

Exploring Youth Workers Views on Tackling Tobacco: Our 2016 Survey Findings

FINDINGS

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. SMOKING RATES

➡ Youth and community workers (YCW's) **perception of smoking rates in their settings was higher than national average figures** collected in schools. Estimations varied greatly by type of organisation.



➡ We need research to accurately investigate smoking rates in out of school youth groups and early school leaver programmes. This would inform youth smoking prevention and cessation work in these settings.

2. NEED

➡ Almost **8 out of 10 YCW's** felt that there is a **high/very high need** for smoking prevention and smoking cessation work in their organisation.

➡ Some YCW's said that their organisation does not address tobacco as they **prioritise supporting young people to address other serious issues**.



➡ We need consultation, training and innovative opportunities within the youth health promotion sector:

- > To understand how we can meet this expressed need effectively.
- > To keep tobacco on the agenda for youth organisations and link it in with other areas of need (mental health, physical activity, nutrition, drug prevention, youth participation, life skills).
- > To target inequalities and denormalise smoking in youth settings by addressing perceived barriers.

3. TRAINING

➡ Only **3 in 10 YCW's** were aware of smoking prevention/cessation training and slightly less have attended training.

➡ YCW's that have attending training and respondents from **organisations that have taken part in the Irish Cancer Society X-HALE initiative reported higher confidence** in their ability to address tobacco prevention, smoking cessation and to empower young people to communicate messages about smoking.



➡ We need more research on the youth smoking prevention/cessation training and programmes currently being provided to build the evidence base.

4. TOBACCO FREE POLICIES

➡ Almost **6 in 10 YCW's** said that a tobacco free policy was in place in their organisation.

➡ Organisations that had taken part in **X-HALE were more likely to have a smoke free policy in place**.

➡ Some YCW's said that their organisation has a policy **because they are committed to protecting and promoting the health of staff and young people**.

➡ Other YCW's said that their organisation doesn't have a policy because there is a **perception that some young people may not engage with their service if smoking within the grounds was not allowed**. Others expressed concern about duty of care and behavioural issues if young people were off site smoking.



➡ We need research, training and support to explore these concerns, address barriers and support youth organisations in implementing tobacco free policies.

5. SUPPORT SERVICES

➡ There were **low percentages of YCW's that reported referring young people to support** for smoking prevention/cessation via phone services (31%), website information (33), social media pages (14%) and in person services (31%).

➡ YCW's whose organisation had **taken part in X-HALE were more likely to refer** young people to smoking prevention/cessation support services.



➡ We need to explore the reasons for low referral with research on young people's usage and attitudes to tobacco prevention/cessation support services.

➡ We need targeted training, information and opportunities for the youth sector to raise awareness of currently available supports and increase signposting.