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AUDIT, RESEARCH AND GUIDELINE UPDATE

Child uptake of smoking by area across the UK

Nicholas S Hopkinson,¹ Adam Lester-George,² Nick Ormiston-Smith,³ Alison Cox,³ Deborah Arnott²

ABSTRACT

Smoking is a major public health problem. As smokers age and die prematurely, the tobacco industry must continue to recruit new, young smokers. Survey data indicate that currently in the UK around 207 000 children aged 11–15 start smoking every year. We used local data on adult smoking rates to apportion national data on child smoking uptake to specific areas. The presentation of data for individual local authorities, which now have responsibility for public health, can be used to focus attention locally. For example, this analysis demonstrates that each day, 67 children, more than two classrooms full, start smoking in London.

BACKGROUND

Tobacco smoking is a major public health problem, even more so for smokers who start at a young age. Lung development is affected,^{1 2} meaning that subsequent decline in lung function starts from a lower base increasing the risk of COPD in later life. Moreover, people who start to smoke before the age of 15 have a higher risk of lung cancer than those who start later even after the amount smoked is taken into account.³

There is compelling evidence that young people are susceptible to branding and advertising and are influenced by the depiction of smoking in films.^{4 5} Legislation is needed to counter the efforts of the tobacco industry, but this requires political will by legislators at both national and local levels. This in turn depends on effective health advocacy.

National figures for smoking rates are available, but we propose that it would be useful to make available local estimates of smoking uptake among children. These could be used to help to focus attention and resources on what is essentially a child protection issue. In England, local authorities now have responsibility for public health and greater awareness of local burden should encourage them to give attention to implementation and enforcement of public health measures.

METHODS

The initial analysis was based on data from the ‘Smoking, drinking and drug use among young people in England’ reports. This is an annual survey of secondary school pupils in England in years 7–11 (mostly aged 11–15) carried out for the Health and Social Care Information Centre. Questionnaires were completed by 6519 children in 219 schools during the Autumn term of 2011. By comparing rates of current smokers at each age with the smoking rates for that cohort surveyed in the year before, the number of new child smokers

aged 11–15 could be estimated, giving a figure of 207 000 new smokers between 2010 and 2011 in the UK.⁶ Current smokers included both regular smokers (one or more cigarettes per week) and occasional smokers (less than one cigarette per week).

This UK estimate was then split across geographical areas according to their adult smoking prevalences, based on the assumption that there was likely to be a greater proportion of childhood smokers in areas that have more adult smokers, since parental smoking is one of the strongest predictors of smoking among children.^{7 8} This would provide a more valid estimate than simply dividing the national figure by the local population.

The adult (18 years and above) population for England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland were collected from each country’s relevant data authority. The smoking prevalence for each country was similarly retrieved and applied to the adult population to produce a total aggregated UK smoking population size. Local authority level data were used to get reliable estimates of smoking prevalence for England from The Office for National Statistics Integrated Household Survey (2011/12) and from the Statistics for Wales—Welsh Health Survey—smoking (2011). The total UK number of new child smokers was then apportioned according to the proportion of the total adult smoking population at a given locality. Further details of and links to the data sources used are available in an online supplement.

RESULTS

The estimated proportion of children aged 11–15 who started to smoke in 2011 are presented by location as a heat map in figure 1. Tables with daily, weekly, monthly and annual figures for each UK country (see online supplementary table S1) and for Local Authorities and Districts in England and Wales (see online supplementary table S2) are available online (<http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/thoraxjnl-2013-204379>). Of 3.7 million children aged 11–15 across the UK, an estimated 463 start to smoke daily in England, 55 in Scotland, 30 in Wales and 19 in Northern Ireland. In each Welsh region, a mean (SD) 10 (4.5) children start smoking each week, from a mean population of 8200. Of 74 000 children in Birmingham, 9 start to smoke daily; in London it is 67 from a population of 458 000.

DISCUSSION

Although the historical trend for smoking in both adults and children is downwards,⁶ the figure is still high and pressure needs to be maintained to ensure that the necessary public health measures are sustained and new initiatives are introduced to reduce it

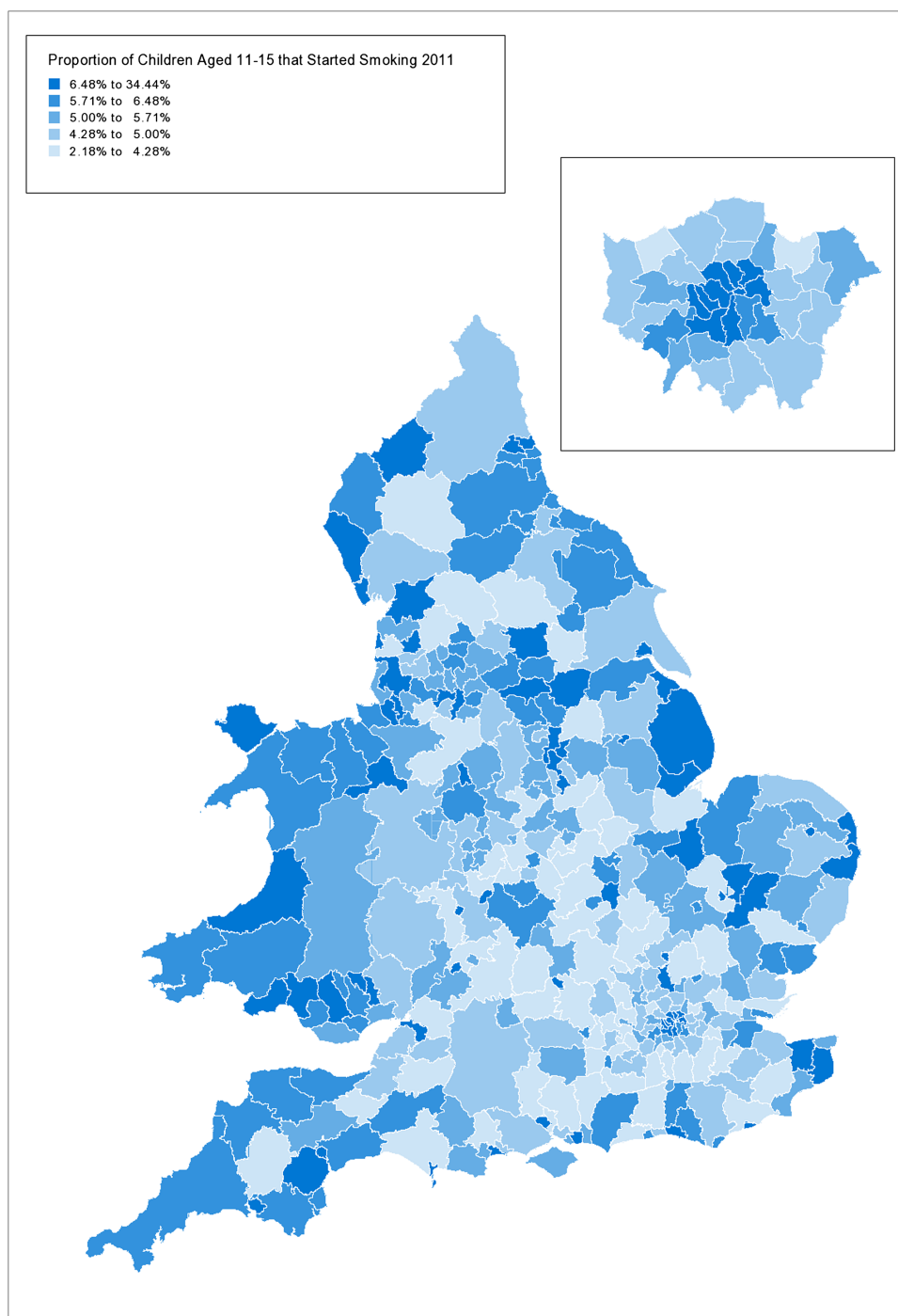


Figure 1 Estimate of proportion of children aged 11–15 who started smoking in England and Wales in 2011.

