

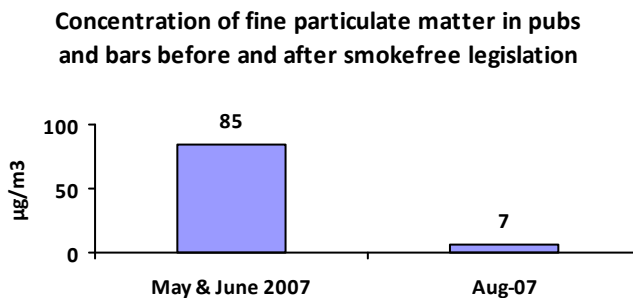
CANCER RESEARCH UK BRIEFING ON SMOKEFREE LEGISLATION

Smokefree legislation has been a popular success with major benefits for the health of employees and others.

1. Protection for all workers

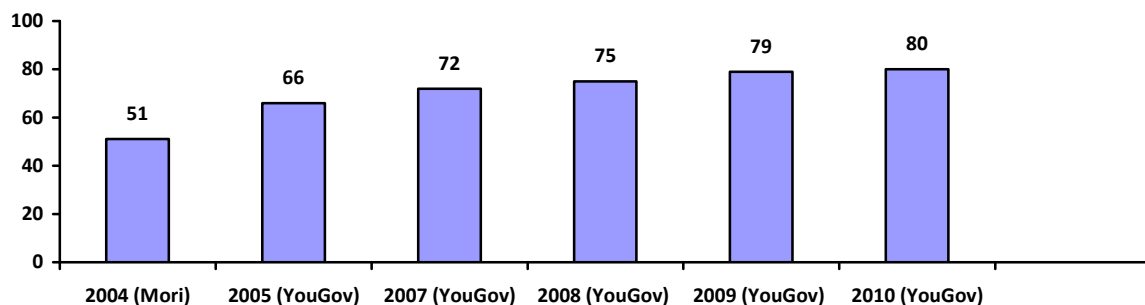
Parliamentarians supported smokefree legislation covering all pubs and clubs because they thought it was right that all workers were protected from second hand smoke.

- Secondhand smoke is classified as a known human carcinogen by the US Environmental Protection Agency and the World Health Organisation's International Agency for Research on Cancer.
- Before the legislation, it was estimated that secondhand smoke at work was causing the deaths of more than 600 workers each year including over 50 in the hospitality industry.¹ This is more than three times the numbers who die from industrial injuries and accidents.
- Research in the months after implementation found that the average air quality of bars became comparable to ambient outside air².
- These kind of results could never have been achieved with ventilation systems.



2. Public support for a well respected law

The debate about smokefree workplaces in the middle of the decade saw quickly rising support for the idea with steady growth continuing after implementation.³



Percentage of adults in England who would support a law to make all pubs and bars smoke-free

This strong public support has been reflected in people abiding by the law – 98% of businesses were compliant with the law in the months after it was introduced².

3. Extra health benefits

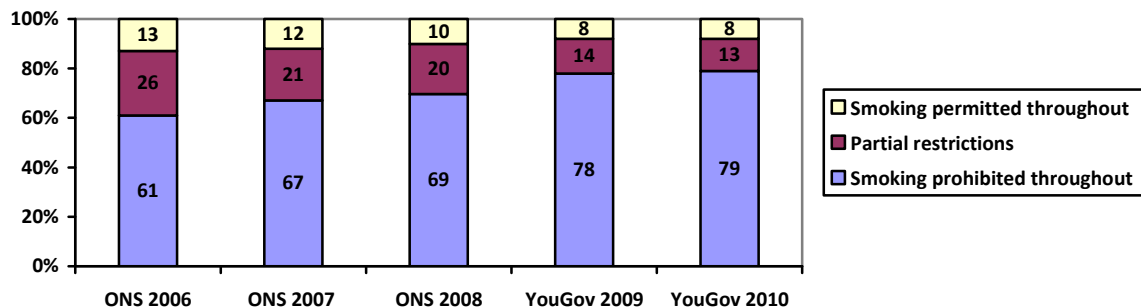
As well as protecting workers from second hand smoke, the smokefree legislation has had other major health benefits.

- The smokefree legislation motivated an extra 300,000 smokers to try to quit.⁴
- In England, smokefree legislation has been responsible for a 2.4 per cent fall in emergency admissions for heart attacks – meaning that 1,200 admissions were prevented over a year, saving the NHS £8.4m a year⁵.
- In Scotland, there was a 17% fall in the much broader category of acute coronary syndrome after smokefree legislation. The difference between the two countries is accounted for by: exposure to second hand smoke being approximately twice as high as England prior to the legislation; the category of acute coronary syndrome including more conditions than heart attacks; and, taking account of a long-term fall in those affected by the syndrome.

4. More smokefree homes

Opponents of smokefree legislation feared there would be a rise in people smoking in homes and this would especially affect children but this has not happened. In fact there have been big improvements:

- There was no significant difference in the numbers of, or degree to which, children had the chemical, cotinine, that the body produces when it is exposed to tobacco smoke⁶.
- There was a significant fall in the proportion of children being looked after by a smoker for more than two hours a week or who were often near people smoking in other people's homes, on public transport, or in other places⁷.
- Reflecting this, the number of people allowing smoking in their homes has fallen. A data series⁸ that that began in 2006 shows a rapid increase in smokefree homes immediately before and after smokefree legislation that has now slowed.



6. Smokefree pubs and communities

We recognise the value of pubs, clubs and restaurants as places for people to meet – some people say the legislation has hurt businesses but others disagree:

- Although some publicans have said the impact of the smoking ban has had an impact on their business, a survey for the Business and Enterprise Select Committee found that 41% of licensees stated that the price of goods and services due to the beer tie was the single most important factor in terms of their current financial struggle. Other factors mentioned were the cost of rent and supermarket pricing.⁹
- Across the licensed sector as a whole, a year after implementation 38% reported to ICM a positive impact on their company against 12% who said it was negative² and the number of licenses to sell alcohol rose by 5% in the year it was introduced.

- 14% of people say they went to pubs more before the smoking restrictions while 17% said they now go to pubs more frequently.
- The tobacco industry successfully generated fears about the impact on pubs but there are now very few groups calling for repeal or amendment.

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References

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2. Department of Health, 2008. *Smokefree England One Year On*. London: HMSO.
3. Percentage of adults who would support a law to make all pubs and bars smoke-free in public opinion surveys. After implementation, the question became: ““It is now against the law to smoke in enclosed public places and workplaces. How strongly, if at all, do you support or oppose this law to make all enclosed public places and workplaces smoke free?”
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