



Survey of Smoking Habits for “Under 25” age group

Date: March 2010

Persons surveyed: 1,312 comprising 5 different areas

England: North East/North West/Midlands/London/South Coast

All respondents were invited to take part in a short survey concerning the hospitality sectors performance in the light of new government legislation. The survey was conducted in towns & cities by members of Freedom2Choose U.K. and supporters. All respondents were below the age of 25 and all were guaranteed complete confidentiality in pursuit of truthful answers to smoking related questions. Once confidentiality was confirmed all participants willingly responded to the questions offered.

When socialising, do you object to being in the company of smokers?	Yes 11.4%	No 78.8%	No opinion 9.8%
Do you still smoke?	Yes 32.6%	No 65.8%	Trying to stop 1.6%
(Smokers) How many cigarettes do you smoke per day?	Under 10 15.4%	10-30 71.4%	Over 30 13.2%
(Smokers) What age did you start smoking?	Under 10 9.6%	10-15 60.8%	16 plus 29.6%
Did you ever try cigarettes and not like them?	Yes 2%	No 97.25%	Yes But Still Smoked 0.75%
(Smokers) Does price put you off smoking?	Yes 0.6%	No 93.74%	No Comment 5.66%

(Smokers) Has the smoking ban deterred you from smoking?	Yes 1.8%	No 93%	Somewhat 5.2%
Has the smoking ban affected your social habits	Yes 85%	No 9.8%	No Opinion 5.2%
(Smokers) Do you smoke in your home environment?	Yes 76%	No 9.4%	Sometimes 14.6%
With the information now available, do you believe that SHS poses a health threat ?	Yes 7%	No 85.2%	No Opinion 7.8%
Do you think pubs & clubs should have smoking rooms?	Yes 98.4%	No 0%	No opinion 1.6%
Do you think pubs/clubs should have the choice of being smoking or non smoking?	Yes 99.7%	No 0.3%	No Comment 0%

Summary:-

A total of 1,312 young people Under-25 yrs were interviewed in the five locations of England, in early March, 2010. Of which 32.6% were active smokers.

All respondents were guaranteed complete confidentiality in the interest of obtaining truthful responses. It is felt that this objective was achieved.

Interestingly, only 11.4% of those surveyed stated they objected to being in the company of smokers (actively smoking) and a further 9.8% offered no preference either way, which relates to 88.6% enjoying the company of smokers.

Slightly less than one third of those interviewed (32.6%) were smokers on a regular basis with the majority taking up smoking between the ages of 10-15 yrs. (Some areas were earlier smokers than others)

None said they felt pressured into smoking by others, and all opined it was a matter of personal choice. Many had brothers or sisters that did not smoke.

Pricing structures had little or no effect on purchasing cigarettes; the majority opined that governments used cigarettes as a regular tax increase year on year. All in this age group showed a clear anger at the way smokers were being treated. Most were happy to forego other commodities in favour of their cigarettes. Many saw that the government had made smoking 'cool' again. The smoking ban has made no difference as a deterrent to this group, again, some even stating that they had smoked more in defiance of the ban.

In socialising terms this age group again described the Smoking Ban as a disaster for it had turned their social lives upside down with many smokers not bothering with pubs & clubs nearly so much as they used to, which in turn led to many of their non smoking friends following suit. Many reported local pub closures aplenty and University bar takings considerably down from pre-ban figures. Live entertainment nights were becoming fewer as pubs could no longer afford to pay the performers on a regular basis. We were informed that one singer was now offering a 2for1 service to clubs!

There was some concern noted insomuch that the ban was supposedly to enhance the enjoyment of non smokers but seemed to have had the reverse effect. Several opined that being outside with smokers was 'a great way to get with new girls (birds)!' Many respondents stated that the British pub had lost its charm, atmosphere and most of all its own particular smell which had been replaced by body odour and cleaning product smells. Generally it was stated that as such the pubs were very 'off putting'.

The vast majority considered that pubs & clubs should be allowed to have a smoking room or the choice of being a smoking/non smoking establishment-many citing closures due to the ban and the growing dole queues from the hospitality sector.

Most noticeable was the few that still believed the mass advertising in regard to the purported health risks from SHS (Second Hand Smoke). Only 7% considered it to be harmful whereas many cited vehicle exhaust fumes as considerably more toxic. This is in direct contrast to media reports from government sources.

Several also cited our rampant drug related problems as a far more pressing business to deal with.

During interviews, many questioned the integrity of the scientific 'evidence' behind passive smoking. The internet was much mentioned as the source of intelligence on the subject and as a powerful source of information.

All our respondents agreed that discrimination against a minority group; i.e. smokers, was wrong, with several quoting EU laws on Human Rights etc.

Conclusions:-

In the first nationwide survey of under 25's it was found that despite all government efforts to stigmatise smokers under the pretence of protecting workforces the entire programme was met with a degree of scorn. The under-25 age group were considerably more militant than their elders, who although angry (separate survey) were more inclined to ignore the pubs & clubs to drink and smoke at home.

