

JSNA Health and Wellbeing Profile 2025/26

Smoking

Summary points

- 12.7% of Bristol adults smoked in 2023, this is considered statistically similar to the national average of 11.6%.
- There is significant variation in smoking prevalence across the city.

Smoking Prevalence

In 2023, 12.7% of adults in Bristol smoked¹, similar to the national rate of 11.6%. Smoking prevalence in Bristol is higher in males, with 14.5% of adult males smoking compared to 10.7% of females. Nationally, 13.4% of males and 9.9% of females smoke.

Data from 2011 onwards shows four years of high smoking prevalence both nationally and locally (2011-14) before significant decreases in 2015 and 2016 (Figure 1). The apparent drop seen in 2017 is thought to be a statistical anomaly and not a true reflection of the prevalence of smokers. Smoking in Bristol was significantly higher than the England average in 2019 and 2020 but has decreased over the last three years to become statistically similar to the national average.

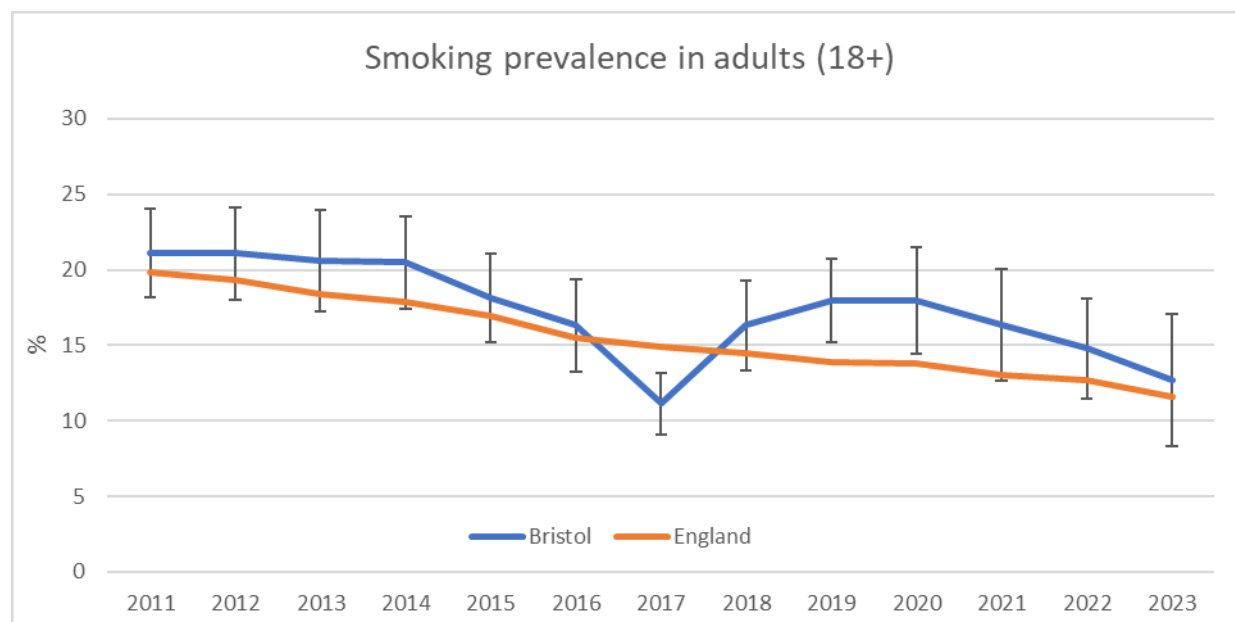


Figure 1: Smoking prevalence in adults. Source: PHE Local Tobacco Control Profiles, April 2025

Published equalities data for Bristol shows that smoking prevalence for residents who rent from local authorities / housing associations (24.9%) is significantly higher than for residents who rent privately (15.5%) or own their house whether owned outright (7.4%) or through a mortgage (5.5%). By socioeconomic group prevalence is lowest for those in managerial and professional roles (6.8%) and highest for those who have never worked or in long term unemployment (22.8%), followed by those in routine and manual roles (17.1%).

¹ Annual Population Survey (APS), via PHE Local Tobacco Control Profiles, May 2024

The Local Quality of Life Survey² data shows there are 13.9% of *households with a smoker* in Bristol, lower than the previous year (15.2%). However, this is significantly higher in the most deprived areas (21.9%) and is lower in the least deprived areas (7.8%). By sub-locality, prevalence of households with a smoker is highest in the Inner City (17.3%) and lowest in North and West (Inner) (9.1%). The percentage of households with a smoker varies across the city by ward from 5.3% of households in Cotham to 21.6% in Ashley (see figure 2).