further. Measures that are recognised to be effective and need to be sustained include making tobacco less affordable by increasing taxation and reducing the illicit trade as well as continuing to run sustained, well-funded anti-smoking media campaigns. New measures include putting all cigarettes out of sight in all shops (due to be implemented in England in Spring 2015), the introduction of legislation for standardised packaging to reduce children's exposure to branding and the extension of smoke-free legislation to private vehicles. The banning of additives such as menthol which make cigarettes more palatable for children is also an important objective.

The data presented here are based on extrapolation from survey data and thus necessarily approximate. However, the

availability of local estimates will enable pressure to be brought directly to bear on those with responsibility for developing and enforcing regulations in particular locations which may be more salient than a national figure.

Local authorities, which following the Health And Social Care Act (2012) now have responsibility for public health, should be encouraged to develop tobacco control policies and programmes designed to reduce local smoking prevalence and live up to their obligations under both the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control Article 5.3 to protect their public health policies from the commercial and vested interests of the tobacco industry (<http://www.who.int/fctc/guidelines/>

adopted/article_5_3/en/) and also the Tobacco Control Plan for England (https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/213757/dh_124960.pdf). Action on Smoking and Health (ASH) has developed the Challenge, Leadership and Results (CLear) standard for tobacco control, which was launched in July 2012 and as of August 2013, 89 out of around 150 upper tier authorities have signed up to it. The CLear standard is effectively a score card which local authorities can use to check whether their tobacco control policies live up to best practice (<http://www.ash.org.uk/information/clear-excellence-in-local-tobacco-control>).

Figures for child smoking uptake in specific areas may be useful when challenging members of parliament who have accepted hospitality, such as trips to Glyndebournne or The Chelsea Flower Show, from the tobacco industry.⁹

There are some limitations of the data presented. Although the Smoking Drinking and Drug Use Survey is relatively large with over 6000 respondents, the analysis is dependent on comparisons by age and sex and the sample sizes within these categories are clearly smaller. The analysis is also dependent on the publicly available data which have been rounded. Although rounding errors will, to some extent, cancel each other out this does add some uncertainty to the national-level estimate. A further limitation, specifically related to the local-level data, is that it is based on the assumption that smoking uptake by children is proportionate to adult smoking rates, since accurate local childhood smoking rates are not available. In addition, the estimates assume a constant ratio between adult and child population across the UK. However, the mean proportion of 11–15-year-olds to over 18s in England is 7.5% with a SD of 0.8%, so the spread is low and this is therefore unlikely to introduce significant bias (see online for data sources). Finally, although the data are presented at a UK level, this is based on an extrapolation of survey data from English children to the UK population.

In addition to this, while our figures are for under-16s, the age limit on buying tobacco products is 18. It is interesting to note that, although the Smoking Drinking and Drug Use in Young People Survey is collecting data for the 11–15 years age group, the national ambition for reduction in smoking prevalence in young people is for 15-year-olds and is to reduce smoking prevalence from 15% in 2009 to 12% or less by the end of 2015. This is problematic, as the data for 15-year-olds

are based on small sample sizes and the CIs wide. Furthermore, there are also no robust data on smoking in 16-year-olds and 17-year-olds. This is a critical transitional period for smoking behaviour and falls below the legal age limit for buying tobacco products, so and it would be useful to have robust annual data on how many contemporary 16–17-year-olds are smoking, and how much.

Smoking is among the largest causes of preventable deaths worldwide. The present data should help to raise awareness of childhood smoking and to focus attention on the need to address this important child protection issue.

Contributors NSH and DA conceived the paper. NO-S and AC performed the initial analysis to obtain UK estimate. AL-G performed the analysis to produce local estimates. NSH wrote the first draft to which all authors subsequently contributed.

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Competing interests None.

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The relevant data sources for the study are listed below:

1 - Cancer Research UK. New childhood smokers as estimated from the Smoking, Drinking and Drug Use Among Young People in England survey (2013)

<http://www.cancerresearchuk.org/cancer-info/cancerstats/types/lung/smoking/lung-cancer-and-smoking-statistics>

Population

2 - Office for National Statistics. Mid-year Population Estimates: Single year of age and sex for local authorities in England and Wales (2010 & 2011)

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/pop-estimate/population-estimates-for-england-and-wales/mid-2011--2011-census-based/stb---mid-2011-census-based-population-estimates-for-england-and-wales.html>

3 - General Register Office for Scotland. Estimated mid-year population by sex, single year of age and administrative area (2010 & 2011)

<http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk/statistics/theme/population/estimates/mid-year/2011/tables.html>

4 - Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency. Mid-year population estimates for Local Government Districts (2010 & 2011)

<http://www.nisra.gov.uk/demography/default.asp17.htm>

Smoking rates

6 - Statistics for Wales. Welsh Health Survey - smoking (2011)

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/headlines/health2012/120919/?lang=en>

7 - The Scottish Government. The Scottish Health Survey - Smoking (2011)

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Health/TrendSmoking>

8 - Northern Ireland Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety. Health Survey Northern Ireland (2011/12)

http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats_research/stats-public-health.htm

Table E1 Smoking uptake among children 11-15 years old by country and region

Region	Adult population	Smoking prevalence	Number of adult smokers	% of UK smokers	Number of new childhood smokers per:					
					Year	6 months	Month	Week	Day	Hour
United Kingdom	49,790,339	20.52%	10,214,507	100.00%	207,000	103,500	17,250	3,981	567	24
England	41,766,418	19.96%	8,338,497	81.63%	168,982	84,491	14,082	3,250	463	19
Scotland	4,218,391	23.30%	982,885	9.62%	19,918	9,959	1,660	383	55	2
Wales	2,431,325	22.60%	549,573	5.38%	11,137	5,569	928	214	30	1
Northern Ireland	1,374,205	25.00%	343,551	3.36%	6,962	3,481	580	134	19	1
East Midlands	3,584,293	19.82%	710,548	6.96%	14,399	7,200	1,200	277	39	2
East England	4,604,976	19.55%	900,395	8.81%	18,247	9,123	1,521	351	50	2
London	6,388,233	18.95%	1,210,335	11.85%	24,528	12,264	2,044	472	67	3
North East	2,070,981	21.23%	439,739	4.31%	8,911	4,456	743	171	24	1
North West	5,555,330	22.07%	1,226,020	12.00%	24,846	12,423	2,070	478	68	3
South East	6,791,986	18.56%	1,260,602	12.34%	25,546	12,773	2,129	491	70	3
South West	4,242,125	19.19%	814,108	7.97%	16,498	8,249	1,375	317	45	2
West Midlands	4,368,703	19.50%	851,776	8.34%	17,261	8,631	1,438	332	47	2
Yorkshire and The Humber	4,159,791	22.16%	921,919	9.03%	18,683	9,341	1,557	359	51	2

