

Sharon Hodgson MP
Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State
for Public Health and Prevention
Department of Health
39 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0EU

22nd May 2026

Dear Minister,

Re: Call to develop a national plan to reduce smoking that prioritises action on mental health inequalities

We are writing as professionals working across mental health, public health and tobacco control to urge the Government to publish a roadmap to a smokefree country which puts people with mental health conditions at the centre of efforts to reduce smoking-related inequalities.

Smoking remains the leading cause of preventable illness and premature death in the UK, yet its burden falls disproportionately on those with poor mental health. As the new report from the Mental Health and Smoking Partnership shows, smoking rates among this population are up to four times higher than in the general population, driving stark and avoidable health inequalities. Despite overall progress in reducing smoking prevalence, people with mental health conditions are at risk of being left behind.

While we welcome the introduction of quit support for people in acute mental health settings, the 1.5 million people in Great Britain with depression and anxiety who smoke have been largely overlooked. For this group, access to tailored stop smoking support is fragmented and inconsistent, resulting in a postcode lottery that undermines efforts to reduce health inequalities.

There are promising examples of innovation across the country, demonstrating what can be achieved through strong partnerships, targeted support, and a commitment to reducing inequalities. However, these approaches remain uneven and are not yet being delivered at the scale required to achieve population-level impact.

The Government must play its part by developing a roadmap to a smokefree country which puts people with poor mental health front and centre. This should explicitly address the needs of people with mental health conditions and include measurable targets and accountability for reducing inequalities.

The Government has made welcome progress through the passage of the Tobacco and Vapes Act and increased investment in stop smoking services. Now is the time to think bigger and be more ambitious to ensure that everyone, regardless of their mental health, can live a smokefree life.

Yours sincerely,

Mark Rowland, Chief Executive, Mental Health Foundation

Dr Ed Beveridge, Presidential Lead, Physical Health at the Royal College of Psychiatrists

Sarah Sleet, Chief Executive Officer, Asthma + Lung UK

Andy Bell, Chief Executive, Centre for Mental Health

William Roberts, Chief Executive Officer, Royal Society for Public Health

Andy McEwen, Chief Executive, National Centre for Smoking Cessation and Training (NCSCT)

Dr Charmaine Griffiths, Chief Executive, British Heart Foundation

Professor Tracy Daszkiewicz, President, Faculty of Public Health

Dr Alison Wright, President, Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists

Hazel Cheeseman, Chief Executive, ASH

Dr Claire Shannon, President, Royal College of Anaesthetists

Professor Nicholas Hopkinson, Professor of Respiratory Medicine, Imperial College London

Professor Ann McNeill, CBE, Emeritus Professor of Tobacco Addiction, Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology & Neuroscience, King's College London

Professor Sanjay Agrawal, Special Adviser on Tobacco, Royal College of Physicians

Anthony Hassall, Chief Executive, Pennine Care NHS Foundation Trust

Chris Oliver, Chief Executive, Lancashire & South Cumbria NHS Foundation Trust

Professor Manisha Kumar, Chief Clinical Officer, NHS Greater Manchester

Dr J Robert Branston, Co-Director, Tobacco Control Research Group, Centre for 21st Century Public Health, University of Bath

Dr Allen Gallagher, Co-Director, Tobacco Control Research Group, Centre for 21st Century Public Health, University of Bath

Professor Matthew Hotopf CBE FMedSci, Executive Dean, Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology & Neuroscience, King's College London

John McKernaghan, Chief Executive Officer, Brunswick Centre

John Gilbert, Chief Executive Officer, Eski

Professor Jamie Brown, Director UCL Tobacco & Alcohol Research Group, UCL

Professor Andy Knox MBE, Medical Director, NHS Lancashire and South Cumbria ICB

Dr Helen Walters, Vice-Chair of ASH, Action on Smoking and Health

Professor Matt Evison, Chest Physician, MFT / Co-Chair, GM Make Smoking History Alliance / Associate Medical Director, GM Cancer Alliance /, GM Make Smoking History Alliance

Dr Rebecca Fletcher, Co-chair of the GM Make Smoking History Alliance, Lead DPH for MSH

Paul Lambert, Head of Services, Yorkshire Cancer Research

Andrea Crossfield MBE, Population Health and Policy Consultant, Cheshire and Merseyside Public Health Collaborative

