

Smoke-free spaces on the the island of Ireland



Snapshot Report





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Data sources used in this snapshot report are listed in the reference section.

Introduction

Reducing second-hand smoke (SHS) exposure has become a central component of tobacco control policies across the island of Ireland. The expansion of smoke-free spaces directly reduces exposure of children and adults and further denormalises tobacco use in a variety of social contexts. Challenges remain in terms of persistent health inequalities and significant exposure to SHS in the home, particularly in the context of children. This snapshot report presents a brief overview of progress on the development of smoke-free spaces on the island of Ireland. This snapshot updates on an earlier document published in June 2016.

Key messages

- ▶ Smoke-free legislation in the workplace has been implemented successfully across the island of Ireland. Legislation prohibiting smoking in cars where children are present has been in place in RoI since January 2016, with similar measures proposed for NI.
- ▶ In RoI 19% of all children aged 10-17 years were exposed to SHS in the car (Gavin et al, 2015).
- ▶ Among children aged 11-16 years who reported that they lived with an adult smoker in NI, 3 in 10 reported that smoking was permitted in the family car (YPBAS, 2013).
- ▶ In NI among households who own a car, 85% of adults reported smoking is not permitted in any car. Of adults in the most deprived quintile, 51% reported that smoking is not permitted in any car, compared to 81% in the least deprived quintile (HSNI, 2016).
- ▶ In 2007/08 in NI 61% of adults reported that smoking was not permitted in the home, increasing to 80% in 2015/16 (CHS, 2007/08 and HSNI, 2016).
- ▶ In NI, over half of children aged 11-16 years in the most deprived areas lived with an adult smoker. Children living in the most deprived areas were more than twice as likely to live with a smoker compared to children living in the least deprived areas (57.9% vs 25.2%) (YPBAS, 2013).
- ▶ In RoI 18% of the population aged 15+ was exposed to SHS on a daily basis. SHS exposure was highest among those aged 15-24 years (28%). Non-smokers in more deprived areas were more likely to be exposed to SHS than those in more affluent areas (Department of Health, 2016b).
- ▶ In RoI there were slightly stricter rules around smoking in the home, compared to the family car, with pre-teen children more protected than teenagers. 12% of 10-17 year old children reported that adults were allowed to smoke in their house (Gavin et al, 2015).
- ▶ In RoI more than twice as many 9 year olds living in families in the lowest income quintile (32.7%) were exposed to SHS in the home compared to children in families in the highest quintile (14%) (McAvoy et al, 2013).

Second-hand smoke and health

Smoking prevalence among adults aged 16 and over in Northern Ireland is currently 22% (Department of Health, 2016a). In the Republic of Ireland, 23% of the population aged 15 and over are smokers (Department of Health, 2016b). SHS is harmful to everyone and is classified as a Group 1 carcinogen. Reducing the exposure of the population to SHS is a core element of the World Health Organization *Framework Convention on Tobacco Control* (WHO, 2003).

Children are especially vulnerable to harms associated with exposure as they are often unable to remove themselves from a smoking environment (Öberg et al, 2010). The frequency, intensity and duration of exposure to SHS are significant in determining health outcomes for infants and children. Babies exposed to SHS are at greater risk of sudden infant death syndrome and children who regularly breathe SHS are more likely to experience asthma, ear infections and respiratory tract infections. While some data are available on school-age children and teens, very little is known about exposure of pregnant women, infants and pre-school children to SHS across the island of Ireland. Further research is needed in this area to determine the extent of exposure and the effects on health in the early years.

A review estimated that around 22,600 new cases of wheeze and asthma in children were attributable to SHS exposure in the UK every year (Royal College of Physicians, 2010). A recent Cochrane review concluded that the introduction of a legislative smoking ban led to improved health outcomes through reduction in exposure to SHS. The clearest evidence was observed in reduced admissions for acute coronary syndrome, with evidence of reduced mortality from smoking-related illnesses (Frazer et al, 2016).