Authority	District	Region	Adult population	Smoking prevalence	Number of adult smokers	% of UK smokers	Number of new childhood smokers per:				
							Year	6 months	Month	Week	Day
Derby		East Midlands	191,949	19.45%	37,338	0.37%	757	378	63	15	2
Leicester		East Midlands	251,787	21.38%	53,825	0.53%	1,091	545	91	21	3
Rutland		East Midlands	29,550	15.73%	4,647	0.05%	94	47	8	2	0.3
Nottingham		East Midlands	241,442	23.34%	56,342	0.55%	1,142	571	95	22	3
Derbyshire		East Midlands	614,185	18.58%	114,087	1.12%	2,312	1,156	193	44	6
	Amber Valley	East Midlands	97,921	19.85%	19,436	0.19%	394	197	33	8	1
	Bolsover	East Midlands	60,363	25.20%	15,212	0.15%	308	154	26	6	0.8
	Chesterfield	East Midlands	82,909	18.25%	15,132	0.15%	307	153	26	6	0.8
	Derbyshire Dales	East Midlands	57,591	17.31%	9,971	0.10%	202	101	17	4	0.6
	Erewash	East Midlands	89,183	18.19%	16,225	0.16%	329	164	27	6	0.9
	High Peak	East Midlands	72,149	16.71%	12,059	0.12%	244	122	20	5	0.7
	North East Derbyshire	East Midlands	80,329	19.07%	15,319	0.15%	310	155	26	6	0.8
	South Derbyshire	East Midlands	73,740	14.76%	10,888	0.11%	221	110	18	4	0.6
Leicestershire		East Midlands	517,281	17.07%	88,290	0.86%	1,789	895	149	34	5
	Blaby	East Midlands	74,079	15.30%	11,335	0.11%	230	115	19	4	0.6
	Charnwood	East Midlands	133,493	18.71%	24,976	0.24%	506	253	42	10	1
	Harborough	East Midlands	67,039	15.04%	10,080	0.10%	204	102	17	4	0.6
	Hinckley and Bosworth	East Midlands	84,207	16.80%	14,150	0.14%	287	143	24	6	0.8
	Melton	East Midlands	40,083	15.08%	6,045	0.06%	123	61	10	2	0.3
	North West Leicestershire	East Midlands	73,716	19.48%	14,358	0.14%	291	145	24	6	0.8
	Oadby and Wigston	East Midlands	44,664	16.38%	7,315	0.07%	148	74	12	3	0.4
Northamptonshire		East Midlands	537,940	20.85%	112,177	1.10%	2,273	1,137	189	44	6
	Corby	East Midlands	47,259	25.49%	12,044	0.12%	244	122	20	5	0.7
	Daventry	East Midlands	61,149	16.02%	9,799	0.10%	199	99	17	4	0.5
	East Northamptonshire	East Midlands	67,220	19.58%	13,163	0.13%	267	133	22	5	0.7
	Kettering	East Midlands	72,763	23.45%	17,060	0.17%	346	173	29	7	0.9
	Northampton	East Midlands	164,192	23.33%	38,298	0.37%	776	388	65	15	2
	South Northamptonshire	East Midlands	66,711	11.18%	7,458	0.07%	151	76	13	3	0.4
	Wellingborough	East Midlands	58,646	25.30%	14,835	0.15%	301	150	25	6	0.8
Nottinghamshire		East Midlands	624,692	19.74%	123,285	1.21%	2,498	1,249	208	48	7
	Ashfield	East Midlands	93,855	29.43%	27,621	0.27%	560	280	47	11	2
	Bassetlaw	East Midlands	89,765	13.81%	12,397	0.12%	251	126	21	5	0.7
	Broxtowe	East Midlands	88,473	16.40%	14,513	0.14%	294	147	25	6	0.8
	Gedling	East Midlands	90,564	15.55%	14,082	0.14%	285	143	24	5	0.8
	Mansfield	East Midlands	82,827	29.25%	24,227	0.24%	491	245	41	9	1

Authority	District	Region	Adult population	Smoking prevalence	Number of adult smokers	% of UK smokers	Number of new childhood smokers per:				
							Year	6 months	Month	Week	Day
	Newark and Sherwood	East Midlands	91,239	20.08%	18,323	0.18%	371	186	31	7	1
	Rushcliffe	East Midlands	87,969	14.80%	13,022	0.13%	264	132	22	5	0.7
Peterborough		East of England	140,416	23.70%	33,279	0.33%	674	337	56	13	2
Luton		East of England	151,385	20.55%	31,103	0.30%	630	315	53	12	2
Bedford		East of England	122,024	16.32%	19,920	0.20%	404	202	34	8	1
Central Bedfordshire		East of England	199,250	16.08%	32,034	0.31%	649	325	54	12	2
Southend-on-Sea		East of England	136,829	22.36%	30,591	0.30%	620	310	52	12	2
Thurrock		East of England	119,777	20.64%	24,717	0.24%	501	250	42	10	1
Cambridgeshire		East of England	494,568	19.50%	96,460	0.94%	1,955	977	163	38	5
	Cambridge	East of England	102,566	15.24%	15,636	0.15%	317	158	26	6	0.9
	East Cambridgeshire	East of England	65,814	13.25%	8,720	0.09%	177	88	15	3	0.5
	Fenland	East of England	76,321	25.53%	19,488	0.19%	395	197	33	8	1
	Huntingdonshire	East of England	133,390	22.13%	29,517	0.29%	598	299	50	12	2
	South Cambridgeshire	East of England	116,477	19.94%	23,220	0.23%	471	235	39	9	1
Essex		East of England	1,101,007	18.70%	205,855	2.02%	4,172	2,086	348	80	11
	Basildon	East of England	135,004	15.71%	21,205	0.21%	430	215	36	8	1
	Braintree	East of England	114,888	19.66%	22,586	0.22%	458	229	38	9	1
	Brentwood	East of England	58,296	14.40%	8,397	0.08%	170	85	14	3	0.5
	Castle Point	East of England	70,882	18.93%	13,418	0.13%	272	136	23	5	0.7
	Chelmsford	East of England	132,850	18.96%	25,192	0.25%	511	255	43	10	1
	Colchester	East of England	137,696	22.48%	30,960	0.30%	627	314	52	12	2
	Epping Forest	East of England	98,861	16.55%	16,363	0.16%	332	166	28	6	0.9
	Harlow	East of England	63,046	23.01%	14,505	0.14%	294	147	24	6	0.8
	Maldon	East of England	49,415	18.78%	9,282	0.09%	188	94	16	4	0.5
	Rochford	East of England	66,147	15.43%	10,205	0.10%	207	103	17	4	0.6
	Tendring	East of England	112,239	22.03%	24,726	0.24%	501	251	42	10	1
	Uttlesford	East of England	61,683	13.92%	8,587	0.08%	174	87	15	3	0.5
Hertfordshire		East of England	866,461	19.45%	168,526	1.65%	3,415	1,708	285	66	9
	Broxbourne	East of England	72,501	21.47%	15,563	0.15%	315	158	26	6	0.9
	Dacorum	East of England	112,595	18.73%	21,091	0.21%	427	214	36	8	1
	East Hertfordshire	East of England	106,640	13.86%	14,783	0.14%	300	150	25	6	0.8
	Hertsmere	East of England	77,399	19.37%	14,993	0.15%	304	152	25	6	0.8
	North Hertfordshire	East of England	99,535	16.72%	16,639	0.16%	337	169	28	6	0.9
	St Albans	East of England	107,392	18.97%	20,367	0.20%	413	206	34	8	1
	Stevenage	East of England	64,778	27.62%	17,894	0.18%	363	181	30	7	1

