

## **Plain language summary**

### **What is this summary about?**

This is a plain language summary of a National Cancer Registry report called 'Tobacco-Related Cancers in Ireland'. The report provides detailed information about tobacco-related cancers in Ireland.

### **What are tobacco-related cancers?**

These are cancers that can be caused by tobacco smoking. These include cancers of the nose, mouth, voice box, throat, food pipe, lung, breast, liver, stomach, kidney, pancreas, bowel, ovary, bladder, cervix, and bone marrow.

### **Why is this important?**

Smoking is the biggest avoidable cause of cancer. Despite fewer people smoking in Ireland than ever before, tobacco smoking remains a major cause of cancer. The population in Ireland is growing and the average age of people who live in Ireland is increasing. Together, these trends mean that the number of cancer cases expected by 2045 will likely be much

higher than they are now. As there can be a long gap between tobacco-smoking and a person being diagnosed with cancer, it is very important to further reduce the number of people who smoke in Ireland now in order to reduce the number of new cases of cancer which will be diagnosed in Ireland in the coming decades.

### **What data did we use?**

This report uses data collected by the National Cancer Registry in Ireland (NCRI). The NCRI has been collecting data on every new case of cancer since 1994. NCRI data are used by government leaders, scientists and healthcare workers to understand and manage how cancer affects our communities and find ways to reduce its impact.

### **What work was carried out?**

We wanted to understand whether there had been a change in the number of new cases of tobacco-related cancers diagnosed between 1994 and 2022, and whether there had been a change in the number of deaths from tobacco-related cancers. We then looked at whether tobacco-related cancers were more common among people living in areas with higher

levels of social disadvantage in Ireland. We also looked at how many people survive for five years following their cancer diagnosis and whether this changed over time. Finally, we looked at the number and what proportion of all cancer cases in Ireland were caused by tobacco-smoking in 2022.

### **What were the key results?**

Smoking caused over 3,750 new cancer cases in 2022. This means that, on average in 2022, 10 people each day in Ireland were diagnosed with a cancer that was caused by tobacco-smoking.

We found that there has been some progress in reducing the number of people being diagnosed with, and the number of people dying from, tobacco-related cancers. Of the types of cancer that can be caused by tobacco-smoking we found that in recent years:

- New cancer diagnoses for most tobacco-related cancer types decreased or stayed the same.

- Deaths from most tobacco-related cancer types decreased or stayed the same.
- Five-year survival for most tobacco-related cancer types increased.

Between 2014 and 2018, tobacco-related cancers such as lung cancer, laryngeal (voice box) cancer and cervical cancer were diagnosed more often in people living in areas of Ireland with higher levels of social disadvantage.

### **What do the results of the study mean?**

While there has been some progress in reducing the burden of tobacco-related cancers in Ireland, tobacco-smoking remains the leading preventable cause of cancer in Ireland. Those who are living in areas with higher levels of social disadvantage are more likely to be affected by tobacco-related cancers. Policies which focus on reducing the numbers of people smoking and help to prevent people starting to smoke in the first place are effective ways to reduce smoking in the population. Health services should ensure that all those seeking to quit smoking can get the

help they need. These measures are important to reduce the future burden of tobacco-related cancer in Ireland.