Electronic cigarette usage in the Republic of Ireland is 6% among both current and ex-smokers (Department of Health, 2016b) and 6% among adults in Northern Ireland (Department of Health, 2016a). It is not known whether increased use of electronic cigarettes has contributed to reductions in exposure to second-hand smoke in public or domestic settings. (McNeill et al, 2015).

Policy

The *Ten Year Tobacco Control Strategy for Northern Ireland* aims to reduce smoking prevalence among adults to 15% by 2020 (Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS), 2012). The strategy names 'reducing exposure to second-hand smoke' as one of three core strategic objectives and emphasises that while SHS is potentially harmful to everybody it is particularly harmful to children and to adults with pre-existing medical conditions. *Tobacco Free Ireland*, the Republic of Ireland strategy, seeks to reduce smoking

prevalence to less than 5% by 2025 (Department of Health, 2013). The strategy recommends a range of measures to protect people from SHS exposure, including tobacco-free campuses for government, health, education, sport and recreation facilities.

Legislation

The Republic of Ireland was the first country in the world to introduce legislation banning smoking in the workplace under provisions in the *Public Health (Tobacco) (Amendment) Act 2004* (Oireachtas, 2004). The *Smoking (Northern Ireland) Order 2006* restricts smoking in the workplace including commercial vehicles and indoor public places (Northern Ireland Assembly, 2006). The primary aim of these legislative measures is to protect third parties, particularly workers, from exposure to the harmful effects of SHS.

Legislation to ban smoking in cars where children are present came into effect in England and Wales in October 2015. In the Republic of Ireland, the *Protection of Children's Health (Tobacco Smoke in Mechanically Propelled Vehicles) Act 2014* came into effect on 1 January 2016 (Oireachtas, 2014). The Act prohibits smoking tobacco products in a mechanically propelled vehicle in which a child is present. In May 2016, the *Health (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill* which includes provisions prohibiting smoking in private vehicles carrying children was granted Royal Assent (Northern Ireland Assembly, 2016). The Department of Health conducted a consultation on *Regulations restricting smoking in private vehicles carrying children* between January and March 2017. The consultation sought to obtain views from the public and interested parties on draft regulations which propose to restrict smoking in private motor vehicles when children under 18 are present. The regulations create two new offences: smoking in a private vehicle and allowing smoking in a private vehicle when a person under 18 is present in the vehicle (Department of Health, 2017).

Data sources

Data for Northern Ireland were obtained from the Public Health Information and Research Branch, Department of Health. The main data sources include the Continuous Household Survey, Health Survey Northern Ireland and the Young Persons' Behaviour and Attitudes Survey. Data for the Republic of Ireland were based on previously published work and sources are referenced accordingly. It is important to note that due to differences in survey methodologies, direct comparisons between survey data for Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland are not appropriate within this report.

Smoke-free spaces – current status and trends

Smoking in the workplace

Legislation in Northern Ireland has been highly effective in protecting workers from SHS (DHSSPS, 2009), with public acceptance and support for smoking bans increasing over time (Callinan et al, 2010). By 2014/15, 98.9% of businesses inspected in Northern Ireland were compliant with smoking legislation (Department of Health, 2016c). Findings from a multi-agency study found that smoke-free legislation was associated with a highly significant improvement in the air quality in pubs and bars in Northern Ireland (Chartered Institute of Environmental Health Northern Ireland (CIEH NI), 2010). Compliance with smoke-free legislation in commercial vehicles has been variable. Between April 2012 and March 2013, 44% of written warnings issued for breaches of the legislation related to smoking in a commercial vehicle and a further 21% related to failing to prevent smoking in a commercial vehicle (Purdy et al, 2015).

