

Falling through the cracks: Closing the gap in stop smoking support for people with common mental health conditions

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Falling through the cracks



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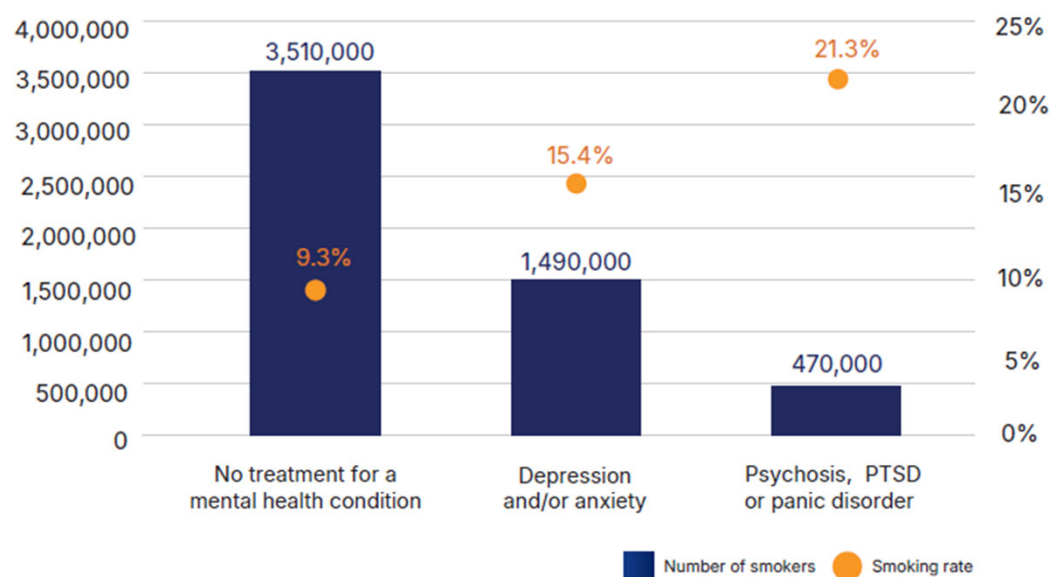
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Why this report?

Report aims

- Outline the current landscape of stop smoking support for people with common mental health conditions.
- Identify gaps in services, policy and data.
- Explore examples of promising practice.
- Develop recommendations for national government, the NHS, local authorities and the voluntary sector.

Figure 1 | Smoking prevalence among people being treated for mental health conditions in Britain



Report sources

- Roundtable discussions with local authorities, NHS services, academia and the voluntary sector
- Lived experience input
- Findings from the ASH/YouGov local authority stop smoking services survey
- Expert input from the Mental Health and Smoking Partnership

Key findings

People with common mental health conditions are falling through the cracks

- Around 1.5 million people in Britain with depression and anxiety smoke
- Current support remains inconsistent
- Promising examples of innovation exist but are not yet operating at scale
- National leadership and coordination are needed

Recommendations: National government and NHS

National government

- Publish a roadmap to a smokefree country with prioritises those with MH conditions
- Develop a national toolkit
- Fund wider rollout of support in NHS Talking Therapies
- Improve understanding of smoking and mental health through communications

NHS

- Reinstate national data collection on smoking among people with common mental health conditions
- Integrate stop smoking support into Talking Therapies

Recommendations: Local authorities

Leading a whole-system response

- Develop local strategies with clear targets and accountability
- Build partnerships across NHS and VCSE organisations (family/income support, foodbanks, addiction support, social housing and homelessness).
- Embed support within services used by people with poor mental health
- Tailor stop smoking support to meet people's needs
- Develop regional communications campaigns

Recommendations: Third sector

Embed stop smoking support into non-acute mental health care and other services for populations with high rates of smoking and poor mental health.

- Upskill staff to deliver advice and referrals
- Adopt smokefree policies that support staff and service users

What we should be aiming for

- **1.5 million smokers with common mental health conditions to be supported to quit smoking**
- People with poor mental health should be able to easily access tailored stop smoking support within their communities.
- Local authorities should lead a whole-system response to smoking, bringing together local services.
- Smoking cessation should be routinely embedded within mental health and community services.
- National data, targets and a framework should be put in place to drive accountability and improvement.

Resources

- [Falling through the cracks: Closing the gap in stop smoking support for people with common mental health conditions](#) – ASH & MHSP
- [1.5 million people with poor mental health smoke – how can we stop them being left behind?](#) – Blog, Dr Ed Beveridge

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