

THE COST OF SMOKING IN WALES

The 2022/23 Picture

Smoking harms health, deepens inequalities and costs Wales billions every year.



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The Cost of
Smoking in Wales

**£1.56
Billion**

in 2022/23

Cost per person

£499

Cost per adult

£622

Cost per adult smoker

£4,661



Additional burden not included in the **£1.56 billion**

This figure excludes the far greater cost of health-related quality of life losses (QALYs), estimated between:

£2.86 billion and **£10.03 billion** across the life-course.

That's many hospital beds, empty chairs at work, and grandchildren growing up without their grandparents.

£4,661

Smoking Prevalence in Wales

Smoking remains unequally distributed across Wales

By Sex

13.8%
of males smoke

13.0%
of females smoke

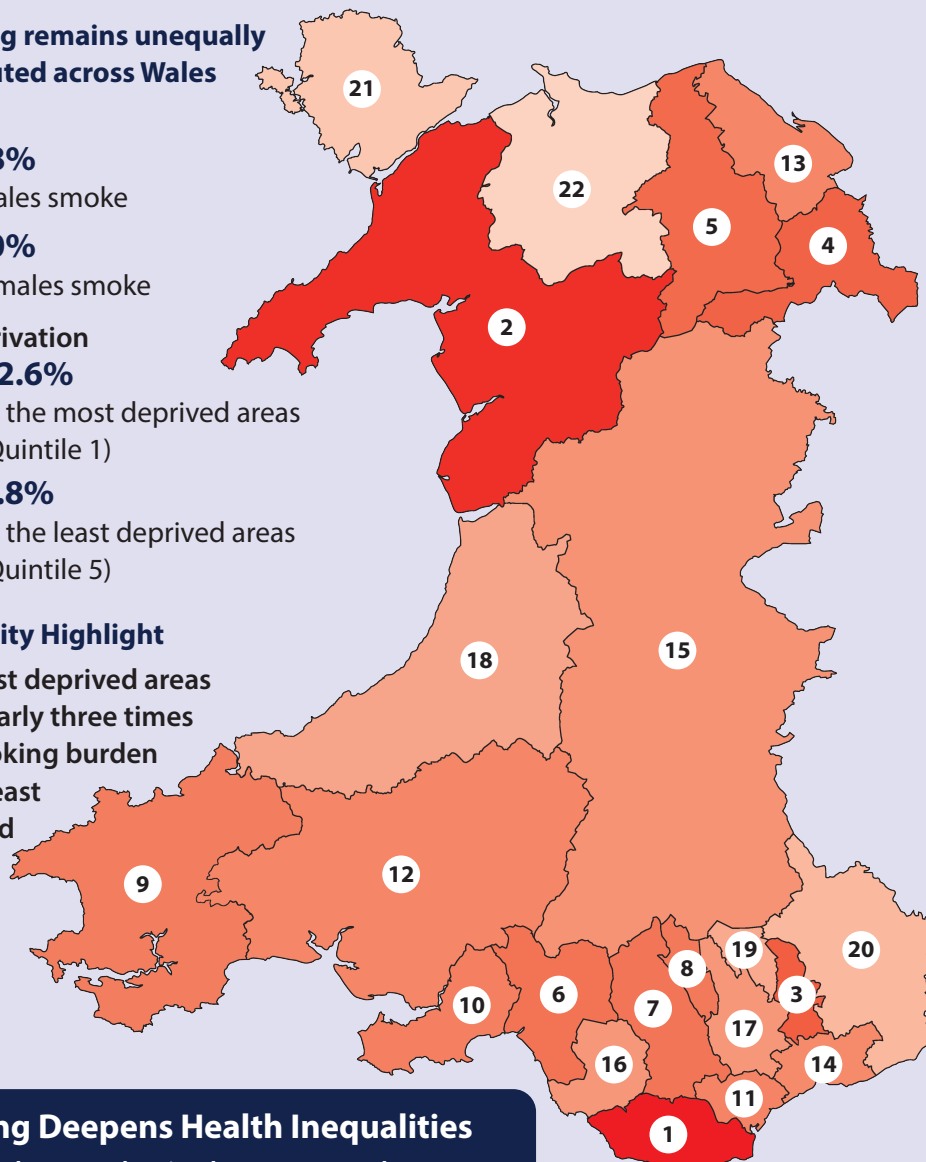
By Deprivation

22.6%
in the most deprived areas
(Quintile 1)

6.8%
in the least deprived areas
(Quintile 5)

Inequality Highlight

The most deprived areas bear nearly three times the smoking burden of the least deprived areas.