In the year following the introduction of smoke-free legislation in the Republic of Ireland, 94% of workplaces inspected were deemed to be smoke-free (Office of Tobacco Control, 2005). Compliance with the legislation continues to be monitored by the Health Service Executive (HSE) National Environmental Health Service Tobacco Control Inspection Programme. In 2014, 80% of premises were fully compliant with smoke-free legislation (Department of Health 2014). Adults in the Republic of Ireland still report exposure to SHS, with 5% of adults exposed to tobacco smoke in bars, 4% in restaurants and 13% in the workplace (European Commission, 2015).

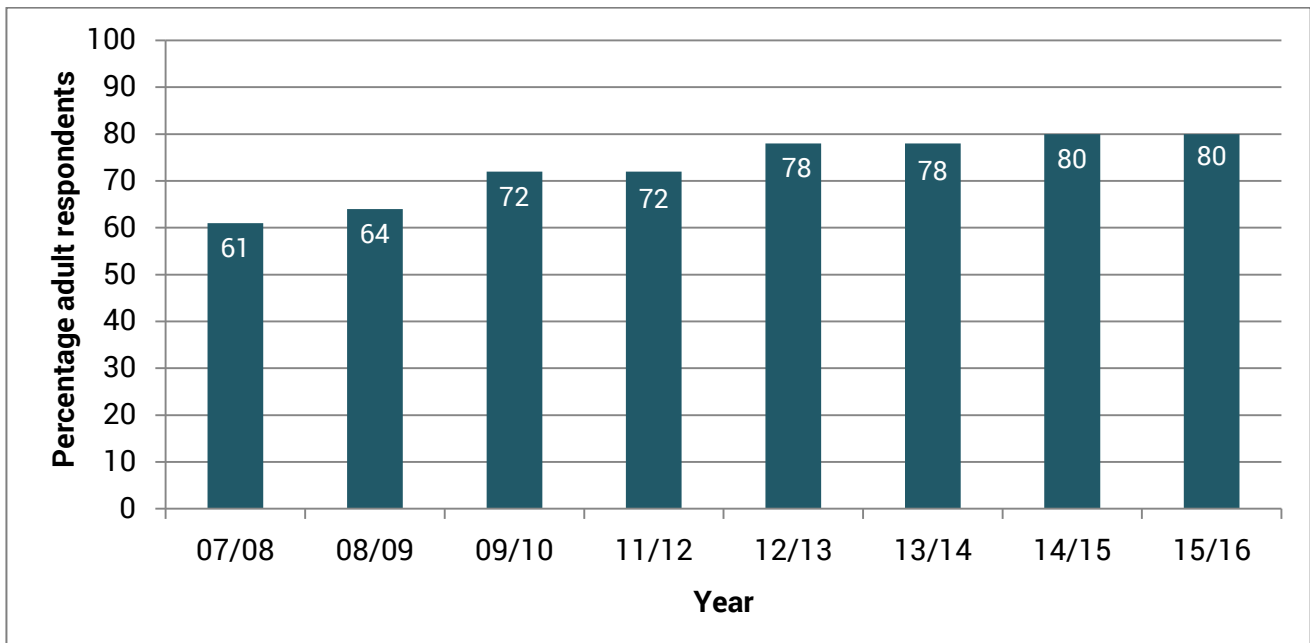
Smoking in private homes

Patterns of smoking behaviour in the home have changed over time since the introduction of smoke-free legislation in the workplace. Evidence shows that smoking in the home has become more restricted, but estimates of rules on smoking in the home and on frequency of exposure from adult and child surveys differ.

Smoking in private homes in Northern Ireland - what adults say

Four out of five adults report that smoking is not permitted anywhere in their home. This proportion has been increasing since 2007/08, show in Figure 1.

