to clubs & bars | 43% | 6% |
| Returning to the office/ workplace | 30% | 11% |
| Getting back into old routines | 32% | 11% |

**Table 5: Results from the question ‘Which ONE of the following statements best describes your attitude towards smoking?’**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Answer selected | Overall % of respondents |
| I don’t want to ever stop smoking | 9% |
| I think I should stop smoking but I don’t really want to | 34% |
| I want to stop smoking but haven’t thought about when | 19% |
| I want to stop smoking and hope to soon | 14% |
| I REALLY want to stop smoking but I don’t know when I will | 14% |
| I REALLY want to stop smoking and intend to in the next 3 months | 4% |
| I REALLY want to stop smoking and intend to in the next month | 2% |
| Don’t Know | 4% |
| Net: Want to Quit | 54% |

**Table 6: ’Why do you want to quit smoking? Please select the 3 most important reasons for you’**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Multiple choice answer selected | Overall % of respondents |
| To improve my physical health | 55% |
| To save money | 52% |
| Personal appearance (as well as smell) | 26% |
| I don’t like the smell of cigarettes | 20% |
| My friends and family want me to | 19% |
| The Coronavirus has make me more concerned about my health | 19% |
| To improve my mental health | 16% |
| My children want me to | 15% |
| My doctor has told me to | 15% |
| Social pressures e.g. other people giving up, stigma around smoking | 15% |
| Family reasons e.g. not to smoke around family or give up for them/ on their advice, pregnancy | 14% |
| A health scare | 14% |
| My partner wants me to | 8% |
| Other | 1% |

**Table 7: Results from the question ‘What do you think are the biggest obstacles to quitting? Please select a maximum of 3.’**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Multiple choice answer selected | Overall % of respondents |
| The strength of addiction & cravings | 43% |
| The stress of everyday life | 42% |
| Getting carvings when drinking alcohol | 25% |
| Getting cravings whilst socialising | 24% |
| The cost of stop-smoking aids (sprays, patches etc) | 13% |
| The influence of friends and/or family that smoke | 11% |
| The fact that cigarettes are sold in lots of places | 8% |
| Seeing cigarettes in films and on T.V. | 6% |
| The lack of information on how best to quit | 6% |
| The lack of support from friends & family | 5% |
| Other | 3% |

**Table 8: Results from the question: ‘If you could go back in time and never start smoking, would you?’**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Answer selected | Overall % of respondents |
|
| No | 25% | Yes | 75% |