

Tallaght, Drogheda have highest level of illicit cigarettes - survey

Research finds a third of packets in Dublin suburb are non-domestic



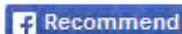
Some 5,000 discarded cigarette packets were collected from streets and easy access bins of 22 towns. Photograph: Jonathan Brady/PA Wire

Genevieve Carbery

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Tallaght and Drogheda have highest levels of “illicit” cigarette consumption at almost a third, according to the results of a nationwide survey released today.

Some 5,000 discarded cigarette packets were collected from streets and bins across 22 towns in research carried out by marketing company MS intelligence whose major clients include the tobacco industry. The survey was carried out for the National Federation of Retail Newsagents in [Ireland](#).

On average, over a quarter of the discarded cigarette packets (28 per cent) surveyed were non-domestic and not taxed in the State, the survey found. The lowest levels of non-domestic cigarette packets were found in Clonmel (19.6 per cent).

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Areas with the highest incidence were Drogheda (32.8 per cent), Tallaght in Dublin (32.8 per cent) and Athlone (32.4 per cent). Levels in Dublin city were 27.4 per cent, Swords was 25 per cent while Dun Laoghaire was 22.6 per cent. Tallaght showed a rise of 4 percentage points since the last survey was carried out six months ago, the federation said.










The packets collected were “non-domestic and had no Irish duty paid stamp on them and so were illegal”, the federation said. Federation president [Joe Sweeney](#) accepted that some could have been brought into the State by holidaymakers returning from abroad. However, he believed people were bringing in cigarettes “far in excess of what they need” and using them to “pay for their holiday” by selling to friends and relations.

Mr Sweeney said the scale of the illegal cigarette trade was “destroying local jobs”. Retailers depended “heavily on legal tobacco sales to also drive additional purchases”, he said.

Mr Sweeney said despite some high profile seizures Revenue was only “scratching the surface”. He urged the Government to prioritise a crackdown on illegal trade by giving market and street selling of tobacco “far stiffer penalties”. The survey was carried out between April and June by MS Intelligence

A report by Italian-based researchers Transcrime last week found that Ireland has the third highest rate of tobacco smuggling in [Europe](#), estimated at between 13 per cent and 29 per cent of all tobacco products.

Earlier this month, some 10.4 million cigarettes were seized by customs officers at Dublin Port after arriving on a container shipped from Rotterdam.

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