Authority	District	Region	Adult population	Smoking prevalence	Number of adult smokers	% of UK smokers	Number of new childhood smokers per:				
							Year	6 months	Month	Week	Day
	Three Rivers	East of England	68,035	22.31%	15,178	0.15%	308	154	26	6	0.8
	Watford	East of England	69,770	16.61%	11,591	0.11%	235	117	20	5	0.6
	Welwyn Hatfield	East of England	87,816	23.56%	20,692	0.20%	419	210	35	8	1
Lincolnshire		East of England	575,467	20.98%	120,741	1.18%	2,447	1,223	204	47	7
	Boston	East of England	51,764	26.15%	13,534	0.13%	274	137	23	5	0.8
	East Lindsey	East of England	112,492	23.62%	26,568	0.26%	538	269	45	10	1
	Lincoln	East of England	75,696	28.33%	21,444	0.21%	435	217	36	8	1
	North Kesteven	East of England	86,664	19.98%	17,312	0.17%	351	175	29	7	1
	South Holland	East of England	71,443	14.69%	10,497	0.10%	213	106	18	4	0.6
	South Kesteven	East of England	105,905	17.27%	18,287	0.18%	371	185	31	7	1
	West Lindsey	East of England	71,503	17.88%	12,783	0.13%	259	130	22	5	0.7
Norfolk		East of England	694,344	20.33%	141,173	1.38%	2,861	1,430	238	55	8
	Breckland	East of England	104,820	19.97%	20,930	0.20%	424	212	35	8	1
	Broadland	East of England	100,784	18.22%	18,358	0.18%	372	186	31	7	1
	Great Yarmouth	East of England	77,455	24.93%	19,311	0.19%	391	196	33	8	1
	King's Lynn and West Norfolk	East of England	119,665	19.35%	23,153	0.23%	469	235	39	9	1
	North Norfolk	East of England	84,739	14.57%	12,342	0.12%	250	125	21	5	0.7
	Norwich	East of England	107,951	26.35%	28,445	0.28%	576	288	48	11	2
	South Norfolk	East of England	98,930	18.43%	18,234	0.18%	370	185	31	7	1
Suffolk		East of England	578,915	20.35%	117,819	1.15%	2,388	1,194	199	46	7
	Babergh	East of England	69,695	14.69%	10,239	0.10%	208	104	17	4	0.6
	Forest Heath	East of England	47,615	24.12%	11,484	0.11%	233	116	19	4	0.6
	Ipswich	East of England	104,207	21.05%	21,940	0.21%	445	222	37	9	1
	Mid Suffolk	East of England	76,879	19.53%	15,017	0.15%	304	152	25	6	0.8
	St Edmundsbury	East of England	88,327	24.12%	21,302	0.21%	432	216	36	8	1
	Suffolk Coastal	East of England	99,497	16.69%	16,606	0.16%	337	168	28	6	0.9
	Waveney	East of England	92,695	22.94%	21,266	0.21%	431	215	36	8	1
City of London		London	6,728	41.67%	2,804	0.03%	57	28	5	1	0.2
Barking and Dagenham		London	133,215	22.97%	30,598	0.30%	620	310	52	12	2
Barnet		London	274,324	17.49%	47,974	0.47%	972	486	81	19	3
Bexley		London	178,573	19.27%	34,411	0.34%	697	349	58	13	2
Brent		London	241,792	18.18%	43,965	0.43%	891	445	74	17	2
Bromley		London	241,896	18.12%	43,822	0.43%	888	444	74	17	2
Camden		London	181,084	17.30%	31,336	0.31%	635	318	53	12	2
Croydon		London	275,599	19.67%	54,219	0.53%	1,099	549	92	21	3

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Ealing		London	262,527	20.12%	52,809	0.52%	1,070	535	89	21	3
Enfield		London	235,049	18.47%	43,420	0.43%	880	440	73	17	2
Greenwich		London	194,025	17.93%	34,780	0.34%	705	352	59	14	2
Hackney		London	190,714	25.24%	48,142	0.47%	976	488	81	19	3
Hammersmith and Fulham		London	149,882	20.67%	30,978	0.30%	628	314	52	12	2
Haringey		London	197,974	18.76%	37,142	0.36%	753	376	63	14	2
Harrow		London	185,737	14.64%	27,184	0.27%	551	275	46	11	2
Havering		London	186,957	20.04%	37,458	0.37%	759	380	63	15	2
Hillingdon		London	211,056	17.64%	37,229	0.36%	754	377	63	15	2
Hounslow		London	197,298	15.29%	30,171	0.30%	611	306	51	12	2
Islington		London	169,966	21.84%	37,113	0.36%	752	376	63	14	2
Kensington and Chelsea		London	131,522	18.05%	23,742	0.23%	481	241	40	9	1
Kingston upon Thames		London	126,574	18.30%	23,169	0.23%	470	235	39	9	1
Lambeth		London	244,054	20.15%	49,167	0.48%	996	498	83	19	3
Lewisham		London	213,291	22.07%	47,082	0.46%	954	477	80	18	3
Merton		London	157,101	16.48%	25,885	0.25%	525	262	44	10	1
Newham		London	232,345	18.79%	43,659	0.43%	885	442	74	17	2
Redbridge		London	210,443	16.11%	33,911	0.33%	687	344	57	13	2
Richmond upon Thames		London	146,801	19.74%	28,986	0.28%	587	294	49	11	2
Southwark		London	229,678	17.51%	40,214	0.39%	815	407	68	16	2
Sutton		London	147,902	17.69%	26,159	0.26%	530	265	44	10	1
Tower Hamlets		London	200,617	21.49%	43,106	0.42%	874	437	73	17	2
Waltham Forest		London	198,122	19.37%	38,385	0.38%	778	389	65	15	2
Wandsworth		London	251,877	16.16%	40,705	0.40%	825	412	69	16	2
Westminster		London	183,510	21.55%	39,539	0.39%	801	401	67	15	2
Gateshead		North East England	160,091	21.32%	34,128	0.33%	692	346	58	13	2
Newcastle upon Tyne		North East England	225,100	23.58%	53,088	0.52%	1,076	538	90	21	3
North Tyneside		North East England	160,879	22.57%	36,303	0.36%	736	368	61	14	2
South Tyneside		North East England	118,569	21.61%	25,628	0.25%	519	260	43	10	1
Sunderland		North East England	220,528	22.13%	48,800	0.48%	989	494	82	19	3
Hartlepool		North East England	71,728	23.53%	16,875	0.17%	342	171	28	7	0.9
Middlesbrough		North East England	106,613	24.71%	26,342	0.26%	534	267	44	10	1
Redcar and Cleveland		North East England	107,415	21.65%	23,258	0.23%	471	236	39	9	1
Stockton-on-Tees		North East England	149,545	17.80%	26,616	0.26%	539	270	45	10	1
Darlington		North East England	82,659	23.31%	19,264	0.19%	390	195	33	8	1