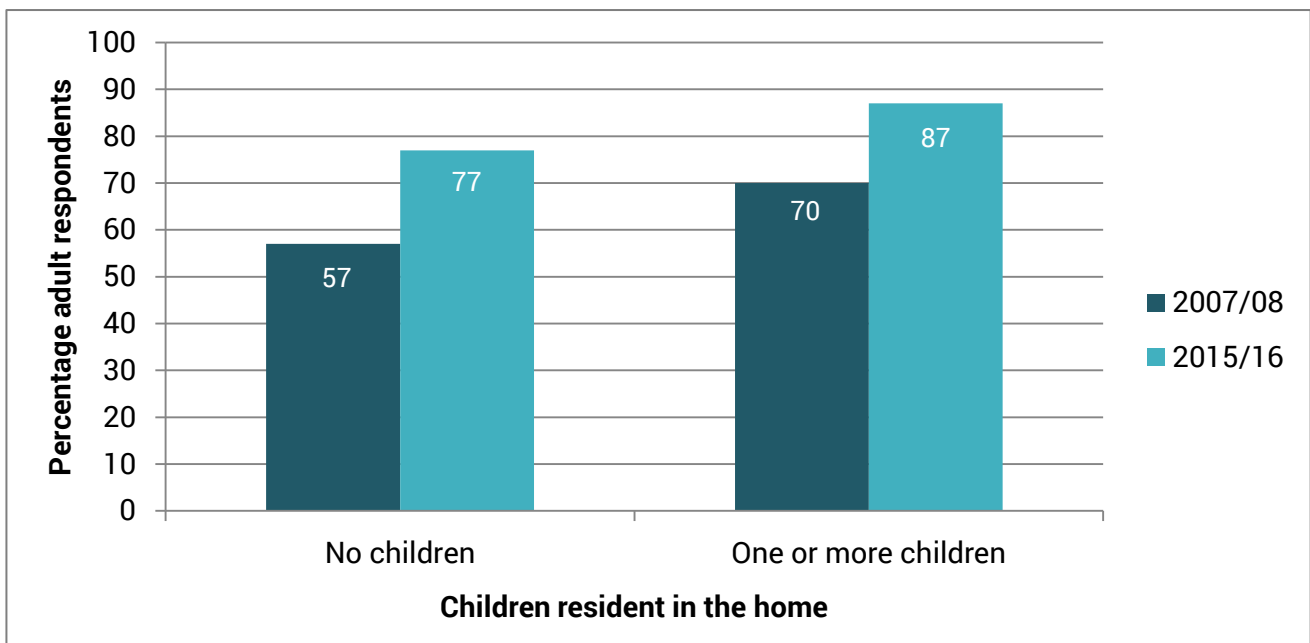
Figure 1. Percentage of adults who reported smoking is not permitted in the home



Source: Continuous Household Survey 2007/08 – 2009/10 and Health Survey Northern Ireland 2011/12 – 2015/16

Figure 2 demonstrates that the presence of children in the household was consistently associated with stricter rules on smoking in the home.

