

Press release: Highest smoking quit success rates on record

New data published in a University College of London (UCL) report shows quitting success rates at their highest for at least a decade, up to 19.8% for the first 6 months of this year, significantly higher than the average for the last 10 years (15.7%).

Success rates among the less well-off have for years remained consistently low, but in a major turnaround the sharp increase in success rates is being seen entirely among this group. For the first time, smokers in manual occupational groups have virtually the same chances of quitting as those in white collar jobs.

The report coincides with the launch of Stoptober quit smoking challenge, which has inspired over one and a half million quit attempts since 2012. The campaign is based on research that if you stop smoking for 28 days you are 5 times more likely to stop for good.

With Stoptober now in its sixth year, the UCL report gives a number of reasons why there's never been a better time to quit, including:

- better and more quitting aid options, with e-cigarettes now the most popular
- more restrictions on smoking
- banning the use of attractive brand imagery on tobacco packaging
- a strong anti-smoking culture in England
- effective stop smoking campaigns such as Stoptober

E-cigarettes are the most popular quitting method in England and local stop smoking services are the most effective way to give up, with those who combine the two having some of the highest success rates. Last year over half (53%) of all those taking part in Stoptober opted to use an e-cigarette as a quitting aid. This year the campaign will feature e-cigarettes in the TV ad and will do more to encourage and support smokers who are keen to try e-cigarettes to help them stop smoking.

Professor John Newton, Director of Health Improvement at PHE said:

E-cigarettes are now the most popular way to quit in the country with half of all those taking part in Stoptober last year using an e-cigarette. The evidence is clear – vaping is much less harmful than smoking, a fraction of the risk. So if you've struggled with quitting before, an e-cigarette may be the best option for you.

Don't be put off if you've already made several attempts. Join in with Stoptober and benefit from free support direct to your phone, laptop or tablet via the Stoptober app, a daily email giving support or Facebook Messenger, free face-to-face support plus a

raft of advice and information on the website. Search 'Stoptober' online and join the thousands of others who go smokefree once and for all this year.

Professor Gina Radford, Deputy Chief Medical Officer, said:

The battle against smoking is far from over. It is still the country's biggest killer, causing 79,000 deaths a year. For every death, another 20 smokers are suffering from a smoking-related disease.

Far too many people are still dying as a result of smoking but there has never been a better time to quit. The culture has changed, strong legislation is in place and effective support is available.

It's never too late to give up. Any smoker, no matter what their age, will feel the health benefits within months. Make the commitment to stop, join Stoptober, and add healthier years to your life.

Robert West, Professor of Health Psychology and Director of Tobacco Studies at University College London, said:

Quitting success rates are higher than ever. I think the advances and wider choice of effective quitting options and a strong anti-smoking culture are fuelling this acceleration.

Thinking about giving up may be daunting, but all the evidence shows there has never been an easier time to stop. Quitting needn't be the painful journey it used to be and the support you'll get from Stoptober will increase your chances of succeeding.

The campaign starts on 1 October 2017. Search 'Stoptober' online for all the support you need to quit.

1. Visit www.nhs.uk/oneyou/stoptober to sign up or find out more on what support is available.
2. [Download Stoptober videos, TV Ad and images of celebrities supporting the campaign.](#)
3. Read UCLs report: [Quit success rates in England 2007 to 2017; Jamie Brown Ph.D. Robert West Ph.D.](#)

4. In 2016, 15.5% of adults aged 18 and over currently smoke, down from 19.9% in 2010; In 2000, 26.8 of adults aged 16 and over were smokers. Prevalence since 2010 has fallen most in younger age groups. See the [smoking prevalence figures](#).
5. See [PHE's Tobacco Control Profiles](#).
6. The total cost from smoking to society in England is approximately £14.7 billion a year. This includes the cost to the NHS of treating diseases caused by smoking which is approximately £2.5 billion a year. Source: ASH: The Local Cost of Tobacco – [ASH Ready Reckoner](#) and [Towards a smokefree generation: a tobacco control plan for England](#).
7. There were estimated to be around [79,000 deaths attributable to smoking in 2015](#). This represents 16% of all deaths.
8. The government's new [Tobacco Control Plan](#) sets a series of challenging ambitions:
 - reduce adult smoking rates 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
9. [PHE](#) exists to protect and improve the nation's health and wellbeing, and reduce health inequalities. It does this through world-class science, knowledge and intelligence, advocacy, partnerships and the delivery of specialist public health services. PHE is an operationally autonomous executive agency of the Department of Health. Follow us on Twitter: @PHE_uk and Facebook: www.facebook.com/PublicHealthEngland.