



## **Press Release**

### **Middle-Aged People Now Smoke More Than Young Adults**

- **Smoking can double the cost of life insurance, due to increased health risks**
- **Those who quit in January 2021 could potentially nearly halve the cost of their premiums**
- **For the first time, the proportion of smokers is highest among 45 to 54-year-olds (24%) rather than those aged between 25-34 (20%)**

January is a time when many people set new health goals, and those that smoke might decide that this year they will give up the bad habit once and for all. If you're a smoker considering quitting, you could be further incentivised knowing that those who successfully quit smoking in January 2021 may be able to avail of substantially reduced life insurance premiums, say experts at Royal London. New figures from the leading protection specialist highlight how much of a difference smoking can make to the cost of life cover; smokers can expect to pay around twice as much for life insurance when compared with non-smokers.

Statistics from the Healthy Ireland Survey 2021\* show that the smoking habits of people in Ireland have changed, with less people lighting up compared to five years ago. Overall, the number of smokers in Ireland has dropped by 5% - from 23% in 2016 to 18% in 2021. Of those that do smoke, the report shows that more are trying to kick the expensive, unhealthy habit. 44% of people who smoked in the 12 months before the survey attempted to quit, and 29% of current smokers were either trying to quit or actively planning to do so.

Karen Gallagher, Interim Head of Proposition at Royal London, commented,

*“Each year thousands of people throughout Ireland aim to give up smoking, with the beginning of a new year seen by many as the perfect time to jumpstart their health goals. While we all know that quitting smoking isn't easy, the Healthy Ireland report shows the prevalence of smoking in Ireland is reducing as more people successfully go tobacco-free. Beyond the physical health advantages of this, people can reap significant financial benefits too. It's common enough to hear stories of people saving up the money from not buying cigarettes over a year and motivating themselves by allocating it towards a car or holiday. But a less commonly-known motivational factor is the thousands in savings that can potentially be made on their life cover.”*

Recent cost analysis from Royal London reveals the difference in premiums paid between non-smokers and smokers.

### Royal London Cost Analysis

#### Level Term Assurance Life Cover of €300,000 ^

Age	Term (years)	Monthly premium non-smoker	Monthly premium smoker	Savings over 25-year term
35	25	€24.58	€44.80	€6,066.00
45	25	€54.78	€115.71	€18,279.00

#### Specified Serious Illness Cover of €300,000 ^

Age	Term (years)	Monthly premium non-smoker	Monthly premium smoker	Savings over 25-year term
35	25	€114.39	€188.45	€22,218.00
45	25	€278.78	€506.72	€68,382.00

Speaking about the cost analysis, Ms. Gallagher said,

*“The price differential here is quite substantial. Our experience is that, while many people expect smokers to pay more in premiums, many don’t realise how much more it adds up to over the lifetime of the policy. For example, a smoker turning 45 on their next birthday will pay over €18,000 more in premiums than a non-smoker will for €300,000 worth of Level Term Life Cover over a 25-year period. The same smoker can expect to pay over €68,000 more than a non-smoker for a Specified Serious Illness policy worth €300,000 over a 25-year term.*

*“These striking cost savings on life insurance are another reason to stop smoking, in addition to the obvious list of health benefits. While Ireland is a recognised global leader when it comes to tobacco control, smoking is the leading cause of avoidable death in this country. This is according to the HSE\*\* who say that one in every two smokers will die from a tobacco-related disease, and nearly 6,000 people die in Ireland each year from smoking-related illnesses.”*

The Healthy Ireland Survey 2021\* also found for the first time that 45 to 54-year-olds are the most likely age group (24%) to smoke, with an increase of 6% since 2019. Meanwhile, the rates of smoking among 25 to 34-year-olds (20%) have declined by 6% since 2019. This is the age group with the highest prevalence of smoking in each previous survey.

Ms. Gallagher finished by saying,

*“The overall trend of less people smoking is a positive one, particularly when it means reducing numbers of young people are making it a habit. It shows that the Government’s campaigns to reduce the number of people smoking seem to be working.*

*“If you’re someone who successfully gave up smoking more than 12 months ago and already have life cover in place, you could potentially get a reduction in the cost of your policy premiums. If you’re an ex-smoker, we recommend that you get in touch with your Financial Broker to see if you can avail of cheaper rates and start saving money on your life insurance policy.”*

If you wish to be re-categorised as a non-smoker for life insurance purposes, you must not have used any tobacco products in the last 12 months and have no intention to use any in the future. This includes e-cigarettes and nicotine replacement products such as patches or chewing gum. As well as providing some health-related information, it’s possible that your insurance provider may ask you to complete a cotinine test (smoker test). This is a simple test which involves screening a sample of saliva or urine for tobacco use.

**ENDS**

**Sources:**

\*Healthy Ireland Survey, 2021 – <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/9ef45-the-healthy-ireland-survey-2021/>

The HSE’s Healthy Ireland Survey 2021 reports that while 18% of Irish people smoke - 20% of men are smokers and 17% of women - the overall prevalence of smoking has declined from 23% in 2016. For the first time ever, the age group with the highest prevalence of smokers is 45-54-year-olds, at 24%. Smoking among 25–34-year-olds stands at 20% - a significant reduction from the 2019 results (26%). The report shows that 29% of current smokers are either trying to quit, or actively planning to do so, and that 27% of those who attempted to quit smoking in the previous 12 months were successful.

\*\*HSE, Smoking, The Facts

<https://www2.hse.ie/wellbeing/quit-smoking/reasons-to-quit-smoking/smoking-facts-and-figures.html>

^Bestadvice.ie as at 17/12/2021.

Figures are subject to Royal London’s €15.15 minimum premium.

Age refers to age next birthday. Sum assured in each case €300,000.

## **Notes to the Editor:**

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Royal London's Irish office is based at 47-49 St Stephen's Green, Dublin 2.

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