

Statistical bulletin

Adult smoking habits in the UK: 2024

Cigarette smoking habits among adults in the UK, including how many people smoke, differences between population groups, changes over time and use of e-cigarettes.

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1 . Main points

- Around 5.3 million people aged 18 years and over (10.6%) smoked cigarettes in the UK in 2024; this is the lowest proportion of current smokers since records began in 2011, based on our estimates from the Annual Population Survey (APS).
- Those aged 25 to 34 years continued to have the highest proportion of current smokers (12.6%) in the UK in 2024.
- Those aged 18 to 24 years have had the largest reduction in smoking prevalence (17.6 percentage points) between 2011 (25.7%) and 2024 (8.1%).
- Around 5.4 million adults aged 16 years and over (10.0%) currently use an e-cigarette daily or occasionally in Great Britain in 2024; overtaking around 4.9 million current smokers (9.1%) for the first time in 2024, based on the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN).
- The percentage of men who reported using e-cigarettes daily or occasionally (e-cigarette users) in Great Britain decreased in 2024 compared with 2023 (10.1% and 11.0%, respectively), while among women, e-cigarette use increased from 8.5% in 2023 to 10.0% in 2024.
- E-cigarette use remained highest among people aged 16 to 24 years in Great Britain, with 13.0% using e-cigarettes either daily or occasionally, although this is a decrease from 2023 (15.8%).
- Daily e-cigarette use was highest among people aged 25 to 34 years and 35 to 49 years in Great Britain (9.3% and 9.5%, respectively), and has increased among both age groups from 2023.

2 . Using and interpreting the statistics in this release

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) collects data on [adult smoking habits](#) through two main surveys. The Annual Population Survey (APS) gives headline indicators of the number of adults aged 18 years and over who smoke in the UK. The Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) collects information on e-cigarette use among those aged 16 years and over in Great Britain (excluding Northern Ireland), as well as smoking habits and the intention to quit smoking.

Read more about these surveys in [Section 11: Data sources and quality](#).

The following guide explains what you can and cannot do when interpreting and using the statistics in this release.

You can

- Find smoking estimates, all of which fall within a range (or [confidence interval](#)) that shows the level of [uncertainty](#) around the estimate.
- Compare trends over time, but be aware that some declines, especially during 2020, could be because of sample sizes and methods changes.
- Examine trends in smoking habits by local authority, but we advise focusing on longer-term trends because short-term trends can vary more.

You cannot

- Compare smoking in the UK, from the Annual Population Survey (APS), with smoking and vaping in Great Britain, from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN); the surveys cover different geographical areas and define a current smoker differently.

Find more information on the statistics in this release in [Section 11: Data sources and quality](#). Further detail on our data collection and analysis methods is available in our [methodology article](#).

3 . Smoking in the UK and constituent countries

The Annual Population Survey (APS) gives headline indicators on the number of adults aged 18 years and over who smoke in the UK. The Annual Population Survey (APS) includes two questions relating to smoking: "Have you ever smoked cigarettes regularly?". If the respondent answers "Yes", they are asked a follow-up question: "Do you smoke cigarettes at all nowadays?". In this survey, a smoker is defined as someone who smokes nowadays.

Changes to APS data collection introduced in March 2020 led to a change in survey mode. An updated weighting methodology was used for smoking prevalence estimates from 2020 to 2023. At the end of 2023, the survey returned to its previous mode of data collection (telephone and face-to-face).

Since the second question is only asked of respondents who report having ever smoked cigarettes regularly, estimates for current smokers may not capture some occasional or non-daily smokers who have never considered themselves to be regular smokers.

Non-cigarette smokers, such as people who use pipes or cigars, will not be included as the questions ask about cigarette smoking.

For this release, a revised weighting approach has been developed and applied to estimates for 2020 to 2023 to ensure consistency across the time series. Therefore, estimates for 2020 to 2023 supersede all previously published estimates for this time period. The weighting approach has not been applied to 2024 estimates. For more detail, please refer to our accompanying [methodology article](#).