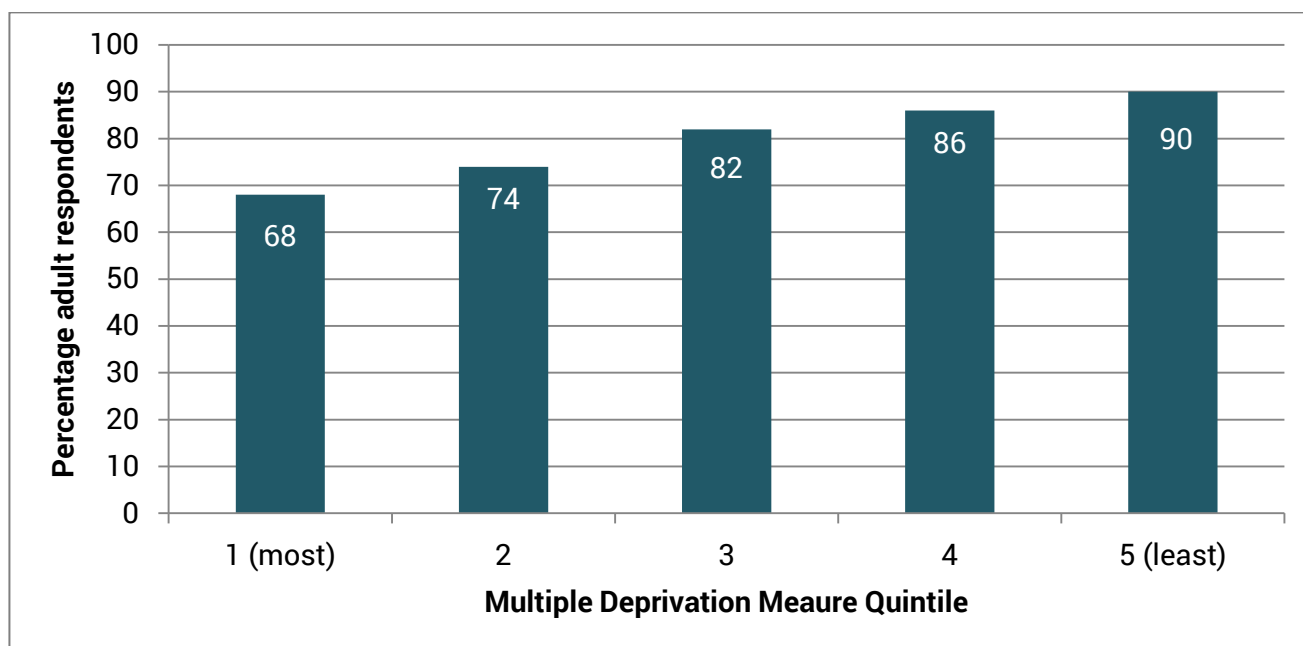
Figure 2. Percentage of adults who reported smoking is not permitted by whether or not children were resident



Source: Continuous Household Survey 2007/08 and Health Survey Northern Ireland 2015/16

There was a trend towards a tightening of the rules on smoking in the home in all multiple deprivation quintiles¹ over time. Figure 3 shows that nine out of 10 adult respondents in the least deprived quintile reported that smoking was not allowed in the home, compared to just under seven out of 10 in the most deprived quintile.

Figure 3. Percentage of adults who reported smoking is not permitted in the home by Multiple Deprivation Measure Quintile



Source: Health Survey Northern Ireland 2015/16

Smoking in private homes in Northern Ireland - what children say²

All children

Findings from the Young Persons' Behaviour and Attitudes Survey in 2003 revealed that just over half (51.8%) of all children aged 11-16 years reported that they lived with an adult smoker, but by 2013 this had fallen to less than four in 10 (38.4%).

In 2013, over half of children aged 11-16 years living in the most deprived areas live with an adult smoker. Children living in the most deprived areas were more than twice as likely to live with a smoker compared to children resident in the least deprived quintile (57.9% vs 25.2%).

Children living in smoking households

Of those children aged 11-16 years who resided with an adult smoker, almost four in five (79%) reported that an adult smoked inside their home (2003). A decade later (2013) two in five (42%) such children reported that an adult they lived with smoked inside their home.

¹ Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA), 2010.

² Data from the Young Persons' Behaviour and Attitudes Survey 2003-2013 provided by Department of Health, Northern Ireland

Smoking in private homes in the Republic of Ireland - what adults say

In 2007, over half (59%) of adults aged 18 and older reported that smoking was not allowed anywhere inside their home. A further 23% stated that smoking was only allowed in their home in some places or at some times. In terms of social class, stricter rules around smoking in the home were evident among higher social classes, with 67% of adults in social classes 1-2 reporting that smoking was not allowed anywhere inside their home compared to 58% of those in social classes 3-4 and 50% of those in social classes 5-6 (Morgan et al, 2008).

The 2015 *Healthy Ireland* survey found that 18% of the population aged 15 and older was exposed to SHS on a daily basis. Four in 10 smokers reported that they were exposed to SHS daily, compared with 11% of non-smokers. SHS exposure was highest among those aged 15-24 (28%) and 21% of non-smokers aged 15-24 were exposed to SHS daily. Non-smokers in more deprived areas were more likely to be exposed to SHS than those in more affluent areas (Department of Health, 2016b).