Smoking prevalence (%)
by local authority
(adults aged 18+)

1	Vale of Glamorgan	19.3
2	Gwynedd	18.4
3	Torfaen	16.2
4	Wrexham	15.8
5	Denbighshire	15.2
6	Neath Port Talbot	14.7
7	Rhondda Cynon Taf	14.6
8	Merthyr Tydfil	14.2
9	Pembrokeshire	14.0
10	Swansea	13.9
11	Cardiff	13.6
12	Carmarthenshire	13.4
13	Flintshire	13.3
14	Newport	13.0
15	Powys	12.4
16	Bridgend	12.1
17	Caerphilly	12.1
18	Ceredigion	10.9
19	Blaenau Gwent	10.7
20	Monmouthshire	9.7
21	Isle of Anglesey	8.6
22	Conwy	7.8

Highest prevalence:
Vale of Glamorgan (19.3%)

Lowest prevalence:
Conwy (7.8%)

Smoking Deepens Health Inequalities

People in the most deprived areas are much more likely to smoke and more likely to be harmed by it. Smoking contributes to:

- ✗ Higher healthcare costs and pressure on public services
- ✗ Greater productivity losses and more people leaving work due to illness
- ✗ Poorer health outcomes and shorter lives
- ✗ Wider impacts on families and communities

A Smoke-Free Future for Wales

Strong, evidence-based tobacco control policies and equitable support for those who smoke can:

- ✓ Save lives
- ✓ Reduce inequalities
- ✓ Improve health
- ✓ Save Wales money

Tackling tobacco use is key to a fairer, healthier Wales

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Annual Costs by Type and Sex (2022/23)

Smoking costs Wales **£1.56 billion** a year across seven key domains:

Domain	Cost (£m)	% of the total	male share
Hospital admissions:	£210.2m	13.5%	58.6%
Outpatient attendance:	£78.3m	5.0%	52.0%
GP services:	£71.5m	4.6%	50.7%
Prescription services:	£94.1m	6.0%	51.0%
Social care:	£196.2m	12.6%	50.1%
Productivity loss:	£670.0m	42.9%	50.6%
Environmental impact:	£241.2m	15.5%	50.6%

Total: **£1,561.5m** (100%) Note: M = million. Male share is shown out of 100%; the remaining percentage is female share.

Costs by Deprivation Quintile



Q1 (Most Deprived):	£489.8m	(31.4%)
Q2:	£382.1m	(24.5%)
Q3:	£300.9m	(19.3%)
Q4:	£219.1m	(14.0%)
Q5 (Least Deprived):	£169.4m	(10.9%)
Total:	£1,561.5m	

The most deprived areas bear nearly three times the cost of the least deprived.



Costs by Local Authority

Top three local authorities account for 29% of total costs:

- 1** Cardiff **£171.4m**
- 2** Rhondda Cynon Taf **£163.1m**
- 3** Swansea **£111.7m**

All local authorities: **£1,561.5m**

These differences reflect smoking prevalence, population size, age structure and wider social and economic factors.



QALY Losses: The Hidden Cost

143,264 QALYs lost across the life-course among adults.

Economic cost of QALY losses:
 £20,000 per QALY: **£2.86bn**
 £30,000 per QALY: **£4.30bn**
 £70,000 per QALY: **£10.03bn**

By deprivation quintile (£20,000 per QALY):

Q1: **£978.9m**
 Q2: **£704.4m**
 Q3: **£531.8m**
 Q4: **£384.7m**
 Q5: **£265.4m**



The most deprived areas lose more than three times the value of QALYs compared with the least deprived.

What Does This Mean?

Smoking is not just a health issue – it is a social justice issue. It drives huge costs, widens inequalities and limits potential.

What We Can Do?

- ✓ Prevent young people from starting
- ✓ Help every smoker to quit
- ✓ Protect people from tobacco harm
- ✓ Tackle the commercial drivers of tobacco

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