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County Durham		North East England	412,875	20.87%	86,152	0.84%	1,746	873	145	34	5
Northumberland		North East England	254,979	16.77%	42,753	0.42%	866	433	72	17	2
Bolton		North West England	212,678	22.88%	48,658	0.48%	986	493	82	19	3
Bury		North West England	143,451	21.99%	31,546	0.31%	639	320	53	12	2
Manchester		North West England	394,420	27.25%	107,475	1.05%	2,178	1,089	182	42	6
Oldham		North West England	168,605	24.94%	42,057	0.41%	852	426	71	16	2
Rochdale		North West England	161,249	23.60%	38,062	0.37%	771	386	64	15	2
Salford		North West England	183,699	25.38%	46,618	0.46%	945	472	79	18	3
Stockport		North West England	222,699	21.46%	47,780	0.47%	968	484	81	19	3
Tameside		North West England	171,263	24.09%	41,264	0.40%	836	418	70	16	2
Trafford		North West England	175,275	19.49%	34,155	0.33%	692	346	58	13	2
Wigan		North West England	250,182	22.76%	56,951	0.56%	1,154	577	96	22	3
Knowsley		North West England	113,222	27.58%	31,225	0.31%	633	316	53	12	2
Liverpool		North West England	376,849	24.20%	91,214	0.89%	1,848	924	154	36	5
St Helens		North West England	139,036	20.66%	28,725	0.28%	582	291	49	11	2
Sefton		North West England	219,776	18.34%	40,318	0.39%	817	409	68	16	2
Wirral		North West England	252,259	21.82%	55,045	0.54%	1,116	558	93	21	3
Cheshire East		North West England	295,835	15.29%	45,243	0.44%	917	458	76	18	3
Halton		North West England	97,536	23.12%	22,548	0.22%	457	228	38	9	1
Warrington		North West England	158,719	14.41%	22,868	0.22%	463	232	39	9	1
Cheshire West and Chester		North West England	263,640	19.47%	51,338	0.50%	1,040	520	87	20	3
Blackburn with Darwen		North West England	109,071	27.17%	29,631	0.29%	600	300	50	12	2
Blackpool		North West England	113,194	25.89%	29,310	0.29%	594	297	49	11	2
Cumbria		North West England	404,301	21.66%	87,588	0.86%	1,775	888	148	34	5
	Allerdale	North West England	77,738	22.56%	17,537	0.17%	355	178	30	7	1
	Barrow-in-Furness	North West England	54,893	24.42%	13,407	0.13%	272	136	23	5	0.7
	Carlisle	North West England	86,558	24.22%	20,964	0.21%	425	212	35	8	1
	Copeland	North West England	56,933	28.43%	16,188	0.16%	328	164	27	6	0.9
	Eden	North West England	42,803	13.70%	5,864	0.06%	119	59	10	2	0.3
	South Lakeland	North West England	85,376	15.72%	13,421	0.13%	272	136	23	5	0.7
Lancashire		North West England	928,371	21.18%	196,658	1.93%	3,985	1,993	332	77	11
	Burnley	North West England	67,660	23.04%	15,590	0.15%	316	158	26	6	0.9
	Chorley	North West England	85,417	17.75%	15,166	0.15%	307	154	26	6	0.8
	Fylde	North West England	62,290	12.47%	7,765	0.08%	157	79	13	3	0.4
	Hyndburn	North West England	61,804	21.29%	13,158	0.13%	267	133	22	5	0.7

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	Lancaster	North West England	111,741	23.57%	26,338	0.26%	534	267	44	10	1
	Pendle	North West England	69,061	23.18%	16,006	0.16%	324	162	27	6	0.9
	Preston	North West England	109,907	24.82%	27,276	0.27%	553	276	46	11	2
	Ribble Valley	North West England	45,227	14.70%	6,649	0.07%	135	67	11	3	0.4
	Rossendale	North West England	53,015	23.38%	12,397	0.12%	251	126	21	5	0.7
	South Ribble	North West England	86,537	18.02%	15,597	0.15%	316	158	26	6	0.9
	West Lancashire	North West England	87,923	28.17%	24,766	0.24%	502	251	42	10	1
	Wyre	North West England	87,789	18.78%	16,484	0.16%	334	167	28	6	0.9
Medway		South East England	203,927	23.63%	48,186	0.47%	976	488	81	19	3
Bracknell Forest		South East England	87,071	19.39%	16,886	0.17%	342	171	29	7	0.9
West Berkshire		South East England	118,711	18.44%	21,888	0.21%	444	222	37	9	1
Reading		South East England	121,930	18.84%	22,972	0.22%	466	233	39	9	1
Slough		South East England	103,297	23.85%	24,639	0.24%	499	250	42	10	1
Windsor and Maidenhead		South East England	112,520	14.83%	16,692	0.16%	338	169	28	7	0.9
Wokingham		South East England	119,367	13.78%	16,452	0.16%	333	167	28	6	0.9
Milton Keynes		South East England	187,923	18.02%	33,863	0.33%	686	343	57	13	2
Brighton and Hove		South East England	223,063	22.85%	50,977	0.50%	1,033	517	86	20	3
Portsmouth		South East England	162,967	22.93%	37,373	0.37%	757	379	63	15	2
Southampton		South East England	189,638	22.64%	42,940	0.42%	870	435	73	17	2
Isle of Wight		South East England	112,246	20.44%	22,944	0.22%	465	232	39	9	1
Buckinghamshire		South East England	391,045	15.38%	60,146	0.59%	1,219	609	102	23	3
	Aylesbury Vale	South East England	134,514	15.20%	20,443	0.20%	414	207	35	8	1
	Chiltern	South East England	71,231	12.99%	9,254	0.09%	188	94	16	4	0.5
	South Bucks	South East England	52,642	13.42%	7,067	0.07%	143	72	12	3	0.4
	Wycombe	South East England	132,658	17.72%	23,502	0.23%	476	238	40	9	1
East Sussex		South East England	422,924	19.84%	83,925	0.82%	1,701	850	142	33	5
	Eastbourne	South East England	80,172	21.19%	16,989	0.17%	344	172	29	7	0.9
	Hastings	South East England	71,156	27.04%	19,240	0.19%	390	195	32	7	1
	Lewes	South East England	78,325	20.05%	15,701	0.15%	318	159	27	6	0.9
	Rother	South East England	74,239	14.06%	10,436	0.10%	211	106	18	4	0.6
	Wealden	South East England	119,032	18.20%	21,665	0.21%	439	220	37	8	1
Hampshire		South East England	1,041,967	17.52%	182,558	1.79%	3,700	1,850	308	71	10
	Basingstoke and Deane	South East England	130,468	20.24%	26,412	0.26%	535	268	45	10	1
	East Hampshire	South East England	91,278	15.35%	14,009	0.14%	284	142	24	5	0.8
	Eastleigh	South East England	98,794	14.62%	14,440	0.14%	293	146	24	6	0.8

