

Breaking new ground: findings from the 2025 ASH survey of local tobacco control

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March 2026

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ASH receives funding from:

- Cancer Research UK
- British Heart Foundation

Overview

- Findings from the twelfth annual ASH survey of local tobacco control.
- Based on a survey of local authorities in England with responsibility for public health carried out between August and September 2025. 127 (84%) of local authorities responded.
- **New government investment has delivered expanded stop smoking services that are working hard to reach smokers in all communities and reduce health inequalities.**

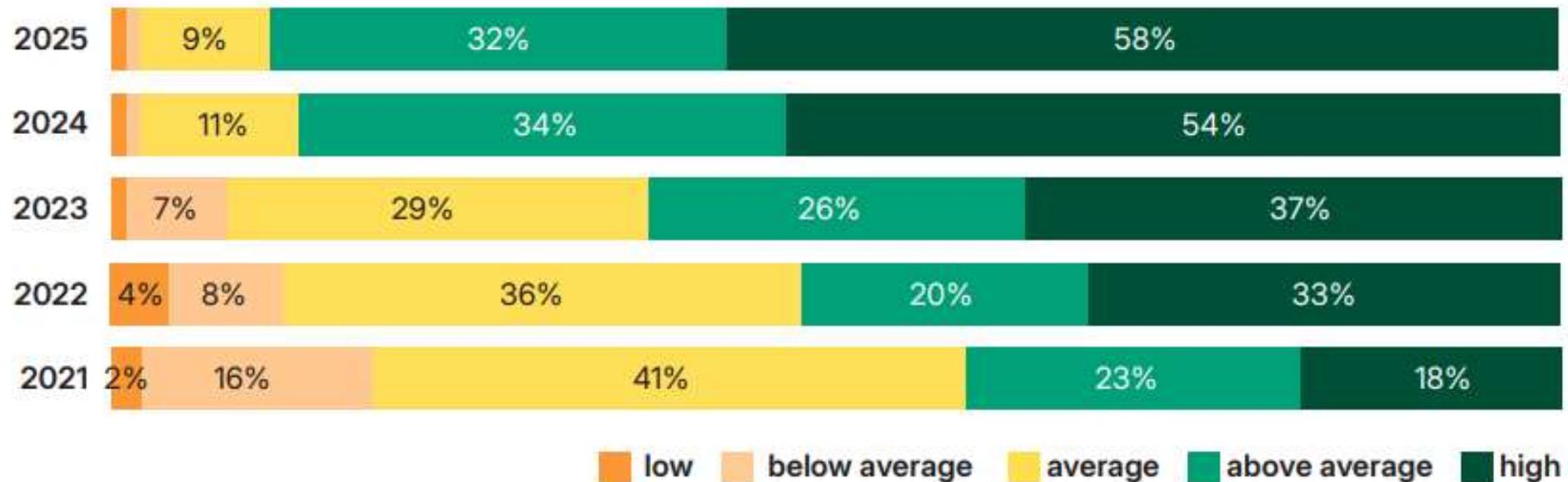


Key findings

1. Tobacco control was a high priority in the majority of local authorities
2. The increase in the Local Stop Smoking Services and Support Grant has resulted in a big expansion of stop smoking services
3. Stop smoking services are reaching out to deprived, marginalised and vulnerable communities as never before
4. Treatment options for smokers have improved markedly
5. The Swap to Stop programme has delivered many positive outcomes
6. Local authority and NHS stop smoking services are not fully integrated in many areas
7. Local authorities continue to invest in wider tobacco control work

High priority

Figure 3. Change in priority of tobacco in local authorities in England, 2021-2025.



- Tobacco control is a higher priority than **ever** before.
- Driven by new stop smoking service funding and Tobacco and Vapes Bill.

Expanded services and rising demand

- **All** surveyed local authorities now commission or provide stop smoking services, with 86% increasing adviser capacity and many **doubling** their capacity.
- Demand for stop smoking services **increased** in 84% of local authorities and fell in only 6%. Driven by:

- local, regional and national communication campaigns
- community outreach and engagement
- an increase in the capacity of services including new providers and partners
- improved community referral pathways and the Smokefree app
- an increase in referrals from NHS services
- Swap to Stop and the offer of vapes
- improved treatment options
- an expansion of training in Very Brief Advice (VBA)

Reaching disadvantaged groups

- The number of settings where stop smoking services are provided **increased** in 83% of local authorities.