In 2024, 10.6% of adults aged 18 years or over (5.3 million people) were current smokers, according to APS data.

This is a decrease from 2023 (11.1% of the population), which follows a long-term downward trend. The proportion of current smokers has fallen by 9.6 percentage points since 2011 (20.2% of the population).

The APS provides the official measure of smoking prevalence in England. It is used to monitor progress towards the UK government's target of achieving a smokefree England by 2030, with smoking prevalence at 5% or lower.

Smoking in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland

In the UK in 2024, as shown in Figure 1, the percentage of adult smokers in:

- England was 10.4%
- Wales was 11.4%
- Scotland was 12.0%
- Northern Ireland was 10.5%

Official smoking prevalence estimates for Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland should be taken from devolved health or national surveys (see [Section 8: Other UK data sources on smoking prevalence](#)).

Figure 1: Smoking prevalence continued to fall in all countries of the UK in 2024

Current smokers as a percentage of all persons aged 18 years and over, 2011 to 2024

Notes:

1. We have applied revised weighting to the figures to account for methodological changes introduced in 2020. This ensures that estimates from 2020 to 2023 are consistent with those from previous years and can be reliably compared over time.
2. For Northern Ireland, the estimate over time has been more variable because of the smaller sample size.

Download the data

4 . Local authority smoking prevalence

Current smoker estimates for each local authority (Figure 2) can vary a lot from year to year because of small sample sizes. So, we have used a five-year average to give a clearer picture of how smoking prevalence varies between local authority areas, rather than focusing on one year's figures. You can still find annual smoking estimates by local authority in our [Smoking habits in the UK and its constituent countries dataset](#).

For this release, we have included the coefficient of variation (CV) to indicate the precision of annual local authority estimates for 2020 to 2024.

Local authorities with the highest average percentage of current smokers are:

- Fenland with 19.8%
- Blackpool with 19.7%

Local authorities with the lowest average percentage of current smokers are:

- Woking with 4.2%
- Epsom and Ewell with 4.8%

Local authority data for England are also available in the [Smoking Profile tool](#) from the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID). This tool allows users to compare local authorities within regions and benchmark a local authority against England or a regional average. OHID publish estimates based on one year and an average of three years.

Figure 2: The average percentage of current smokers by local authority of the UK

Five-year average smoking prevalence in percent among adults aged 18 and over, 2020 to 2024

Notes:

1. The averages presented are 5-year averages, calculated using data from 2020 to 2024, where available.
2. The 5-year estimates have ranges of uncertainty (confidence intervals), which can be found in the accompanying data download.
3. North Northamptonshire and West Northamptonshire averages are based on a 3-year average (2022 to 2024), because of boundary changes.
4. City of London and Buckinghamshire Unitary Authority averages are based on a 4-year average (2021 to 2024), because of boundary changes.
5. Official smoking prevalence estimates for Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland should be taken from devolved health or national surveys.

5 . Percentage of smokers by age, sex and other personal characteristics

Men were more likely to smoke than women in the UK in 2024, as seen in previous years. Around 3.0 million men (12.3%) and around 2.3 million women (9.0%) reported being current smokers.

When considering the population by age (Figure 3):

- those aged 25 to 34 years were most likely to smoke (12.6%)
- those aged 65 years and over were least likely to smoke (7.1%)
- those aged 18 to 24 years have seen the largest reduction in smoking prevalence between 2011 (25.7%) and 2024 (8.1%)

Figure 3: People aged 25 to 34 years continued to have the highest smoking prevalence

Percentage who were current smokers, all persons by age group, UK, 2011 to 2024

[Download the data](#)

Characteristics of current cigarette smokers in the UK

Smoking prevalence is known to be associated with a variety of characteristics, such as relationship status, education level and socio-economic status.