John Moxham, Emeritus Professor of Respiratory Medicine, KCL

Dr Hannah Walsh, Researcher, King's College London

Dr John Moore, Mental Health Lead & Consultant Forensic Psychiatrist, British Medical Association

Hannah Sharpe, Senior Manager of Campaigns, Bite Back

John Waldron, Policy and Public Affairs Manager, ASH

Rachel Maynard, Senior Policy Officer, ASH

Alison Patey, Director of Public Health, Hull City Council

Mike Hardy, Public Health Principal, North East Lincolnshire Council

Hannah Buckland, Senior Public Health Officer - Tobacco Control, London Borough of Hounslow

Alina Mackenzie, Head of Prevention - Population Health, NHS Hampshire & Isle of Wight Integrated Care Board

Kate McBride, Physical Health and Wellbeing Lead, Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear Mental Health Trust

Sarah Harding, Lead Nurse Physical Health, Avon & Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust

Peter Terry, Smoke Free Lead, Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust

Charlotte Pedley, Health Improvement Advisor - Stop Smoking, Live Life Better Derbyshire

John Hutchinson, Consultant in Respiratory Medicine, Sherwood Forest Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Stephanie Duckworth Porras, Tobacco Dependence Specialist, Kings College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

Ailsa Rutter OBE, Director, Fresh and Balance

Caitlin Notley, Professor of Adduction Sciences, University of East Anglia

Nora Smith, Director of Policy, Research and External Engagement, Cancer Focus Northern Ireland

Merja Hart, Tobacco Dependency Lead, Oxleas NHSFT

Vicky Taylor, Acute Tobacco Dependency Service Lead, United Lincolnshire Hospitals Trust

Jaimee Wylam, Consultant in Public Health

Kirsty Adair, Sr Officer Community Health and Wellbeing, North Lincolnshire Council

Sarah Coogan-Hill, PH lead in Mental Health, Pennine care NHS foundation trust

Mathew Rowley, Public Health Officer, Stoke-on-Trent City Council

Emily Fazal, Specialist Stop Smoking Practitioner, Living Well Smokefree North Yorkshire Council

Andy Simpson, Public Health and Personalised Care Manager, Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust

Darran Faulkner, Tobacco Dependency Treatment Service Team Manager, TEWV

Tobi Owootomo, Senior Practitioner - Smoking Cessation, Guys and St. Thomas NHS

Lea Oultram, Smoking Cessation Advisor, Brio Wellbeing Chester and Cheshire West

Gareth Spooner, Public Health Development Manager, Portsmouth City Council

Priti Gohil, Public Health Manager, Kirklees Council

Helen Wootton, Healthy Lives Advisor, Public Health, Shropshire Council

Lobna Begum-Haris, Health Improvement Officer, Be Well Tameside, Public Health, TMBC

Jenny Houlihan, Tobacco Dependency Lead, North East London Foundation Trust

Stephanie Law, Strategic Business Support, Solutions4Health

Sandra Johnson, Smokefree Practitioner, CHCP cic - St. Helens Wellbeing Service

Lorretta Mason, Tobacco Dependency Treatment Service Lead, Lincolnshire Partnership Foundation Trust

Jessica Cox, Smokefree Generation Officer, Merton Public Health

Kerry Copson, Community Development Manager, Ongo

Laura Colby, Public Health Manager, North Lincolnshire Council

Elena Ratschen, Reader in Health Services Research, University of York

Gayle Wilkinson, Community Matron, Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust

Shizana Arshad, Equally Well UK Lead, Equally Well UK

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Pamela Murray, Modern Matron, Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust

Abid Hussain, Regional Service Manager, Solutions4health Ltd

Jason Lupton, Community Mental Health SmokeFree Team Leader, Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

Emily Peckham, Researcher, Bangor University

Clare Stirling, Pathway Manager, Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust

Dejan Volf, Peer Supporter, Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust

Kristine Finnigan, Occupational Therapist, Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust

Josey Grant, Social Worker, Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust

Claire Tatton, Public Health Specialist, Torbay Council

Colin Addison, Head of Estates, NTW Solutions Ltd. (Subsidiary of Cumbria Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust)

Imtiaz Hussain, Public Health Administrator, Kirklees Public Health

Nadia Burman, Mental Health Nurse/Research Nurse, Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust