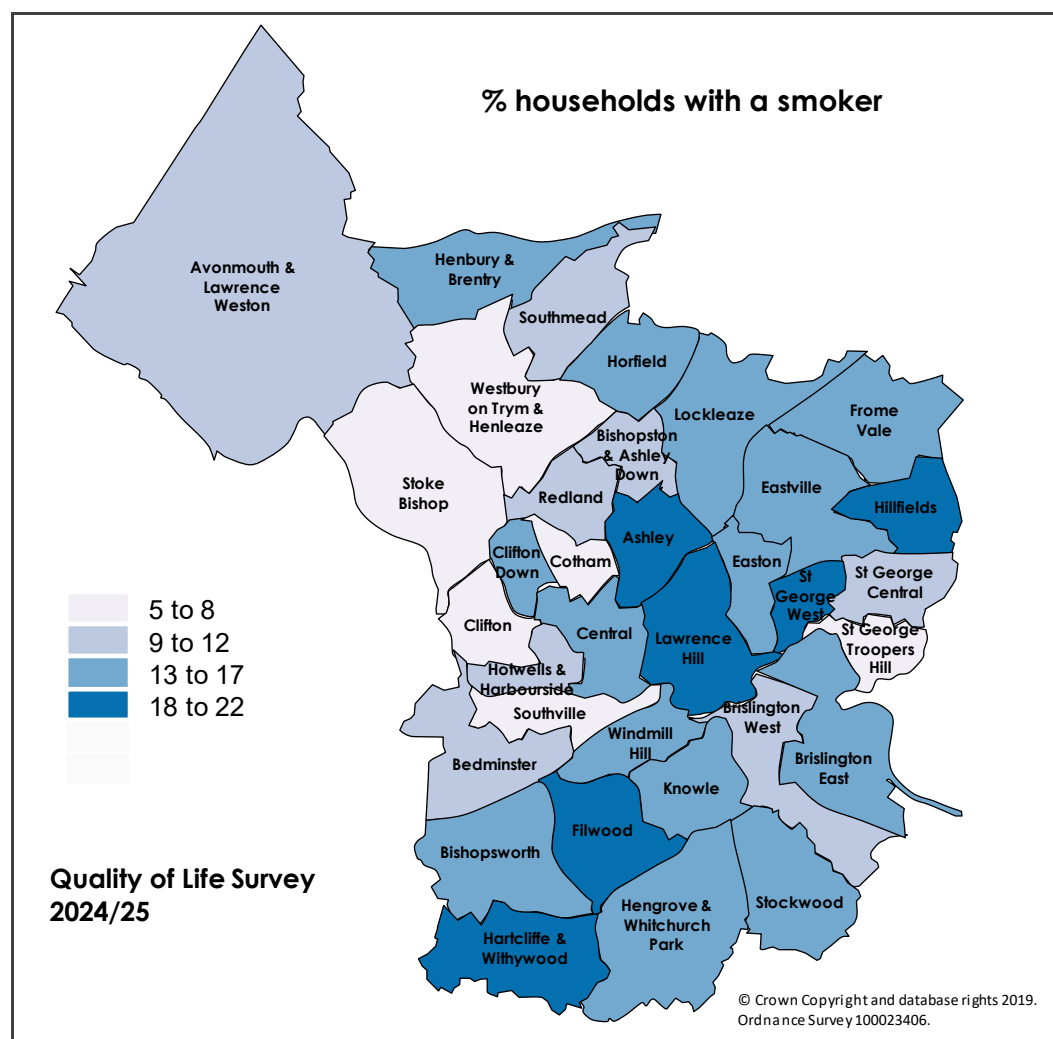


Figure 2: Percentage of households with a smoker, 2024/25, Bristol Quality of Life Survey

Further analysis by equalities group indicates there is higher prevalence (than Bristol average) amongst:

- Lesbian, gay, bisexual people (21.6%)
- Disabled people (21.3%)
- People of White minority ethnicity (19.5%)
- Carers (18.3%)
- Young people aged 16-24 (18.3%)
- Single parents (17.3%)
- People of Black/Black British ethnicity (16.6%)

² Bristol Quality of Life survey 2024/25

Smoking-related deaths

In the absence of up-to-date smoking attributable hospital admissions and mortality data, deaths from lung cancer and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) can be used as a proxy measure.

There were 598 deaths from lung cancer in Bristol in the three-year period 2021-23. This is a rate of 61.4 deaths per 100,000 which is significantly higher (worse) than the England average of 47.5 deaths per 100,000 (see figure 3) and fifth highest of all the English core cities. The mortality rate for males in Bristol (72.0 per 100,000) is significantly higher than the rate for females (52.8 per 100,000), both of which are significantly higher than the national averages of 54.7 per 100,000 for males and 41.9 per 100,000 for females.

Historically Bristol has had high smoking rates (linked to being a centre for cigarette manufacture) and to at least a limited extent, this may be responsible for our high smoking-related mortality rates.