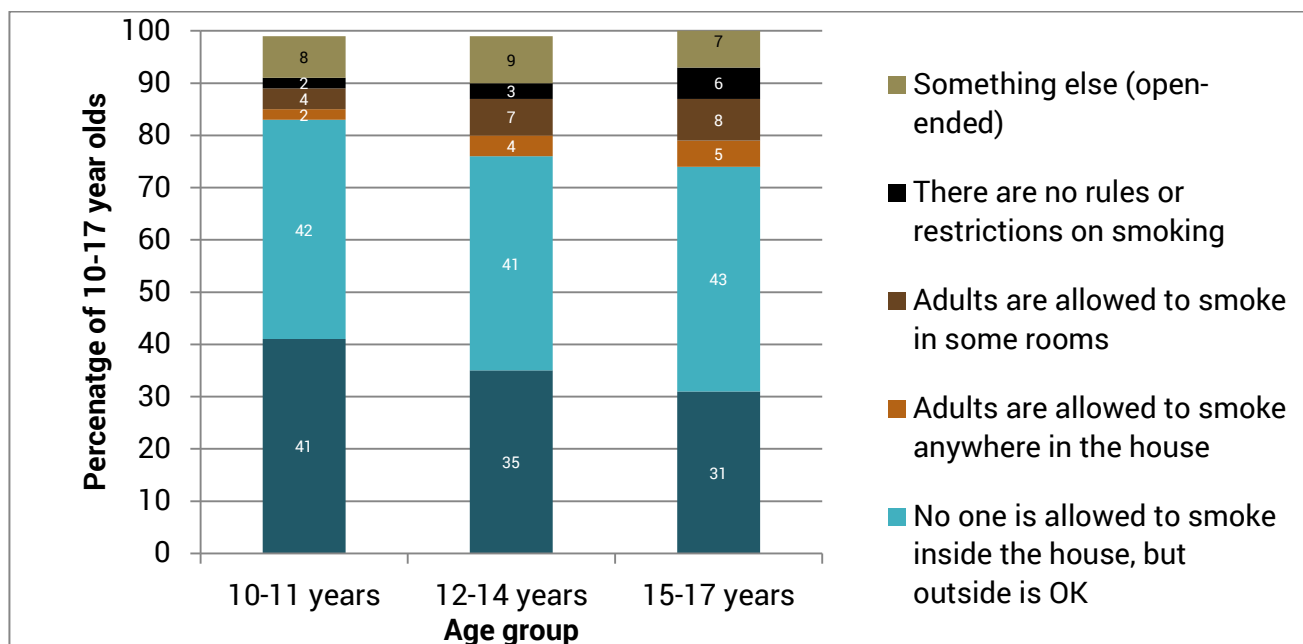
Smoking in private homes in the Republic of Ireland - what children say

All children

Figure 4 presents data from the Irish *Health Behaviour in School-aged Children* survey. This survey revealed that 12% of children report that adults are allowed to smoke in their house. A further 5% report there is no rules or restrictions on smoking in their house. For the majority of children in the Republic of Ireland, smoking is not permitted inside the family home. Pre-teen children were more likely to report stricter rules or restrictions on smoking in the family home than teenagers (Gavin et al, 2015).

Twenty-two percent of primary care givers of 9 year olds responding to the *Growing up in Ireland Survey* in 2007 indicated that smoking occurred in the same room as their child. More than twice as many 9 year olds living in families in the lowest income quintile (32.7%) were exposed to second-hand smoke in the home compared to children in families in the highest quintile (14%) (McAvoy et al, 2013).

Figure 4. Percentage of all children aged 10-17 who report rules or restrictions on smoking on cigarette the house



Source: The Irish Health Behaviour in School-aged Children Study 2014

Smoking in cars in Northern Ireland - what adults say

Figure 5 presents data from the 2015/16 *Health Survey Northern Ireland*, which reveals that 70% of all adults surveyed reported that smoking is not permitted in any car.