Much was made of the exorbitant costs to government for a law that has divided the nation-mention of "divide and conquer" was often made. The majority of respondents could not understand why a total ban was implemented in the first place when referring to the horrendous number of closures because of the ban. It was felt that government had grossly miscalculated the effects that a total ban may have. Ignorance or blind refusal to accept and publicise closures in Southern Ireland & Scotland was questioned for some respondents quoted the government line that Caroline Flint used in dismissing business closures pre-ban.

This age group proved to be highly 'internet orientated' which has led them have a deeper knowledge of the 'behind the scenes' work put into the ban by government. Many asked the question concerning 'junk science' being used when (quote) "80 odd percent of the world's top studies show no direct link between SHS & mortality"

It was universally accepted by this age group that this was a clear case of discrimination against smokers and very little to do with health benefits.

Questions were asked about the relevant health status of all those who had lost their jobs since implementation of the smoke ban. Of course, suicides were mentioned as it has been well documented that some licensees could not see any other way out of their misery and poverty, where once they ran a thriving business. Four suicides to date were mentioned.

Overall it is clear that this age group have not accepted the legislation with any degree of faith whatsoever and are quite prepared to rebel against what they clearly see as an affront to their dignity and human rights. Many of this age group gain part time employment within the hospitality sector but now find it exceedingly difficult to do so.

Selection of comments from respondents:-

“landlords should decide for themselves”

“I don’t smoke & don’t like smoking but what they are doing to smokers is disgusting-the law has gone too far”

“”I’m a student and I think it’s stupid that I have to stand outside like a naughty schoolboy just because I enjoy a fag”

“stupid law that has purposely divided the country and caused totally unnecessary litter problems. When we were smoking inside everyone used ashtrays. We had proper, uninterrupted conversations and didn’t have idiots sneering at us and waving their stupid arms about!”

“crap law from a crap government”

“gone far too far with this law”

“the law is a load of ‘bollocks’-sorry”

“ridiculous law. Why do WE have to go outside when we could have a smokers room-like what my dad did?”

“landlords should decide for themselves, not go bust because of some law”

“what are this loony government doin’ then? Tryin’ to ban fags altogether?”

“health values my a**e, it’s just an electioneering strategy”

“why can’t governments stay out of our private lives?”

“I feel sorry for the pubs n clubs, they got no chance of making a living now!”

“them shelter things are crap man, ought to be condemned”

Our landlord spends more time outside with his real customers!”

“too many boozers turning to food so the market will be flooded with them soon – and then they’ll go skint”

“are they gonna ban junk food next then ?”

“them in Westminster haven’t got a clue what life’s all about, they wanna spend a month up ‘ere mate!”

“check out the internet mate, it’s all lies and junk science”

“my old man goes out at 9pm now, cos the boozers shut (wink) know what I mean Harry-takes more money between then and midnight that ‘e does all day!”

“too much interfering from them in London”

“who’d wanna live in this country now, it’s f****d mate!”

“ow can they say passive smoking kills when the WHO couldn’t prove it?”

“landlords should decide for themselves, not go bust because of some law”

“what are this loony government doin’ then? Tryin’ to ban fags altogether?”

“nothing to do wiv health, it’s just a social engineering plan they got”

“why can’t governments stay out of our private lives?”

“I feel sorry for the pubs n clubs, they got no chance of making a living now!”

“the so called smoking shelters are immoral, why does a pig have to be 95% enclosed but not us?”

“Our landlord spends more time outside with his real customers!”

“the health feaks don’t realise that cancers amplified alongside industrialisation-it’s called ‘the costs of progress’-simple as that!”

Liam Donaldson is clinically obese isn’t he, are they going to wage war on him next?”

“Down here mate you’ve gotta know the times and the places I’m telling you-nudge nudge”

“I don’t smoke but spend most of my social life outside with my colleagues-it’s a disgrace”

“Labour! Labour? The smokeban has killed their vote around here. Good riddance.”

“Are they banning highly toxic diesel fumes next week then?”

“Funny how they only believe certain ‘scientific studies’ isn’t it?”

Accreditation

“I feel this survey was carried out objectively and offers a good range of questions to both smokers and non- smokers. It is short enough to get to the point and yet detailed enough to gain a good range of information.

It is very clear that the younger generation do not support a total ban but would prefer choice for pubs and clubs or a smoking room. They are sceptical of government motives and don’t swallow all the publicity about passive smoking, instead citing other deaths that have been related to the ban such as suicides by pub owners. They seem very ‘clued up’ indeed and do not like being dictated to. Environmental concerns as well as some about illegal drug use were raised as more serious issues.

Having read the results of this survey, I would say that there is strong evidence that the under 25s are not in favour of the blanket ban on smoking in public places. The government should think again not only about the ban but how they view the under 25s!”

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