



Young people and smoking in England

- Smoking prevalence is initially higher among girls, but boys overtake in their late teens. Socioeconomic gradients are evident in early teens but become clearer by the late teens.
- Just under half of 11-15 year olds live with a smoker, and most 11-15 year old regular smokers are already dependent. Many want to quit or have tried, mostly unaided.
- Becoming a smoker is influenced by a range of factors operating at several levels- individual, family, social, community and societal.
- Young people are most at risk of becoming smokers if they grow up and move into social networks where smoking is accepted and perceived to have positive value within social relationships.
- They are also more at risk if they have easy access to cigarettes and believe that smoking helps them deal with difficult aspects of adolescence, feel that negative effects are not immediately salient and have disadvantaged social, educational and economic trajectories.
- The most effective interventions are comprehensive, multi-component, well-funded, sustained, tailored prevention approaches that address all levels of influence on young people's smoking.
- There is consistent evidence of high impact on prevalence of smoking among young people for increases in price through taxation; comprehensive bans on tobacco promotion/marketing; mass media campaigns that are tailored, have an appropriate tone, are sustained and of high intensity; parenting skills programmes for parents of pre-teens/young adolescents; reductions in adult smoking rates are also associated with reductions in young people's smoking.
- Evidence on the effectiveness of youth cessation interventions is less clear than that for adult cessation or youth prevention and thus are classified as currently being 'unproven'.

Details of the research team

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