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	Fareham	South East England	89,657	17.78%	15,941	0.16%	323	162	27	6	0.9
	Gosport	South East England	64,450	20.37%	13,128	0.13%	266	133	22	5	0.7
	Hart	South East England	70,936	14.53%	10,310	0.10%	209	104	17	4	0.6
	Havant	South East England	95,818	21.72%	20,816	0.20%	422	211	35	8	1
	New Forest	South East England	143,879	16.78%	24,143	0.24%	489	245	41	9	1
	Rushmoor	South East England	72,883	24.27%	17,690	0.17%	358	179	30	7	1
	Test Valley	South East England	91,747	13.62%	12,496	0.12%	253	127	21	5	0.7
	Winchester	South East England	92,057	13.99%	12,877	0.13%	261	130	22	5	0.7
Kent		South East England	1,143,723	20.11%	229,956	2.25%	4,660	2,330	388	90	13
	Ashford	South East England	90,702	18.28%	16,580	0.16%	336	168	28	6	0.9
	Canterbury	South East England	121,751	23.41%	28,501	0.28%	578	289	48	11	2
	Dartford	South East England	75,078	16.70%	12,540	0.12%	254	127	21	5	0.7
	Dover	South East England	88,558	27.43%	24,292	0.24%	492	246	41	9	1
	Gravesham	South East England	78,143	23.17%	18,102	0.18%	367	183	31	7	1
	Maidstone	South East England	121,996	18.70%	22,807	0.22%	462	231	39	9	1
	Sevenoaks	South East England	89,774	16.41%	14,732	0.14%	299	149	25	6	0.8
	Shepway	South East England	86,274	20.95%	18,073	0.18%	366	183	31	7	1
	Swale	South East England	105,332	20.52%	21,611	0.21%	438	219	36	8	1
	Thanet	South East England	105,245	21.65%	22,786	0.22%	462	231	38	9	1
	Tonbridge and Malling	South East England	92,485	13.68%	12,653	0.12%	256	128	21	5	0.7
	Tunbridge Wells	South East England	88,385	20.43%	18,055	0.18%	366	183	30	7	1
Oxfordshire		South East England	516,775	17.54%	90,645	0.89%	1,837	918	153	35	5
	Cherwell	South East England	110,286	20.20%	22,274	0.22%	451	226	38	9	1
	Oxford	South East England	122,032	22.08%	26,941	0.26%	546	273	45	10	1
	South Oxfordshire	South East England	105,580	15.63%	16,503	0.16%	334	167	28	6	0.9
	Vale of White Horse	South East England	95,541	12.68%	12,110	0.12%	245	123	20	5	0.7
	West Oxfordshire	South East England	83,336	15.30%	12,754	0.12%	258	129	22	5	0.7
Surrey		South East England	888,398	15.81%	140,493	1.38%	2,847	1,424	237	55	8
	Elmbridge	South East England	100,140	19.76%	19,791	0.19%	401	201	33	8	1
	Epsom and Ewell	South East England	58,485	12.08%	7,068	0.07%	143	72	12	3	0.4
	Guildford	South East England	109,916	16.36%	17,979	0.18%	364	182	30	7	1
	Mole Valley	South East England	67,541	13.82%	9,331	0.09%	189	95	16	4	0.5
	Reigate and Banstead	South East England	107,835	15.72%	16,950	0.17%	344	172	29	7	0.9
	Runnymede	South East England	64,876	11.64%	7,555	0.07%	153	77	13	3	0.4
	Spelthorne	South East England	76,045	18.68%	14,207	0.14%	288	144	24	6	0.8

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	Surrey Heath	South East England	67,278	11.86%	7,978	0.08%	162	81	13	3	0.4
	Tandridge	South East England	64,872	15.99%	10,374	0.10%	210	105	18	4	0.6
	Waverley	South East England	94,212	17.17%	16,179	0.16%	328	164	27	6	0.9
	Woking (borough)	South East England	77,198	17.21%	13,286	0.13%	269	135	22	5	0.7
West Sussex		South East England	644,494	18.50%	119,217	1.17%	2,416	1,208	201	46	7
	Adur	South East England	49,202	16.86%	8,294	0.08%	168	84	14	3	0.5
	Arun	South East England	123,193	12.18%	15,009	0.15%	304	152	25	6	0.8
	Chichester	South East England	92,980	20.99%	19,513	0.19%	395	198	33	8	1
	Crawley	South East England	82,219	21.25%	17,471	0.17%	354	177	30	7	1
	Horsham	South East England	103,494	14.72%	15,232	0.15%	309	154	26	6	0.8
	Mid Sussex	South East England	109,390	24.23%	26,508	0.26%	537	269	45	10	1
	Worthing	South East England	84,016	20.46%	17,189	0.17%	348	174	29	7	1
Bath and North East Somerset		South West England	141,884	16.43%	23,308	0.23%	472	236	39	9	1
Bristol		South West England	340,426	20.95%	71,336	0.70%	1,446	723	120	28	4
North Somerset		South West England	161,585	16.34%	26,401	0.26%	535	268	45	10	1
South Gloucestershire		South West England	206,430	16.52%	34,092	0.33%	691	345	58	13	2
Cornwall		South West England	443,785	21.39%	94,926	0.93%	1,924	962	160	37	5
Plymouth		South West England	205,699	22.14%	45,538	0.45%	923	461	77	18	3
Torbay		South West England	106,363	21.32%	22,674	0.22%	460	230	38	9	1
Bournemouth		South West England	151,630	19.01%	28,824	0.28%	584	292	49	11	2
Poole		South West England	118,866	18.26%	21,704	0.21%	440	220	37	8	1
Swindon		South West England	163,136	21.15%	34,505	0.34%	699	350	58	13	2
Wiltshire		South West England	370,735	17.15%	63,581	0.62%	1,288	644	107	25	4
Devon		South West England	607,156	20.21%	122,724	1.20%	2,487	1,244	207	48	7
	East Devon	South West England	109,685	19.06%	20,904	0.20%	424	212	35	8	1
	Exeter	South West England	96,145	18.68%	17,962	0.18%	364	182	30	7	1
	Mid Devon	South West England	61,385	21.08%	12,937	0.13%	262	131	22	5	0.7
	North Devon	South West England	75,415	22.36%	16,863	0.17%	342	171	28	7	0.9
	South Hams	South West England	68,277	20.77%	14,178	0.14%	287	144	24	6	0.8
	Teignbridge	South West England	100,850	22.72%	22,913	0.22%	464	232	39	9	1
	Torridge	South West England	51,901	20.05%	10,408	0.10%	211	105	18	4	0.6
	West Devon	South West England	43,498	14.72%	6,403	0.06%	130	65	11	2	0.4
Dorset		South West England	336,283	17.12%	57,562	0.56%	1,167	583	97	22	3
	Christchurch	South West England	39,368	16.18%	6,368	0.06%	129	65	11	2	0.4
	East Dorset	South West England	71,714	13.27%	9,517	0.09%	193	96	16	4	0.5

