

Fastfacts

Smoking and Poverty

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Tobacco and socioeconomic inequality

- people living in areas of multiple deprivation are more likely to smoke and less likely to quit smoking.
- one in three (34 per cent) adults in the 20 per cent most deprived areas in Scotland smoke cigarettes, significantly higher than 9 per cent of those in the 20 per cent least deprived areas.
- incidence of lung cancer is around three times higher in the 20% most deprived areas of Scotland than in the least deprived 20%
- almost half of adults who are unemployed and seeking work (46%) are current smokers
- almost half of adults who are permanently sick or disabled (48%) are current smokers, and smoking may be responsible for 12% of disability adjusted life years lost annually in the UK, representing a huge burden of ill-health and a reduction in quality of life
- smoking is linked to a wide variety of socioeconomic indicators, such as income, housing tenure and occupational status across the developed world, suggesting that tackling smoking and tackling poverty must go hand in hand
- two thirds of smokers in all socioeconomic groups want to quit, but those in more deprived groups are less likely to succeed.

Tobacco pricing and poverty

- the recommended retail price of the most commonly sold packet of 20 cigarettes in the UK is £9.40, according to the Tobacco Manufacturers' Association, with £6.91 being made up by taxation.
- half of recent increases in tobacco price stem not from Treasury tax policies but from the [tobacco industry's own price hikes](#)
- tobacco consumption is [strongly affected by price](#), so reducing the cost of tobacco would lead to increased consumption, and therefore greater harm to health
- reducing the smoking rate can help to tackle poverty: every 1% reduction in the smoking rate of the most deprived fifth of Scotland provides an extra £12.5 million in disposable income every year.

Tobacco and global poverty

- across the world, it is most often the poorest parts of the population that are most affected by tobacco, rather than the wealthier segments of society
- reducing tobacco consumption and production can also contribute to the elimination of poverty and hunger (UN Sustainable Development Goals 1 and 2)
- the consumption of tobacco products leads to more spending on medical treatment and care, and even to loss of income as a result of the inability to work. The death of the main wage earner also increases the risk of poverty for the entire family.