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## Smoke-free Scouting

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**This page looks at the issues that smoking raises in Scouting, both for adults and young people. The Scout Association's Safety Policy relates to smoking, provides some facts and offers guidance.**

Thanks to hard-hitting government advertising and prominent health warnings on cigarette packs, many people are now more aware of the harmful effects of smoking.

The guidance is not about the rights and wrongs of smoking, but aims instead to offer information to help Scout leadership teams. It is hoped that this will allow you to make sensible and informed decisions at all times.

### Legislation

During 2006 and 2007, new legislation came into force around the UK to ban smoking in public places.

'Virtually all enclosed public places and workplaces will be smoke free. This means that it is a ban on smoking in all indoor parts of places such as pubs, bars, nightclubs, cafes and restaurants, lunchrooms, meeting rooms and leisure centres.'

This includes Scout buildings, Scout huts, Minibuses etc. It also includes marquees and tents at outdoor events. A risk assessment will probably show that it is not advised to smoke in these areas anyway.

Signs need to be placed on the main access points into buildings and in vehicles. These are detailed on the various government websites detailed later.

### Electronic cigarettes

Although smoking an electronic cigarette is not illegal, Scouting strives to provide role models for young people. In this instance it is recommended that the smoking of an electronic cigarette device in front of young people, just the same as traditional cigarettes are not smoked in front of young people.

Smokers may argue that young people are not in danger from passive smoking so it's ok to smoke. However, taking into account adults must be role models, the behaviour that adults display by smoking such as in front of young people is not acceptable.

Research has shown (Bates 2003) that young people are influenced by adults and their behaviour. They often copy at their own conduct and consider would I smoke traditional cigarettes in the same way that I am seeing others do.

We would like to commend anyone trying to give up smoking as we recognise that it brings many benefits. If anyone needs further advice or support the Scout association recognised organisation such as [www.givingupsmoking.co.uk](http://www.givingupsmoking.co.uk) (<http://www.givingupsmoking.co.uk/>)

### Leading by example

As an adult in Scouting, you are a role model for the young people in your care. Young people are often influenced by adults' behaviour – especially that of those whom they respect.

One of the most effective ways of helping young people to develop is to allow them to learn by demonstrating a particular skill and in turn will expect a young person to learn the skill. If a young person may copy in their desire to be 'grown up'.

### **The Scout Association's Policy**

The Scout Association has a key policy which requires Scouting to be provided in a safe manner reasonably practicable (Policy, Organisation and Rules, The Scout Association). For further detail Policy please see Policy, Organisation and Rules, Chapter 2, Page 3.

### **Adults and smoking**

There are currently about 10 million adult cigarette smokers in the UK and another three million (Ash.org.uk; 2013, Great Britain). In Scouting, we understand that our adult leaders and members recognise that people have a choice. Ideally, we would like members to stop smoking but when their time on a voluntary basis, we have to be careful what restrictions we impose. We must also ensure smokers have rights and choices too.

Getting the balance between those who do and those who don't is the difficult part.

### **Passive smoking**

The majority of adults who choose to smoke are aware of the harmful effect of smoking, and with campaigning many adults and young people are now aware of the harmful effect of passive or second-hand smoke. If adults don't like smoking, then they can make a decision about the environment they are in and whether they are a smoker. An eight-year-old Cub Scout however, is much less likely to voice their opinion.

### **Coping with young people who smoke**

At some time, as an adult in Scouting, you will come across young people who choose to smoke. As adults we can deal with young people who smoke, but the ultimate aim should be to support and inform them of the effect of smoking on themselves and others.

A young person can legally smoke when they are aged 18. Sometimes we will come across young people who choose to smoke. We must treat these young people the same as any other young person in the rest of the group.

Please note that the following is guidance only. It should be used as a basis for your own local rules and guidance as further points of discussion, between a leadership team.

The law now ensures that all Scouting premises are smoke free. This includes premises, which are buildings on campsites. It is important that no leader smokes around young people.

Not only does smoking around young people subject them to passive smoking, but it also encourages them to refrain from smoking during a section meeting. The majority of section meetings run for two hours and it is not always possible to refrain from smoking for such a short period of time. No leader who smokes should be expected to attend events that last longer than a couple of hours.

They should however be expected to deal with this in a sensible manner. The smoker should make sure they do not expose an adult or young person to their smoke, i.e. on a weekend camp a leader who smokes should arrange to be away from young people. Great care should be taken on camp, especially around tents and in work areas.

Remember, leaders lead by example. Any young person over the age of 18 who smokes should be treated as adults. Smoking around their peers is not acceptable. When dealing with a young person under 18, it is important that you help the young person, to deal with their smoking. Sometimes you may need to communicate with the parents.

As a leader it is unacceptable to allow young people (under 18) to smoke while in your care.

The key to these guidance points is common sense. We all have a responsibility to make sure we provide a safe environment. The well-being of the young people in Scouting is paramount and we must ensure they are not subjected to tobacco smoke. This also applies to anyone who does not wish to be subjected to tobacco smoke.

### **Some common sense advice**

- Don't offer cigarettes, tobacco products, electronic cigarette or patches to young people
- Don't smoke or use electronic cigarettes in buildings used by young people, Smoking in buildings using electronic smoking devices in buildings gives young people mixed messages
- There should be restrictions on smoking in and around Scouting premises and events.
- All leaders and adult helpers should be actively discouraged from smoking around young people
- Consider giving up – people will support you!

### **Get help to stop smoking**

There are many reasons for giving up smoking, not least the cost to your pocket and your health.

To get help to stop smoking and to read about people who have managed it, visit:

[www.quit.org.uk](http://www.quit.org.uk) (<http://www.quit.org.uk>)

[www.givingupsmoking.co.uk](http://www.givingupsmoking.co.uk) (<http://www.givingupsmoking.co.uk>)

Scotland

[www.clearingtheairscotland.com](http://www.clearingtheairscotland.com) (<http://www.clearingtheairscotland.com>)

Wales

[www.smokingbanwales.co.uk](http://www.smokingbanwales.co.uk) (<http://www.smokingbanwales.co.uk>)

Northern Ireland

[www.spacetobreathe.org.uk](http://www.spacetobreathe.org.uk) (<http://www.spacetobreathe.org.uk>)

England

[www.smokefreeengland.co.uk](http://www.smokefreeengland.co.uk) (<http://www.smokefreeengland.co.uk>)