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	North Dorset	South West England	54,670	21.05%	11,510	0.11%	233	117	19	4	0.6
	Purbeck	South West England	36,794	17.22%	6,337	0.06%	128	64	11	2	0.4
	West Dorset	South West England	80,957	14.67%	11,877	0.12%	241	120	20	5	0.7
	Weymouth and Portland	South West England	52,780	23.92%	12,627	0.12%	256	128	21	5	0.7
Gloucestershire		South West England	476,120	18.48%	87,988	0.86%	1,783	892	149	34	5
	Cheltenham	South West England	93,124	17.94%	16,709	0.16%	339	169	28	7	0.9
	Cotswold	South West England	67,425	13.57%	9,151	0.09%	185	93	15	4	0.5
	Forest of Dean	South West England	65,869	19.74%	13,006	0.13%	264	132	22	5	0.7
	Gloucester	South West England	94,502	25.14%	23,762	0.23%	482	241	40	9	1
	Stroud	South West England	89,503	20.69%	18,519	0.18%	375	188	31	7	1
	Tewkesbury	South West England	65,697	10.28%	6,756	0.07%	137	68	11	3	0.4
Somerset		South West England	422,799	19.15%	80,983	0.79%	1,641	821	137	32	4
	Mendip	South West England	85,687	17.58%	15,061	0.15%	305	153	25	6	0.8
	Sedgemoor	South West England	91,210	18.39%	16,774	0.16%	340	170	28	7	0.9
	South Somerset	South West England	129,408	23.06%	29,839	0.29%	605	302	50	12	2
	Taunton Deane	South West England	87,455	16.20%	14,165	0.14%	287	144	24	6	0.8
	West Somerset	South West England	29,039	17.31%	5,025	0.05%	102	51	8	2	0.3
Birmingham		West Midlands	799,835	19.31%	154,426	1.51%	3,129	1,565	261	60	9
Coventry		West Midlands	246,354	18.18%	44,777	0.44%	907	454	76	17	2
Dudley		West Midlands	245,581	19.08%	46,869	0.46%	950	475	79	18	3
Sandwell		West Midlands	234,401	22.88%	53,627	0.53%	1,087	543	91	21	3
Solihull		West Midlands	161,899	13.25%	21,448	0.21%	435	217	36	8	1
Walsall		West Midlands	206,203	22.72%	46,850	0.46%	949	475	79	18	3
Wolverhampton		West Midlands	193,687	22.16%	42,918	0.42%	870	435	72	17	2
Herefordshire		West Midlands	147,755	17.42%	25,736	0.25%	522	261	43	10	1
Telford and Wrekin		West Midlands	127,921	22.38%	28,630	0.28%	580	290	48	11	2
Shropshire		West Midlands	246,004	17.38%	42,746	0.42%	866	433	72	17	2
Stoke-on-Trent		West Midlands	194,183	25.34%	49,216	0.48%	997	499	83	19	3
Staffordshire		West Midlands	678,241	19.13%	129,760	1.27%	2,630	1,315	219	51	7
	Cannock Chase	West Midlands	76,657	19.61%	15,030	0.15%	305	152	25	6	0.8
	East Staffordshire	West Midlands	89,046	20.03%	17,832	0.17%	361	181	30	7	1
	Lichfield	West Midlands	80,816	17.31%	13,988	0.14%	283	142	24	5	0.8
	Newcastle-under-Lyme	West Midlands	99,846	20.05%	20,018	0.20%	406	203	34	8	1
	South Staffordshire	West Midlands	87,899	15.43%	13,562	0.13%	275	137	23	5	0.8
	Stafford	West Midlands	105,607	21.05%	22,230	0.22%	451	225	38	9	1

Authority	District	Region	Adult population	Smoking prevalence	Number of adult smokers	% of UK smokers	Number of new childhood smokers per:				
							Year	6 months	Month	Week	Day
	Staffordshire Moorlands	West Midlands	78,814	18.85%	14,855	0.15%	301	151	25	6	0.8
	Tamworth	West Midlands	59,556	20.17%	12,015	0.12%	243	122	20	5	0.7
Warwickshire		West Midlands	434,734	19.07%	82,894	0.81%	1,680	840	140	32	5
	North Warwickshire	West Midlands	49,576	12.81%	6,348	0.06%	129	64	11	2	0.4
	Nuneaton and Bedworth	West Midlands	98,109	22.95%	22,515	0.22%	456	228	38	9	1
	Rugby	West Midlands	78,408	14.61%	11,458	0.11%	232	116	19	4	0.6
	Stratford-on-Avon	West Midlands	97,462	20.19%	19,681	0.19%	399	199	33	8	1
	Warwick	West Midlands	111,179	20.51%	22,803	0.22%	462	231	39	9	1
Worcestershire		West Midlands	451,905	18.43%	83,276	0.82%	1,688	844	141	32	5
	Bromsgrove	West Midlands	74,778	15.75%	11,777	0.12%	239	119	20	5	0.7
	Malvern Hills	West Midlands	60,223	15.15%	9,125	0.09%	185	92	15	4	0.5
	Redditch	West Midlands	65,570	25.24%	16,550	0.16%	335	168	28	6	0.9
	Worcester	West Midlands	77,900	23.01%	17,924	0.18%	363	182	30	7	1
	Wychavon	West Midlands	94,369	16.93%	15,974	0.16%	324	162	27	6	0.9
	Wyre Forest	West Midlands	79,065	15.45%	12,218	0.12%	248	124	21	5	0.7
Barnsley		Yorkshire and the Humber	183,087	25.63%	46,916	0.46%	951	475	79	18	3
Doncaster		Yorkshire and the Humber	237,259	26.98%	64,009	0.63%	1,297	649	108	25	4
Rotherham		Yorkshire and the Humber	201,646	23.31%	46,994	0.46%	952	476	79	18	3
Sheffield		Yorkshire and the Humber	438,565	21.57%	94,598	0.93%	1,917	959	160	37	5
Bradford		Yorkshire and the Humber	386,554	21.45%	82,923	0.81%	1,680	840	140	32	5
Calderdale		Yorkshire and the Humber	158,856	22.00%	34,953	0.34%	708	354	59	14	2
Kirklees		Yorkshire and the Humber	326,107	23.58%	76,902	0.75%	1,558	779	130	30	4
Leeds		Yorkshire and the Humber	595,800	23.05%	137,312	1.34%	2,783	1,391	232	54	8
Wakefield		Yorkshire and the Humber	258,024	23.02%	59,401	0.58%	1,204	602	100	23	3
Kingston upon Hull		Yorkshire and the Humber	201,406	29.32%	59,046	0.58%	1,197	598	100	23	3
East Riding of Yorkshire		Yorkshire and the Humber	270,707	17.21%	46,580	0.46%	944	472	79	18	3
North East Lincolnshire		Yorkshire and the Humber	125,389	27.35%	34,292	0.34%	695	347	58	13	2
North Lincolnshire		Yorkshire and the Humber	132,044	22.87%	30,192	0.30%	612	306	51	12	2
York		Yorkshire and the Humber	161,843	17.12%	27,702	0.27%	561	281	47	11	2
North Yorkshire		Yorkshire and the Humber	482,504	16.71%	80,638	0.79%	1,634	817	136	31	4
	Craven	Yorkshire and the Humber	44,815	8.20%	3,675	0.04%	74	37	6	1	0.2
	Hambleton	Yorkshire and the Humber	72,375	16.04%	11,607	0.11%	235	118	20	5	0.6
	Harrogate	Yorkshire and the Humber	125,513	14.50%	18,203	0.18%	369	184	31	7	1
	Richmondshire	Yorkshire and the Humber	42,877	20.35%	8,725	0.09%	177	88	15	3	0.5
	Ryedale	Yorkshire and the Humber	41,940	23.68%	9,930	0.10%	201	101	17	4	0.6