Among those households where car ownership is reported, 85% of adults reported that smoking is not permitted in any car. Of adults in the most deprived quintile, 51% reported that smoking is not permitted in any car, compared to 81% in the least deprived quintile.

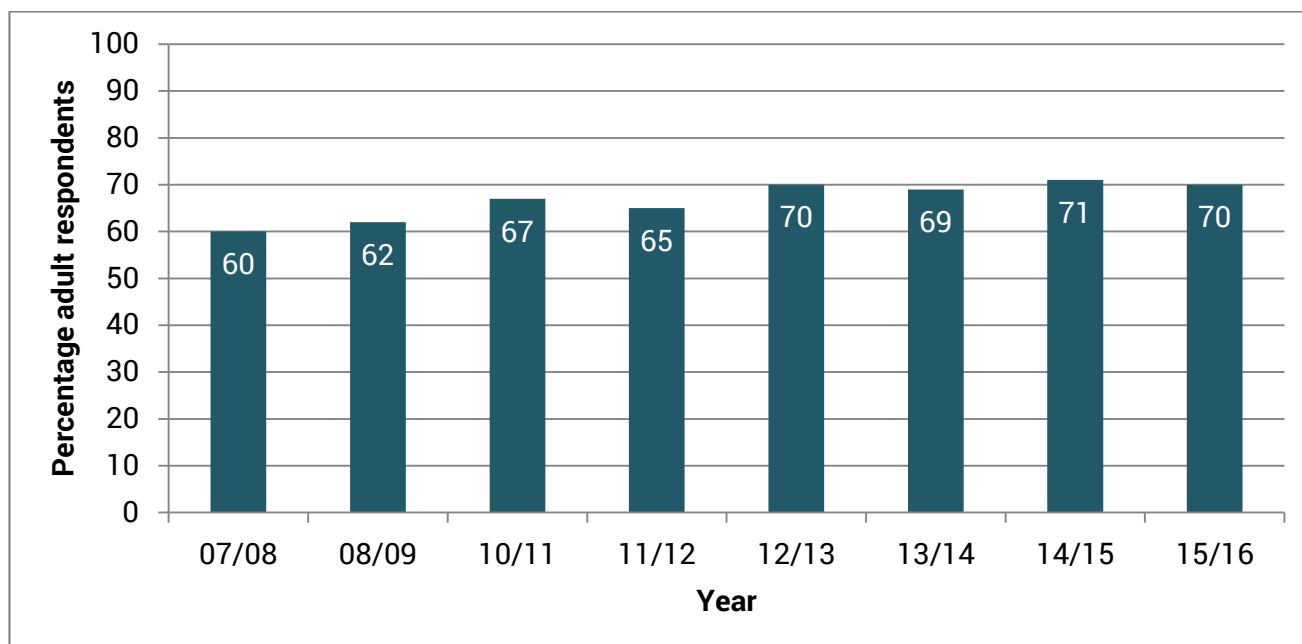
In adult only households, 67% of adults reported that smoking is not permitted in any car. Where children were members of the household, 76% of adults surveyed reported that smoking is not permitted in any car.

Smoking in cars in Northern Ireland - what children say³

In 2013, of young people aged 11-16 years who resided with an adult smoker, 30.2% reported that smoking was permitted in the family car. This compared with 41.7% of children co-resident with an adult smoker who reported that smoking was permitted in the family home indicating that rules on smoking in the car tended to be stricter than those adopted in the home.

³ Data from the Young Persons' Behaviour and Attitudes Survey 2013 provided by Department of Health, Northern Ireland

Figure 5. Percentage of adults (car owners and non-car owners) reporting that smoking is not permitted in any car from 2007/08 to 2015/16



Source: Continuous Household Survey 2007/08 - 2008/09 and Health Survey Northern Ireland 2010/11 – 2015/16

Smoking in cars in the Republic of Ireland - what adults say

There were no survey data on smoking in cars as reported by adults in the Republic of Ireland at the time of publication.