When looking at smoking prevalence by economic activity status in the UK in 2024, those who were defined as unemployed had a higher proportion of current smokers (17.5%), compared with those who were in paid employment (9.9%) and those who were economically inactive (11.4%).

Of those who were classified as being in a "routine and manual" occupation, according to the [National Statistics Socio-economic Classification](#) (NS-SEC), 18.8% were current smokers, compared with 6.5% of "managerial and professional" occupations. This follows the same trend since data collection began in 2014 (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Smoking prevalence continued to be higher in routine and manual occupations than in managerial and professional occupations in 2024

The percentage who were current smokers by socio-economic status, all persons aged 18 to 64 years, UK, 2014 to 2024

Notes:

1. Socio-economic status is defined using the National Statistics Socio-economic Classification (NS-SEC).
2. We have restricted the data to those of working age, aged between 18 and 64 years.

[Download the data](#)

Of people who had no qualifications, 25.5% were current smokers in 2024. This is higher than among those who reported their highest level of education as "Other qualifications" (20.6%), and those who reported GCSEs as their highest level of education (16.7%). Those who reported a degree or equivalent as their highest level of education had the lowest percentage of current smokers (5.1%) (Figure 5).

Figure 5: The highest percentage of current smokers were among those who reported they had no qualifications

Percentage who were current smokers by highest level of educational attainment, all people aged 18 years and over, UK, 2014 to 2024

[Download the data](#)

A wider range of data on the characteristics of cigarette smokers from the APS is available in our accompanying dataset. This includes estimates by:

- relationship status
- housing tenure
- country of birth
- ethnicity
- religion

These data for England are also available in the [Smoking Profile tool](#) from the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities.

More information on smoking prevalence by socio-economic status can be found in our [Deprivation and the impact on smoking prevalence in England and Wales: 2017 to 2021 bulletin](#).

6 . Quitting smoking

In this section, we describe data from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN), which covers adults aged 16 years and over in Great Britain. In the OPN, a smoker is someone who reports smoking cigarettes, even only occasionally.

The percentage of adults in Great Britain aged 16 years and over who said they smoked cigarettes decreased from 10.5% in 2023 to 9.1% in 2024. This is lower than the Annual Population Survey (APS) and it is not the official estimate for smoking prevalence, however this continues the downward trend seen since 1974.

This is in-line with the reduction in smoking prevalence seen in the APS, which covers the UK and adults aged 18 years and over.

The percentage of people who indicated that they had previously smoked and had now quit increased to 74.2% in 2024, compared with 70.9% in 2023 (Figure 6).

For the first time, the percentage of current e-cigarette users (daily or occasional) was higher than the number of current smokers in 2024 (10.0% and 9.1%, respectively). This equates to around 5.4 million current e-cigarette users compared with around 4.9 million current smokers. For more information on e-cigarette use, see [Section 7: E-cigarette use in Great Britain](#).

Figure 6: The percentage of e-cigarette users have overtaken current smokers for the first time in Great Britain in 2024

The percentage of current cigarette smokers, those who have quit smoking, and current e-cigarette users, all people aged 16 years and over, Great Britain, 1974 to 2024

Notes:

1. Current cigarette smokers are defined as those who report smoking cigarettes, even if only occasionally.
2. The percentage of cigarette smokers who have quit refers to the proportion of people who do not currently smoke, even occasionally, but previously smoked cigarettes regularly.
3. Data collection on e-cigarette usage started in 2014; prior to this, no information on e-cigarette use was collected.
4. From 2020 onwards, current e-cigarette users can define themselves as either daily users or occasional users. To compare current users with previous years, these figures need to be summed.
5. OPN data collection was monthly before March 2020. It changed to weekly collection from March 2020 to July 2021, then moved to fortnightly until June 2024. From June 2024, it returned to monthly data collection, split across two 12-day periods.
6. Data are unweighted before 2000. From 2000 onwards, they are weighted.
7. We collected data on cigarette use every two years before 2000.
8. Information on the changes in legislation and government policy can be found on the [Tobacco and smoking: policy, regulation and guidance](#).