Tracy Boyd, CPN and Stop Smoking MH Nurse, Belfast Trust

Arun Gupta, Consultant Psychiatrist, Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust

Barbara Mcfadden, Nurse, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

Emma Sharp, Community Nurse LD, CNTW

Matt Greensmith, Consultant in Public Health, Hull City Council

Di Hurley, Smoking Cessation Advisor and Trainer, Central and NW London NHS FT

Derys Pragnell, Consultant Public Health and Chair of Oxfordshire Tobacco Control Alliance, Oxfordshire County Council

Sylvia Bilsby, Community Manager, Kingston Upon Hull City Council

Becky Pollard, Assistant Director of Public Health (Older Adults & Health Improvement), Birmingham City Council (as deputy chair of the Birmingham and Solihull Tobacco Control Alliance)

Will Adam, Health Improvement and Service Development Manager, Hull City Council

Kaylee Hopwood, Tobacco Dependency Treatment Support Delivery Lead, Northern Lincolnshire and Goole Trust

Glyn Newberry, Public Health Manager, City of York Council

Refia Yazar, Service Manager, Leeds Stop Smoking Service

Jacqueline Henderson, Development and Performance Manager, Rotherham Healthwave-Connect Healthcare

Selina Treuherz, Health Improvement Officer, Sheffield City Council

Adelle Lynch, Advanced Health Improvement Practitioner, Kirklees Council Public Health

Gareth Hubbard, Tobacco Dependency Advisor, Hull University Teaching Hospital

Connor Jeffries, Service Co-ordinator, Smokefree Oxon / Solutions 4 Health

Nezahat Onder, Stop Smoking Advisor, Solutions4Health

Georgia Ball, Healthy Lifestyle Coach, Solutions 4 Health

Sophie McMillan, Public Health Officer, North East Lincolnshire Council

Jessie Bye, Head of Service, Your Health Torbay, ABL Health

Maria Anderson, Transformation Project Manager, Mid Cheshire NHS Trust

Sreenath, Stop Smoking Advisor, Health Promotion Officer, Solution 4 Health ,NHS Oxford

Sophie Panghli, Public Health Improvement Officer - Tobacco Control, City of Doncaster Council

Kristin Ricci, Art Psychotherapist, Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust

Benjamin Adams, Stop Smoking Specialist, North Yorkshire Council

Rachael Gosling, Consultant in Public Health, NHSE North West

Dr Emma Pearce, Consultant in Public Health, West Yorkshire Mental Health, Learning Disability and Autism Programme

Ansaf Azhar, Director Public Health and Communities, Oxfordshire County Council

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Folasayo Oladejo, Senior Project Officer (Tobacco Control and Mental Health), Medway Council

Irem Patel, Consultant Respiratory Physician, Kings College Hospital, London

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Alex Major, ACP, Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust

Jubeen Ashraf, Senior Manager Prevention Health Inequalities, Thames Valley ICB

Amy Preece, Tobacco Dependency Advisor, Oxford University Hospital NHS foundation trust

Sam Wanmer, Treating Tobacco Dependency Lead, Avon & Wiltshire Mental health trust

Nicola Standing-Brown, Executive Committee Member, Primary Care Respiratory society

Linda Donaghy, Stop Smoking Advisor, North Yorkshire Council

Arran Woodhouse, Tobacco Dependence Lead, King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

Joanne Bellerby, Clinical Educator Maternity & Gynaecology, Doncaster & Bassetlaw Teaching NHS Foundation Trust

Lucy Sinfield, Midwife, Doncaster Royal Hospital

Lisa Hodgkinson, Stop Smoking Team Lead / Practitioner, City Health Care Partnership Cic , St Helens Wellbeing Service.

Kerry Apedaile, Specialist Service Manager Tobacco Dependence Treatment Service, Cumbria Northumberland Tyne and Wear Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust

Garreth Robinson, Senior Public Health Officer, Barnsley MBC

Stacy Awuor Ouma, Community Health Development Officer, West Oxfordshire District Council

Sarah Stevens, Youth Voice & Influence Service Manager, Sheffield City Council

Jenny Robertson, National Children and Young People's Development Lead, Change Grow Live

Abbie Kelly, PH Portfolio Lead, Darlington Borough Council

Julie Shaw, Mental Health Programme Manager, South Yorkshire ICB

Nicola Jay, Consultant Paediatrician, Sheffield Children's NHS Trust