

Fastest drop in smoking rates in over a decade as Stoptober launches

Latest figures from the University College London (UCL) [Smoking Toolkit Study](#) suggest that smoking rates in England are dropping at the fastest rate in over a decade, with around 200 fewer smokers every hour.

Not smoking is now the norm in England – but despite smoking rates being lower than ever before, [millions still smoke across the country](#). [Stoptober](#) is back to help encourage smokers to make a quit attempt and join those who have already quit this year.

Public Health England (PHE) is encouraging all smokers to join in with the nation's biggest quit attempt, which begins on 1 October 2019. PHE is providing them with the support and information they need to 'split up' with smoking this Stoptober.

Yvonne Doyle, Director for Health Protection and Medical Director at PHE, said:

It's really encouraging to see these early signs of such a fast drop in smokers but we've still got a way to go to achieve our ambition of a smoke-free society. That's why Stoptober is back and we are encouraging all smokers to take part.

Giving up smoking is the best thing a smoker can do for their health and it can also help save money – in just 28 days smokers will start to notice so many benefits.

The campaign will target all smokers with new creative content highlighting the benefits of 'breaking up', urging them to re-evaluate their bad relationship with smoking and 'split up' this October. The creative will feature across digital, radio and out-of-home advertisements throughout the campaign period, to help keep smokers motivated during their quit attempt.

Stoptober has supported over 1.9 million people on their quit journey to date – if a smoker can remain smokefree for 28 days, they are 5 times more likely to quit for good.

Stoptober's free quitting support includes:

- the Stoptober app
- Facebook Messenger bot
- daily emails
- a personal quit plan
- Stoptober online communities

[Research by the National Centre for Smoking Cessation and Training](#) has shown

that while many smokers want to quit, they face common barriers including procrastination and a fear of failure.

Smokers can get expert face-to-face support from local stop smoking services. Those who do are 3 times as likely to quit successfully as those who try to quit using willpower alone.

Additionally, GPs and pharmacists can also give advice and tips to help smokers quit, including what stop smoking aids might be right for them. Support from family and friends is also an important factor in quitting smoking, and these networks are encouraged to support a smoker as they split up with smoking.

Professor Jamie Brown, Co-Director, Tobacco and Alcohol Research Group at UCL who leads the Smoking Toolkit Study, said:

We're really excited about this data showing such a huge drop in the number of smokers so far in 2019. We're at an all-time low for the number of smokers, but we want to see more people quitting.

There is nothing to be lost by trying to quit, so I would advise every smoker to give it a go at least once a year. Stoptober is an excellent opportunity to quit because there are so many other smokers across the country who are doing it at the same time. There is nothing to lose, so why not give it a go?

Jo Churchill, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Prevention, Public Health and Primary Care, said:

Thanks to our tough action on tobacco, smoking rates are falling faster than in years – presenting us with the real opportunity for a smoke-free society by 2030. Despite this progress, smoking persists in some areas, often those with other challenges, and unfortunately remains the single biggest preventable cause of premature death.

This inequality cannot continue. I want all smokers to quit, so please, take advantage of the support available this Stoptober and enjoy all the health, social and financial benefits this will bring when you succeed.

Dr Rosemary Leonard said:

We know it can be hard to give up smoking but now is the time to give it a try, whether it's the first time or you've tried before. The Stoptober community can really help with motivation and staying on track. Additional support is also available from a variety of places including local stop smoking services, GPs, pharmacies and

of course, the Stoptober and NHS Smokefree websites.

Quitting smoking is the best thing a smoker can do for their health – Stoptober is a brilliant chance to quit with others for 28 days and see the benefits for yourself. If you're a non-smoker, use this chance to support a loved one as they split up with smoking this Stoptober.

Nadia Sawalha, TV presenter and supporter of Stoptober said:

I always knew smoking was bad for me, but I was addicted. I loved cigarettes and for years I used to joke that giving up smoking was like giving up a bad boy lover. You think you're having the best of times, but the truth is deep down you know they're no good for you.

After several attempts I did succeed and ended my relationship with smoking and I'm so pleased I did. The feeling of being smokefree and no longer feeling guilty about smoking is amazing, and I couldn't have done it without the support of my family and friends who helped me resist the urge to turn back to cigarettes if I was stressed or upset.

I'd encourage anyone thinking about quitting to give Stoptober a go and see if they can split up with smoking for 28 days.

Stoptober resources

Visit www.nhs.uk/oneyou/stoptober to sign up or find out more on what support is available.

Stoptober's [new video content and images](#) can be viewed and downloaded online.

UCL Smoking Toolkit Study

The [UCL Smoking Toolkit Study](#) is an academic study of smoking and quitting trends, based on monthly household surveys of representative samples of approximately 1,800 adults (16 years old and above) in England.

Smoking prevalence figures

Smoking prevalence in England has reached a record low, with smokers accounting for 14.4% of the adult population in England. Smoking prevalence in England amongst men is 16.4% and amongst women 12.6%. (Source: [ONS Annual Population Survey 2018](#))

Additional quote

Paula Betenson, 38, from Wokingham said:

I had my first cigarette at 12 years old and was smoking for 25 years before I decided to quit a year ago. I had noticed my health deteriorating and I knew that I didn't want it to get any worse for the sake of my daughter. Last year with the help of Stoptober and my friends and family, I finally managed to split up with smoking for good.

I loved knowing that there were thousands of other smokers out there going through the same thing I was and I am so happy now I'm smokefree! That's why I'd encourage any other smokers to give Stoptober a try this October.

PHE's Tobacco Control Profiles for England

See local smoking prevalence figures and additional local data on [PHE's Local Tobacco Control Profiles website](#).

Deaths caused by smoking

There were an estimated 77,800 deaths attributable to smoking in 2017. This represents 16% of all deaths.

Tackling health inequalities

Data shows that those in manual occupations are more than twice as likely to smoke as those in professional and clerical roles. Through Stoptober, PHE aims to target these groups in particular to help reduce health inequalities.

Towards a smokefree generation: a tobacco control plan for England

The government's [tobacco control plan](#), published in July 2017, sets a series of challenging ambitions to:

- reduce adult smoking rate from 15.5% to 12% or less
- reduce the prevalence of 15 year olds who regularly smoke from 8% to 3% or less
- reduce the prevalence of smoking in pregnancy from 10.7% to 6% or less