Download the data

Of the people who currently smoked in 2024, 56.2% intended to quit smoking. Almost a quarter of current smokers (24.4%) intended to quit within the next three months. Current smokers who intended to quit in the next three months were more likely to wait longer to have their first cigarette of the day (Figure 7).

Figure 7: Current smokers who intended to quit in the next three months waited longer to have their first cigarette of the day

Percentage of current smokers by time waited until first cigarette of the day and intention to quit, Great Britain, 2024

Notes:

1. The data refer to the amount of time cigarette smokers typically waited until they had their first cigarette after waking.

Download the data

7 . E-cigarette use in Great Britain

Data for e-cigarette use come from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN), which covers adults aged 16 years and over in Great Britain.

An estimated 6.7% of people aged 16 years and over in Great Britain reported using an e-cigarette daily in 2024, up from 5.9% in 2023.

A further 3.3% of people aged 16 years and over in Great Britain reported using an e-cigarette occasionally, down from 3.9% in 2023 (Figure 8). The decrease in occasional users of e-cigarettes this year suggests that some individuals may have either transitioned to daily use or stopped using e-cigarettes altogether.

This equates to around 5.4 million e-cigarette users (both daily and occasional users) in Great Britain, compared with 5.1 million users in 2023.

Those who have never used an e-cigarette continued to decrease in 2024 (83.4%), compared with 2023 (84.2%).

Figure 8: The percentage of daily e-cigarette users increased in 2024, compared with 2023

Percentage of e-cigarette users, Great Britain, 2023 and 2024

Notes:

1. E-cigarette users are daily and occasional users combined.

Download the data

Current and ex-smokers were more likely to report using an e-cigarette in 2024 (32.8% and 20.8%, respectively). This is an increase compared with 2023 when 31.6% of current smokers used an e-cigarette, and 18.7% of ex-smokers used an e-cigarette.

Around 2.7% of those who had never smoked reported using an e-cigarette daily or occasionally.

The number of people aged 16 years and over who had never smoked but reported using an e-cigarette daily, increased slightly to 1.3% (around 450,000 people) compared with 1.2% in 2023 (around 400,000 people).

When looking at the whole population, whether they smoked cigarettes or not, people more likely to use an e-cigarette daily were:

- people aged 35 to 49 years (9.5%) and 25 to 34 years (9.3%) (figure 9)
- men (7.0%) compared with women (6.5%)

Figure 9: Daily e-cigarette use was highest in people aged 35 to 49 years in 2024

Percentage of daily e-cigarette users by age, Great Britain, 2023 and 2024

Download the data

The percentage of men who reported using e-cigarettes daily or occasionally (e-cigarette users) decreased in 2024 compared with 2023 (10.1% and 11.0%, respectively). The largest decrease was observed among men aged 16 to 24 years, with usage at 10.6% in 2024, compared with 14.3% in 2023.

Among women, e-cigarette use increased to 10.0% in 2024, from 8.5% in 2023. Women aged 16 to 24 years were the only age group where there was a decrease in e-cigarette use in 2024 compared with 2023 (15.7% and 17.6%, respectively). The largest increase in e-cigarette use between 2024 and 2023 was among women aged 25 to 34 years (13.7% and 10.5%, respectively), followed by women aged 35 to 49 years (11.4% and 8.5%, respectively).

8 . Other UK data sources on smoking prevalence

Health surveys in the devolved countries of the UK provide official estimates of smoking in each country. Each country uses these surveys to track progress against their targets to reduce smoking. These are:

- the Northern Ireland Health Survey, which shows that [13% of adults smoked cigarettes in 2023 to 2024](#)
- the National Survey for Wales, which shows that [10% of adults smoked cigarettes in April 2024 to March 2025](#)
- the Scottish Health Survey, which shows that [14% of adults smoked cigarettes in 2024](#)

Information about cigarette smoking in England is also available in the [Smoking Profile tool](#) from the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID). The tool gives data on a wide range of indicators related to the smoking of cigarettes, including:

- different measures of prevalence in adults and young people
- smoking-related mortality

The [Health Survey for England](#) and the [Smoking Toolkit Study](#) (non-Government Statistical Service) also collect data on smoking habits and e-cigarettes.

