



# *Tobacco key messages*

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# Health and tobacco smoking

Tobacco smoking produces more illness and premature death than any other preventable cause of disease.<sup>1</sup> Smoking costs the region of Yorkshire and the Humber £4.1 billion a year in healthcare, lost productivity and social care.<sup>2</sup>

Although significant progress has been made to reduce the rates of smoking in Yorkshire, we estimate that the region will not meet the 5% target until 2043 if no significant changes are made.

## Tobacco dependency and quitting:

Smoking is an addiction that often requires multiple attempts and specialist support for people to quit successfully.

Nicotine is the part of a cigarette to which most people who smoke are addicted.

While nicotine alone is less harmful than the combination of other chemicals in cigarettes, it still affects the body and brain.

Yorkshire Cancer Research recommends avoiding nicotine if you do not smoke, but if you do, consider stop-smoking aids like nicotine replacement therapies and e-cigarettes. These can provide relief from withdrawal symptoms without the toxicity of the many other chemicals in a cigarette.

## Smoking and cancer:

- Tobacco smoking is the largest preventable cause of cancer in the UK.
- At least 80 chemicals in tobacco smoke cause cancer, leading to at least 16 different types of cancer.
- Smoking contributes to approximately 14.7% of all cancers in England and 72.0% of lung cancers.
- In Yorkshire, 6,903 people die from smoking-related illnesses each year (equivalent to 19 people every day).



# The Yorkshire picture

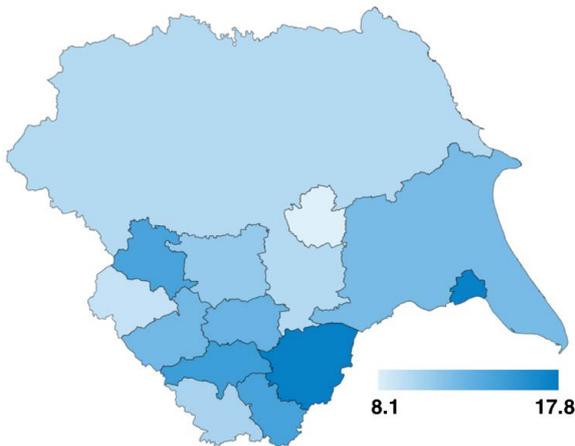
The Yorkshire smoking rate is 12.4%, however there is much variation across the region, with Doncaster having a smoking rate of 17.8%.

Although smoking rates are declining there are still over half a million people who smoke in Yorkshire.

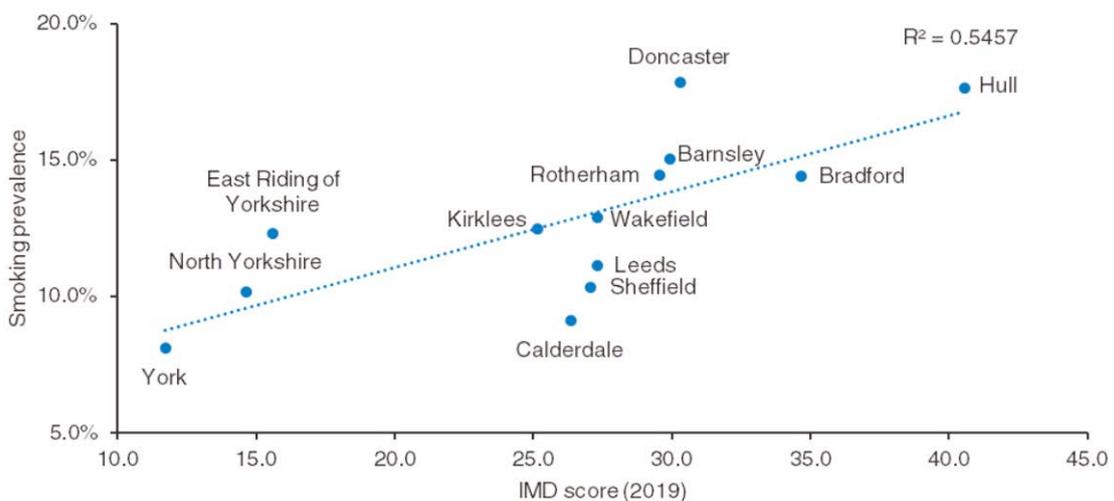
In Yorkshire and the Humber, 11.5% of children and young people have ever tried smoking.

Smoking is strongly linked to deprivation. Figure 2 demonstrates the relationship between the deprivation score of an area and smoking prevalence across Yorkshire.

Yorkshire has the third highest regional rate of smoking at the time of delivery of a baby, at 9.0%, with Hull having the highest rate at 16.4%. The Tobacco Control Plan aimed to reduce the prevalence of smoking in pregnancy to 6.0% by 2022, a target which has been missed.



**Figure 1:** Adult smoking prevalence in Yorkshire districts, 2023



**Figure 2:** Adult smoking prevalence by Index of Multiple Deprivation score in Yorkshire, 2023

# Other forms of tobacco

Other tobacco-containing products besides cigarettes include hand-rolled tobacco, cigars, cigarillos, pipes, waterpipes (hookah or shisha), smokeless tobacco, and tobacco “heat not burn” products. Despite perceptions of being less harmful, these alternatives still pose significant health risks, containing similar levels of toxic chemicals and nicotine to cigarettes.

Hand-rolled tobacco, cigars, cigarillos, and pipes are not safer alternatives and should be subject to the same regulations as cigarettes.

Waterpipes, or shisha, despite misconceptions, can be equally harmful as cigarettes, with smoke containing similar toxicants and posing risks of cancer and cardiovascular disease.

Smokeless tobacco or ‘heat not burn’ products are highly addictive and linked to various health issues, including cancer and heart disease.



# Recommendations

As Yorkshire will not reach a smoking prevalence of 5% or less until 2043, the Government must provide a comprehensive roadmap to achieve a smokefree future in Yorkshire.

**Yorkshire Cancer Research urges the next Government to:**

**1** **Ensure the timely and smooth passage of the Tobacco and Vapes Bill**, which will increase the age of sale of tobacco every year and significantly reduce the harm that tobacco causes to younger generations.

**2** **Introduce a Tobacco Industry Levy**, capping profits at 10%, and using the rest to fund health promotion activities. This follows the All Party Parliamentary Group on Smoking and Health's recommendations.

**3** **Drive forward the expansion of a Smokefree NHS to all hospitals**, including within Yorkshire to create supportive environments for patients and staff to stop smoking. Additionally, incorporate smoking cessation into as many NHS touchpoints as possible, so whenever someone who smokes interacts with the NHS, they are offered the high-quality stop smoking support they need to quit. This should be set up so that within these touchpoints, people who smoke are automatically enrolled and must then actively opt-out of the scheme.

**4** **Discourage the use of other tobacco-containing products** including waterpipes (shisha), smokeless tobacco, tobacco "heat not burn" products, cigars, cigarillos and pipes. This is because produce the same toxic chemicals as cigarettes and are therefore addictive and harmful.