Authority	District	Region	Adult population	Smoking prevalence	Number of adult smokers	% of UK smokers	Number of new childhood smokers per:				
							Year	6 months	Month	Week	Day
	Scarborough	Yorkshire and the Humber	88,874	21.07%	18,723	0.18%	379	190	32	7	1
	Selby	Yorkshire and the Humber	66,110	14.96%	9,893	0.10%	200	100	17	4	0.5
Blaenau Gwent		Wales	55,476	27.75%	15,396	0.15%	312	156	26	6	0.9
Bridgend		Wales	110,509	22.53%	24,896	0.24%	505	252	42	10	1
Caerphilly		Wales	139,249	23.46%	32,668	0.32%	662	331	55	13	2
Cardiff		Wales	274,592	20.65%	56,694	0.56%	1,149	574	96	22	3
Carmarthenshire		Wales	146,347	21.43%	31,364	0.31%	636	318	53	12	2
Ceredigion		Wales	62,523	21.94%	13,717	0.13%	278	139	23	5	0.8
Conwy		Wales	93,382	22.31%	20,833	0.20%	422	211	35	8	1
Denbighshire		Wales	74,395	23.30%	17,336	0.17%	351	176	29	7	1
Flintshire		Wales	120,031	21.43%	25,726	0.25%	521	261	43	10	1
Gwynedd		Wales	97,845	20.95%	20,496	0.20%	415	208	35	8	1
Isle of Anglesey		Wales	56,398	24.94%	14,063	0.14%	285	142	24	5	0.8
Merthyr Tydfil		Wales	46,297	23.93%	11,077	0.11%	224	112	19	4	0.6
Monmouthshire		Wales	72,667	18.36%	13,341	0.13%	270	135	23	5	0.7
Neath Port Talbot		Wales	111,671	24.80%	27,699	0.27%	561	281	47	11	2
Newport		Wales	112,550	23.56%	26,514	0.26%	537	269	45	10	1
Pembrokeshire		Wales	97,509	24.10%	23,501	0.23%	476	238	40	9	1
Powys		Wales	106,868	21.04%	22,480	0.22%	456	228	38	9	1
Rhondda Cynon Taf		Wales	184,278	26.36%	48,569	0.48%	984	492	82	19	3
Swansea		Wales	191,909	22.80%	43,753	0.43%	887	443	74	17	2
The Vale of Glamorgan		Wales	99,443	21.37%	21,248	0.21%	431	215	36	8	1
Torfaen		Wales	71,371	26.46%	18,882	0.18%	383	191	32	7	1
Wrexham		Wales	106,015	24.64%	26,119	0.26%	529	265	44	10	1

THORAX

Almost 600 under-16s take up smoking every day in the UK

In London alone, the daily tally is 67 - more than two classrooms-full

[Child uptake of smoking by area across the UK Online First doi 10.1136/thoraxjnl-2013-204379]

Almost 600 under-16s take up smoking every day in the UK, suggests research published online in Thorax.

In London alone, the daily tally is 67 - more than two classrooms-full, the calculations indicate.

National figures on smoking prevalence are available, but the researchers* wanted to estimate smoking uptake among children, to provide some baseline data to inform efforts for preventive measures, and focus attention and resources on what is “essentially a child protection issue.”

This is because taking up smoking at a young age is an even greater risk to health than starting later in life, they say. Smoking at a young age affects lung development and boosts the risk of progressive lung disease (COPD).

And people who start smoking before the age of 15 run a higher risk of developing lung cancer than those who take up the habit later on, even if the cumulative number of cigarettes smoked is smaller, they add.

The researchers based their analysis on data taken from the 2011 ‘Smoking, drinking and drug use among young people in England’ survey, which targets schoolchildren in England between the ages of 11 and 15 every year.

Questionnaires were completed by 6519 children in 219 schools. And by comparing the numbers of current smokers - regular and occasional - with smoking rates among the same age band surveyed the previous year, the researchers were able to estimate the numbers of new 11 to 15 year olds starting to smoke in 2010-11 in the UK.

To calculate the number of new child smokers for each locality, this estimate of 207,000 was then split across geographical areas according to population size and smoking prevalence among adults, on the assumption that there would be more child smokers where the proportion of adult smokers was high. Parental smoking is one of the strongest predictors of smoking among children.

The researchers then used population and adult smoking prevalence data for each of the four UK countries to calculate the number of new child smokers for each locality.

The analysis indicated that among the 3.7 million children aged between 11 and 15 in the UK, an estimated 463 start smoking every day in England, with the equivalent figures for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, 55, 30, and 19, respectively.

Of 74,000 children in this age group in Birmingham, nine take up smoking every day, while the daily tally in London is 67 out of 458,000 children in this age group.

The authors acknowledge that as their figures are calculated from survey data, they can only be approximate, but the fact that they are regional might be more helpful to healthcare professionals and regulators, they say.

Smoking rates among both adults and children are falling in the UK, but the figures are still high, so the pressure needs to be kept up to reduce smoking further, say the authors.

This means increasing taxation, curbing smuggling, and running well-funded anti-smoking media campaigns, as well as banning smoking in cars and introducing plain packaging to reduce children's exposure to branding, they say.

"Smoking is among the largest causes of preventable deaths worldwide," they write. "The present data should help to raise awareness of childhood smoking and to focus attention on the need to address this important child protection issue," they conclude.