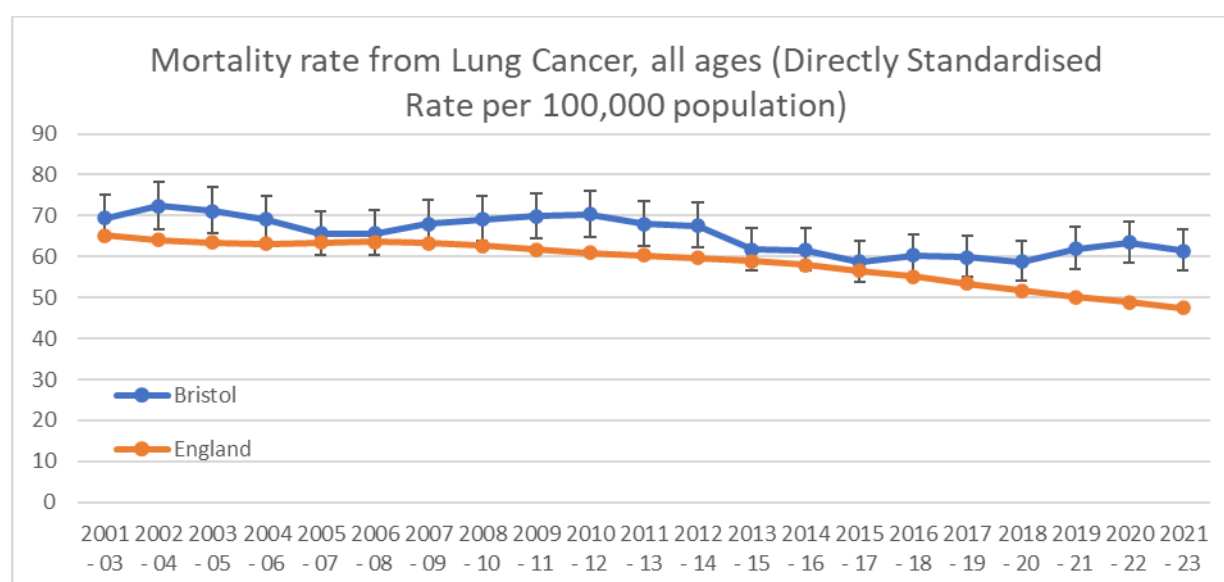


Figure 3: Mortality rate from lung cancer. Source: PHOF (April 2025)

Smoking in school pupils

Results from the latest [Bristol Pupil Voice survey](#) for 2024 found that 6% of secondary pupils have ever tried smoking tobacco and only 1% of reported having smoked a cigarette in the last week. This is a reduction from highs of 31% ever tried smoking tobacco and 7% smoking weekly in 2009.

In terms of e-cigarettes, 20% of secondary pupils responded that they have ever tried vaping and 5% vape weekly. This has been increasing from 16% tried vaping in 2015 when we first started asking about vaping and corresponds with a steady decrease in the number of pupils smoking. This is in line with the national estimate of 18% of children 11-17 years who have ever tried vaping and 7% who currently vape³.

³ [Use of e-cigarettes among young people in Great Britain - ASH](#)
www.bristol.gov.uk/jsna

The majority of regular e-cigarette users were neither regular cigarette smokers or had ever tried conventional cigarettes⁴.

Female pupils (4%), pupils of white minority ethnicity (9%), pupils in receipt of free school meals (4%), pupils with a family/household member that had been to prison (10%), disabled pupils (5%) and pupils reporting a special educational need or learning difficulty (5%), were all significantly more likely on average to report being a regular vape user than average (3%).

Support to stop smoking services

There has been a steady reduction in smoking prevalence in the UK since its peak of over 40% in 1974 to 11.9% in 2023⁵. Whilst the overall smoking prevalence in Bristol has reduced in line with this national trend, there remains distinct pockets of above average smoking prevalence, with some wards reporting up to 21.6% of all households as having someone smoking within the home⁶.

At the same time, the use of electronic cigarettes as a method of stopping smoking has increased locally and nationally, with national estimates that up to 10% of adults regularly or occasionally use electronic cigarettes. The vast majority of these people are current or ex-smokers using electronic cigarettes as part of a quit attempt⁷. Electronic cigarettes are now identified as the most effective smoking cessation aid⁸.

From 2020-25, Bristol commissioned a targeted stop smoking service to support those smokers who are likely to be living with a greater addiction to nicotine and who may otherwise face additional barriers to treatment for their nicotine addictions⁹. In July 2025, a new, universal service will commence which will be available for all Bristol residents.

Further data / links:

- Local Tobacco Control Profiles - a snapshot of the extent of tobacco use, tobacco related harm, and measures being taken to reduce this harm at a local level. See [PHE Local Tobacco Control Profiles](#)

Covid-19 impact:

The Covid 19 pandemic may have prompted an increase in smoking quitters and a reduction in overall smoking prevalence although it is difficult to isolate this impact from the ongoing increasing trend in quits and decreasing reduction in prevalence.

Date updated: May 2025

Date of next update: April 2026

⁴ [Bristol Pupil Voice Survey 2024](#)

⁵ [Adult smoking habits in the UK - Office for National Statistics](#)

⁶ Bristol Quality of Life survey 2024/25

⁷ [Adult smoking habits in the UK - Office for National Statistics](#)

⁸ [Latest Cochrane Review finds high certainty evidence that nicotine e-cigarettes are more effective than traditional nicotine-replacement therapy \(NRT\) in helping people quit smoking | Cochrane](#)

⁹ [ASH-Briefing Health-Inequalities.pdf](#)