An increase in advisors has enabled the service to offer more settings, including libraries and council buildings. In addition, we have our pilot in 4 community centres. We are currently setting up a clinic at our Independent Living Centre which serves people with mental health problems, physical disability and learning disability.

London Borough of Camden

GP surgeries, family hubs, Routine and Manual workplaces (factories such as Amazon), social housing providers.

Durham County Council

We now take stop smoking services to venues where people are already accessing services, such as food banks, homeless organisations and job centres.

Wiltshire Council

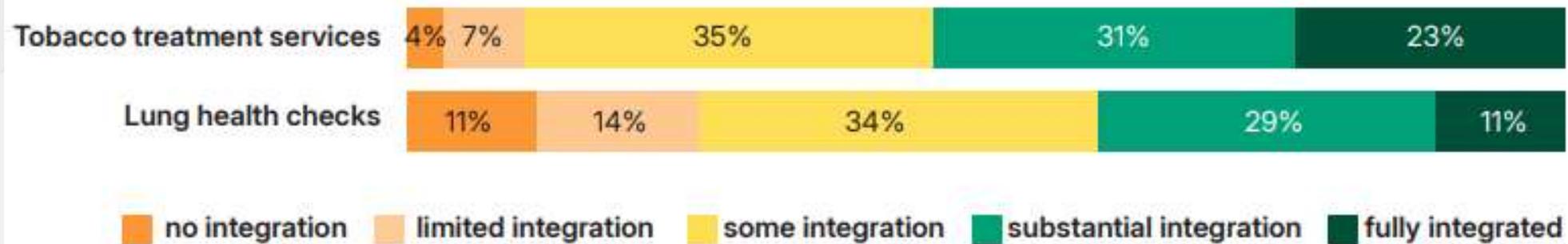
- Community centres, shopping centres, libraries, leisure centres and job centres
- Family hubs and community wellbeing hubs
- Workplaces including factories and construction sites
- Drug and alcohol services
- GP surgeries, pharmacies and dentists
- Community mental health services
- Emergency departments
- Social housing
- Specific settings for asylum seekers and homeless people
- Food banks
- Vape shops

Improved treatment choices

- 71% of stop smoking services offered **varenicline**, up from 38% in 2024. 47% offer **cytisine**, up from 30% in 2024.
- Vapes are provided by virtually all (98%) of services.
- 97% of local authorities participate in the Swap to Stop programme, offering free vapes and **boosting quit rates** among those least likely to access traditional support. Benefits cited include:
 - Increased quit attempts and quit rates
 - More choice for service users
 - **Popular with service users**, particularly the most disadvantaged
 - Alternative for those who don't want to access the service or other treatment
 - Zero cost to service users
 - Simpler to deliver than other treatment option

Integration with NHS services

Figure 4. Integration of NHS services with community stop smoking services in England, 2025



- Integration has been limited by the **financial uncertainty** affecting TDTS.
- Respondents described an **increase** in referrals from NHS TDTS.

Investing in wider tobacco control

- Local authorities are investing in **wider tobacco control** work such as illicit tobacco and vape enforcement (94%), public communications campaigns on smoking (90%) and work to promote smokefree homes (41%).

We have recently launched East Riding's Smokefree Homes Reward Scheme to help support and encourage pregnant smokers to quit as well as supporting a member of their household, who also smokes, to quit. By meeting key milestones on their quit journey, they can earn points which can be spent in shops, local businesses and leisure centres, or donated to charity.

East Riding of Yorkshire Council

Our local authority supported the South East London public communications campaign, which promoted the Smokefree app and local stop smoking services. The campaign aimed to raise awareness of local accessible support, encourage setting quit dates and quit attempts, and reduce smoking inequalities. It included digital outreach and targeted social media messaging.

London Borough of Bexley

Ending on a high note

Thanks to the additional funding, Birmingham has been able to extend stop smoking support into a wider range of settings. This includes integration within existing drug and alcohol services, provision of support in mental health settings—both inpatient and community—and increased outreach within the wider community. These developments have enabled us to reach more individuals in need of support, particularly those in vulnerable or underserved groups.

Birmingham City Council

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