Smoking in cars in the Republic of Ireland - what children say

The *Health Behaviour in School Age Children* survey estimate that 19% of all children aged 10-17 years were exposed to SHS in the car. Sixteen per cent of children report that adults are allowed to smoke in the family car as long as the window is down, with a further 3% reporting that there are no rules or restrictions on smoking in the family car. Children aged 10-11 years (69%) were more likely to report no one is allowed to smoke in the family car compared to those aged 15-17 years (59%) (Gavin et al, 2015). Unlike Northern Ireland data on second-hand smoke exposure among children in cars has not been further analysed according to whether the family owns a car or not.

Places and spaces

Government buildings

Smoke-free policies do not yet include outdoor areas surrounding government buildings in Northern Ireland. In the Republic of Ireland, the Department of Health and Department of Children and Youth Affairs have adopted a smoke-free campus policy for its buildings and grounds (Department of Health, 2014).

Health and social care facilities

The Western Health and Social Care Trust was the first Health and Social Care Trust in Northern Ireland to become completely smoke free on 12 March 2014, by prohibiting smoking anywhere on its grounds or premises (WHSCCT, 2014). This smoke-free policy has been extended to include all Health and Social Care sites from March 2016 (Public Health Agency, 2016).

In the Republic of Ireland, the HSE committed to making all its workplaces and campuses smoke-free by 2015. All HSE acute hospitals have implemented the Tobacco Free Campus policy. By December 2014, 69% (target 70%) of all Primary Care sites had implemented the national smoke free campus policy (Department of Health, 2014). Exemptions exist for long term residential care facilities across the island. In the Republic of Ireland, psychiatric hospitals are not required to enforce the smoking ban, but may do so if they wish.

Public transport

In Northern Ireland smoke-free bye-laws have been adopted by Translink which covers platforms as well as the areas provided under the main smoke-free legislation relating to the interior of buses and trains as well as stations (Translink, 2013). In the Republic of Ireland, smoking is not permitted on buses (Bus Éireann, 2016) trains (Irish Rail, 2016) or trams (Luas, 2015) or in enclosed areas of stations.

Schools and education facilities

A number of schools in Northern Ireland have developed smoke-free policies but there is no central register of this activity. In third level education, smoke-free campuses and exclusion zones have been introduced to varying degrees in Northern Ireland (Queen's University Belfast, 2008; Ulster University, 2013) and the Republic of Ireland (Department of Health, 2014).

Playgrounds

There is no formal register of smoke-free playgrounds in Northern Ireland. In the Republic of Ireland the first smoke-free playground was introduced in Donegal in 2009 (ASH Ireland, 2015). Since then, 82% of local authorities in the Republic of Ireland have either implemented or agreed to implement a smoke-free playground policy (Department of Health, 2014).

Sports stadia

Some variation exists in the extent to which smoke-free policies have been implemented in sports stadia. In Kingspan Stadium Belfast (Ulster Rugby, 2016) and the Aviva Stadium in Dublin (Aviva Stadium, 2012), smoking, including the use of electronic cigarettes, is not permitted within the stadium. The Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) Healthy Club Initiative is supporting the development of smoke-free policies in GAA clubs (Lane et al, 2015).

Useful resources

For support with quitting smoking:

Northern Ireland:

<http://www.want2stop.info/>

Republic of Ireland:

<https://quit.ie/>

For further information on tobacco control policies:

Northern Ireland:

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/dhssps/tobacco-control-10-year-strategy.pdf>

<http://www.publichealth.hscni.net/directorate-public-health/health-and-social-wellbeing-improvement/stopping-smoking>

Republic of Ireland:

<http://health.gov.ie/healthy-ireland/tobacco/>

<http://www.ntco.ie/>

<http://www.hse.ie/eng/about/Who/TobaccoControl/campus/>

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