

# Summary

This report presents the results of a survey on smoking behaviour and attitudes carried out in 2003. The survey is the latest in a series of surveys carried out for the Department of Health as part of the ONS Omnibus Survey. The surveys were primarily designed to explore views on giving up smoking, second-hand smoking and smoking restrictions.

The key findings are outlined below.

## Giving up smoking (Chapter 3)

- The percentage of current smokers who said they would like to give up smoking (70%) was not significantly different to figures for previous years.
- More than eight out of ten (84%) smokers who wanted to give up mentioned at least one health-related reason for wanting to give up smoking. The most common, mentioned by 67%, was that it would be better for their health in general. More than one in four smokers (28%) said they wanted to give up smoking because they could not afford to smoke or considered smoking a waste of money.
- Just over half (53%) of smokers said that they intended to give up smoking within the next 12 months – this was not significantly different to the figures for previous years. Compared with other smokers, those who intended to give up tended to be younger, to have children aged 5 to 10 at home, to be smokers of packeted cigarettes, and to be aware of the effects of second-hand smoking.

## Attempts to give up smoking (Chapter 4)

- Nearly four-fifths (78%) of current smokers had tried to give up smoking, and over a half (52%) of current smokers had made a serious attempt in the past 5 years. The corresponding figures for 2002 were almost identical, 79% and 53% respectively.
- A fifth (21%) of ex-smokers had given up within the past 5 years.

- Overall, 39% of current smokers and 45% of those who had given up smoking in the past year had sought some kind of help or advice for stopping smoking.

## Awareness of the effect of second-hand smoking (section 5.2)

- Awareness of the effects of second-hand smoking was widespread. Respectively, 90% and 84% of respondents thought that a child's risk of getting chest infections and asthma were increased by second-hand smoking. Over 80% thought that second-hand smoking would increase a non-smoking adult's risk of lung cancer, bronchitis and asthma. The percentages were similar to those found in 2002.

## Non-smokers' attitudes towards people smoking near them (section 6.1)

- 56% of those who did not smoke (51% of men and 60% of women) said they would mind if other people smoked near them.

## Smokers' behaviour in the presence of non-smokers (section 6.2)

- 68% of smokers said they do not smoke at all when they are in a room with a child (66% in 2002) and 24% said they would smoke fewer cigarettes in the presence of a child (21% in 2002).
- Most smokers said they would modify their smoking in the company of adult non-smokers – 46% would not smoke at all and 36% would smoke fewer cigarettes.

## Smoking restrictions in public places (sections 6.3, 6.4 and 6.5)

- Half of respondents (50%) who were in work said that smoking was not allowed at all on the premises where they worked – a significant increase from 40% in 1996.

- About four-fifths or more of those interviewed agreed that there should be restrictions on smoking at work (86%), in restaurants (87%), in indoor shopping centres (85%), in indoor sports and leisure centres (91%), in indoor areas at railway and bus stations (78%) and in other public places such as banks and post offices (90%). A smaller percentage of respondents, 56%, thought that smoking should be restricted in pubs.
- The support for smoking restrictions has been increasing since 1996. The percentage in favour of restrictions increased from 85% to 87% in restaurants, from 48% to 56% in pubs and from 82% to 90% in other public places. The percentage in favour of restrictions at work rose from 81% in 1996 to 86% in 2000 and has remained stable at 86%.
- About half the respondents thought that pubs should be mainly non-smoking with smoking allowed in designated areas (51%), and a fifth (19%) thought the premises should be mainly smoking with a designated non-smoking area. A fifth (20%) said that smoking should not be allowed anywhere. Less than a tenth (8%) thought there should be no restrictions on smoking at all.
- Overall, the vast majority (92%) of respondents agreed that there should be smoking restrictions in places where there are, or are likely to be, children under the age of 16.
- 41% of people considered the provision of a non-smoking area as an important factor when deciding where to go for a meal and 22% said they would take it into account when selecting a place to go for a drink.