NHS England also collects data on [smoking, drinking and drug use among young people in England](#).

9 . Data on adult smoking habits in the UK

[Smoking habits in the UK and its constituent countries](#)

Dataset | Released 4 November 2025

Annual data and the annual historic data on the proportion of adults who currently smoke, the proportion of ex-smokers and proportion of those who have never smoked, by sex and age.

[E-cigarette use in Great Britain](#)

Dataset | Released 4 November 2025

Annual data on the proportion of adults in Great Britain who use e-cigarettes, by different characteristics such as age, sex and cigarette smoking status.

[E-cigarette use in England](#)

Dataset | Released 4 November 2025

Annual data on the proportion of adults in England who use e-cigarettes, by different characteristics such as age, sex and cigarette smoking status.

[Adult smoking habits in Great Britain](#)

Dataset | Released 4 November 2025

Annual data on the proportion of adults in Great Britain who smoke cigarettes, cigarette consumption, the proportion who have never smoked cigarettes and the proportion of smokers who have quit, by sex and age over time.

[Adult smoking habits in England](#)

Dataset | Released 4 November 2025

Annual data on the proportion of adults in England who smoke cigarettes, cigarette consumption, the proportion who have never smoked cigarettes and the proportion of smokers who have quit, by sex and age over time.

10 . Glossary

Cigarette smokers who have quit

The Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) defines cigarette smokers who have quit (ex-smokers) as those who reported they do not currently smoke, even occasionally, but have previously smoked cigarettes regularly. This is provided as a proportion of those who have ever smoked cigarettes regularly.

Confidence interval

A [confidence interval](#) uses the standard error to define a range in which the true population value is likely to lie. It reflects the uncertainty around a sample estimate, with lower and upper bounds indicating the possible values. Wider intervals suggest less precision, often because of greater standard error or lower sample size.

Current cigarette smokers

The Annual Population Survey (APS) defines current cigarette smokers as those who said they had ever smoked cigarettes regularly, and that they smoke cigarettes nowadays. As the first question focuses on regular smoking, some occasional or non-daily smokers may not be captured in the estimates for current smokers. The OPN defines current cigarette smokers as those who said they smoked cigarettes, even if occasionally. Current cigarette smokers are provided as a proportion of those in the population.

Current e-cigarette users

The OPN defines current e-cigarette users as those who said they currently use e-cigarettes, a vaping device, or both. Current e-cigarette users are provided as a proportion of those in the population.

Economic activity

We use the International Labour Organization (ILO) definitions of economic activity. Unemployed people are those who are not currently in work but who are looking for work. The group "economically inactive" contains those who are not in work and not looking for work; this includes retired people and students. More information on economic activity can be found in our [Labour Force Survey user guide](#).

Sampling and non-sampling error

The people who respond to the survey may differ from the population because of random sampling (sampling error), or because of other factors, for example, because some could not be contacted or refused to participate (non-sampling error). These non-random effects can lead to sample bias if they are not fully adjusted for through weighting.

Survey mode

Survey mode is the method that is used to collect information from respondents. There are different types of survey mode, such as face-to-face, telephone, online and mixed mode.

11 . Data sources and quality

Annual Population Survey

Data on smoking habits in the UK come from the Annual Population Survey (APS). The survey covers residents of the UK aged 18 years and over. For more information on APS survey methodology, see our [APS Quality and Methodology Information \(QMI\)](#).

