

Fastfacts

Young people and tobacco

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It is children who start smoking, not adults

- on average 36 children under sixteen start smoking in Scotland every day
 - 7% of 15 year olds and 2% of 13 year olds are regular smokers
 - two-thirds of adult smokers in the UK say they started smoking regularly before the age of 18, while two-fifths say they started before the age of 16
 - many individual, environmental and social factors influence a young person's decision to smoke or not smoke
 - if a child's parents smoke they are three times more likely to smoke themselves
 - very few adults start smoking, 99% of first cigarette use occurs by the age of 26
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Young people's health

- smoking causes nicotine addiction and people who start smoking at an early age find it more difficult to quit
 - smoking early in life has substantial short and long-term health risks which begin almost immediately, such as: early cardiovascular damage, reduced lung function, impaired lung growth and wheezing severe enough to be diagnosed as asthma
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Financial costs to young people

- tobacco has obvious financial costs as well as health costs for young smokers. A typical pack of 20 cigarettes costs £9.40
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The tobacco industry

- the tobacco industry cynically targeted young adults calling them 'replacement smokers'
- the tobacco industry claimed that advertising only encourages existing smokers to switch between brands but many years of research shows that the advertising and promotion of tobacco encourages young people to experiment with smoking, and increases their chances of becoming smokers.