

## Smokefree England factsheet

### BUSINESS RESEARCH

The Department of Health undertook a series of surveys to measure businesses' awareness of smokefree law, levels of support and understanding of the details of the legislation as well as the expected impact on their business. To date, there have been six waves of research conducted in August 2006 and in January, February, May, June and August 2007. All research was conducted by Continental Research.

The most recent wave was conducted on Continental Research's regular telephone omnibus amongst small, medium and large businesses, amongst a sample of 455 businesses, similar to June (462). In May, 700 businesses were interviewed on an adhoc basis, with the sample matched to the profile achieved in February (692), which included booster interviews in Manufacturing, Transport & Communications and Pub sectors. The research in January was on Continental's regular business omnibus among a sample of 449 and the research in August 06 included booster interviews in the hospitality sector, with a sample of 501.

The sample composition is thus slightly different each wave, but all waves are weighted to be representative of the 1,084,000 companies in England with a turnover of £50,000+ as estimated by the DTI.

#### Key findings:

##### 9 out of 10 businesses are aware of smokefree law

- Awareness of the smoking legislation has increased steadily from just over half (57%) of the business population in August 2006 up to 73% in January 2007, 77% in February, 89% in May, 96% in June and 92% this August.
- Prior to the law being introduced, businesses' awareness of the July 1st date for the introduction of the law also increased dramatically, standing at 93% spontaneous awareness in June (up from 68% in May 07, 44% in Feb 07 and 35% in Jan 07).

##### 98% say they are fully compliant

- In August, 98% of businesses said they were fully compliant with the law and 87% thought that implementation of the new law had gone well.
- In June, 95% of businesses believed they were already compliant, or would be by July 1st (similar to May and February results).
- Over 79% of businesses said they were displaying the new no-smoking signs in August, compared with a third of companies in June.
- 97% of businesses with work vehicles and 95% with company cars said that either all vehicles or those used by more than one person are smokefree.

- In August, over three quarters of businesses said they had taken specific action to comply with the legislation, with over half having informed or trained staff.
- The number of businesses with a no-smoking policy in place prior to July 1st rose to 56% in June, up from 44% in August 2006.

### **78% support smokefree**

- 78% of businesses said they think the smokefree law is a 'good idea' – only 7% said it was a 'bad idea' (question added in June 07: 78%/11%).
- This is consistent with August 2006 research, when 79% of businesses said they would support a law which made all workplaces smokefree.
- The research in August 2006 asked businesses about their attitude to smokefree and found:
  - 91% of businesses said they agreed with the statement "people at work have the right not to breathe in other workers' smoke"
  - 91% said they agreed that other people's cigarette smoke harms non-smokers
  - 71% agreed that secondhand smoke can cause heart disease in non-smokers.
- Fewer businesses predicted a positive impact on staff health in May compared with Aug 06, with more saying there would be no change. This is likely to be due in part to the increased number of businesses to have introduced a no-smoking policy over this period of time. Only 2% predicted a negative impact.
- When asked about the effect on the company of creating a smokefree workplace, the general pattern of responses throughout all waves of research was around a quarter saying it would have a positive impact, two thirds saying it would make no difference and a small minority saying it would have a negative impact.

### **93% said enough information made available to help prepare for smokefree**

- In August, 93% of businesses said they felt that enough information had been made available to help them prepare for smokefree law (up from 86% in June).
- In June, 81% of businesses had "no concerns" about the legislation, including 88% of the hospitality trade. This is consistent with expectations in August 2006, when 89% of businesses said they thought implementing smokefree legislation would be easy.
- By June, the vast majority of businesses understood that enclosed workplaces (87%) and enclosed public places (84%) would be affected by the new law – a slight increase from 81% in May 07.

### **91% believe the new law is being obeyed**

- In August, 91% of businesses said they think the new law is being obeyed.
- Prior to the introduction of the law, 87% of businesses said the law will be enforced, with 80% believing the council/local authority would enforce the law, 64% said workers in the workplace and 51% said members of the public.
- Understanding of the offences was also high, with 96% knowing that it would be an offence to smoke in a public place/workplace, 86% knew it was an offence if a business failed to prevent smoking in a smokefree place and 81% knew that failing to display no-smoking signs would be an offence.