The change from mixed mode to telephone-only data collection for the APS, introduced at the end of March 2020, resulted in a potentially unrepresentative sample. The change in the mode of data collection suggested that our smoking prevalence estimates for 2020 were not comparable with the estimates of previous years. We have updated our weighting methodology for smoking prevalence estimates from 2020 to 2023 to improve comparability. The APS returned to mixed mode data collection (face-to-face and telephone interviews) at the end of 2023. As a result, a revised weighting approach has been developed for this release and applied to estimates for 2020 to 2023. The weighting approach has not been applied to 2024 estimates and will not be applied in future years. This is because the APS has now returned to mixed mode data collection. For more details about this update, see our [Adult smoking habits in the UK methodology](#).

The Annual Population Survey (APS) is the official measure of smoking prevalence in England. It is used to monitor and track progress towards a smoke-free generation, a goal outlined in the [10 Year Health Plan for England](#).

The government aims to achieve a smoke-free generation through delivering a comprehensive package of measures, which will reduce smoking prevalence. This includes providing funding to support current smokers to quit, and progressing the [Tobacco and Vapes Bill](#), which will make it illegal for tobacco products to be sold to anyone born after 2008. This means that the age of sale will gradually rise over time.

Opinions and Lifestyle Survey

Data on smoking and e-cigarette use for Great Britain for those aged 16 years and over come from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN). In March 2020, the OPN was transformed from a monthly to weekly omnibus survey to understand how the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic was affecting life in Great Britain. As a result, the number of questions relating to smoking and vaping habits was greatly reduced. For more information on the OPN survey methodology, see our [Opinions and Lifestyle Survey QMI](#).

The analysis reported in this bulletin used survey weights to make estimates representative of the population. Survey weights consider observed patterns of non-response and attrition, as well as the distribution of population characteristics, like sex and age, where someone lives, and socio-economic characteristics.

Changes to datasets and user feedback

For the next release, we will be changing the format of the datasets that are published alongside this bulletin. These changes may include:

- combining Great Britain and England for the Adult Smoking Habits and E-cigarette use datasets
- including confidence intervals in each table alongside estimates, rather than in separate tables
- including the sample sizes for some of the back series.

Before deciding on these changes, we would like to gather user feedback to understand how the datasets are used and what format changes would be beneficial for users. Please contact health.data@ons.gov.uk with any questions or feedback on these changes.

Strengths

The APS and the OPN use standard methods for sampling and weighting strategies to limit the effect of bias. We carry out quality assurance procedures throughout the analysis stages to minimise the risk of processing error.

The sample size of the APS is large, approximately 159,209 respondents, making it possible to generate statistics for small geographic areas. The sample size of the OPN in 2024 was approximately 47,486 respondents.

Limitations

Comparisons between periods and groups must be done with caution, because estimates are provided from a sample survey. We have included [confidence intervals](#) in our [accompanying datasets](#) to present the sampling variability. These should be considered when assessing differences between periods, because true differences may not exist.

There are differences that should be considered when comparing estimates of smoking prevalence from different surveys. These differences are because of a range of factors, for example:

- different survey questions
- different methods of sampling
- different methods of weighting

Official statistics in development

These statistics were previously designated as accredited official statistics (formerly known as National Statistics). As of 9 October 2024, ONS statistics produced from the Annual Population Survey (APS) are not considered accredited official statistics and are designated as official statistics in development until further review. This is a consequence of ongoing challenges with the response rates, levels, and weighting approach of the APS.

12 . Related links

[Office for Health Improvement and Disparities: Smoking Profile](#)

Web page | Updated when new data become available

Data on a wide range of indicators related to smoking cigarettes, including different measures of prevalence in adults and young people, smoking-related mortality, and the wider impacts of smoking on health.

[Smoking prevalence in the UK and the impact of data collection changes: 2020](#)

Bulletin | Released 7 December 2021

Impact that the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has had on data collection, how this has influenced estimates of smoking prevalence and the comparability of these estimates.

13 . Cite this statistical bulletin

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