



Public Health
England

Protecting and improving the nation's health

Exploring the influences on smoking in young adults

PHE Behavioural Insights

Literature review and behavioural diagnosis: Preliminary findings

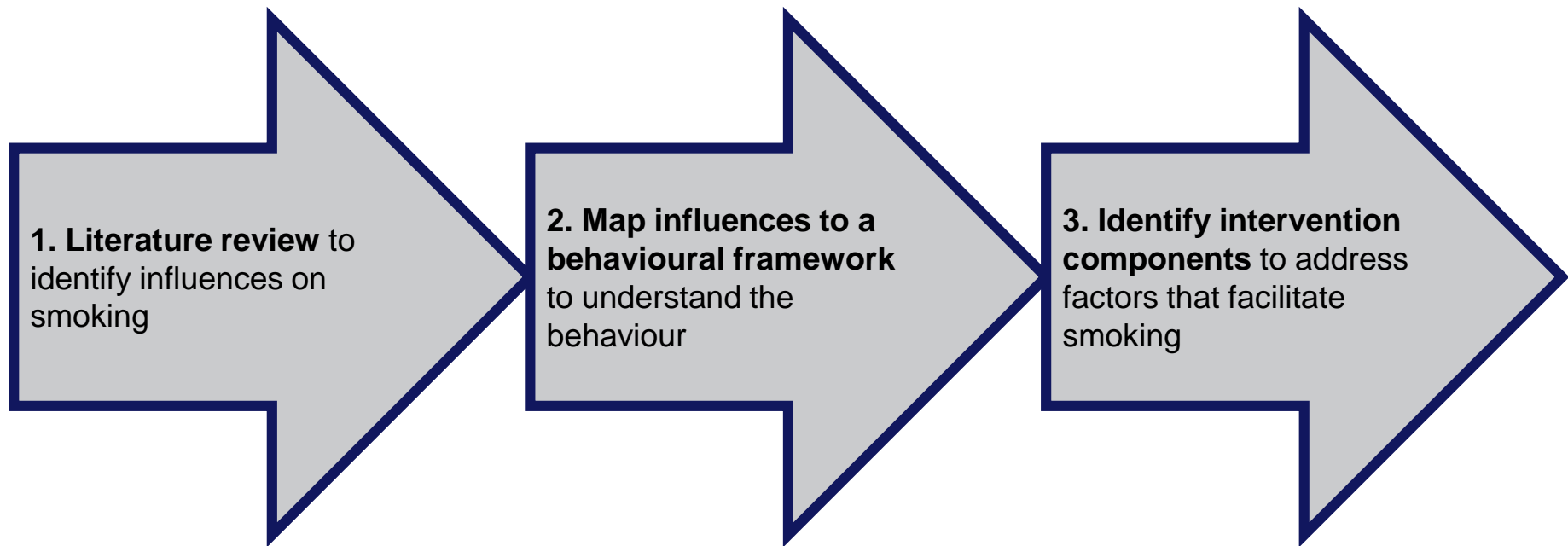
The review and behavioural diagnosis aimed to...

Understand why young people smoke; influences on smoking in 18 - 25 year olds

Recommend intervention components that could address these influences

Suggest areas for future exploration

Approach to understanding behaviour

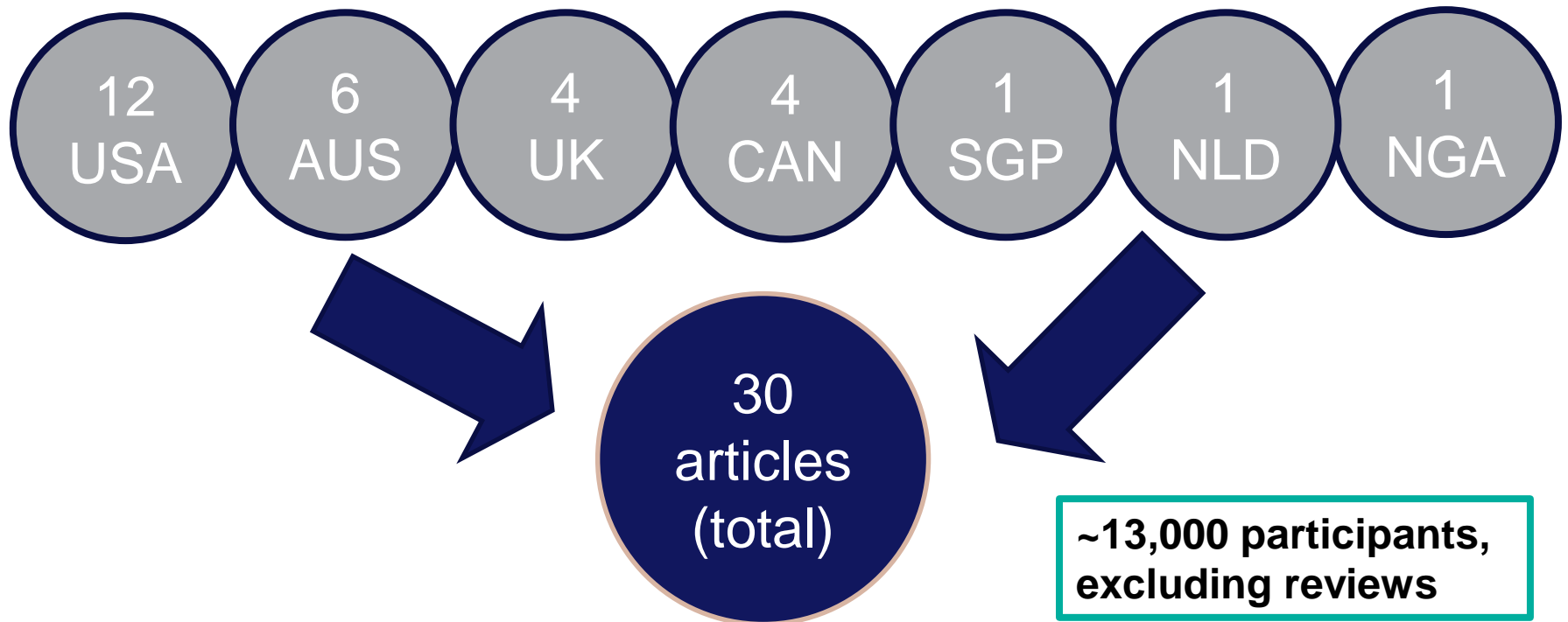


1. Literature review to identify influences on smoking in young people

Mostly from outside of the UK

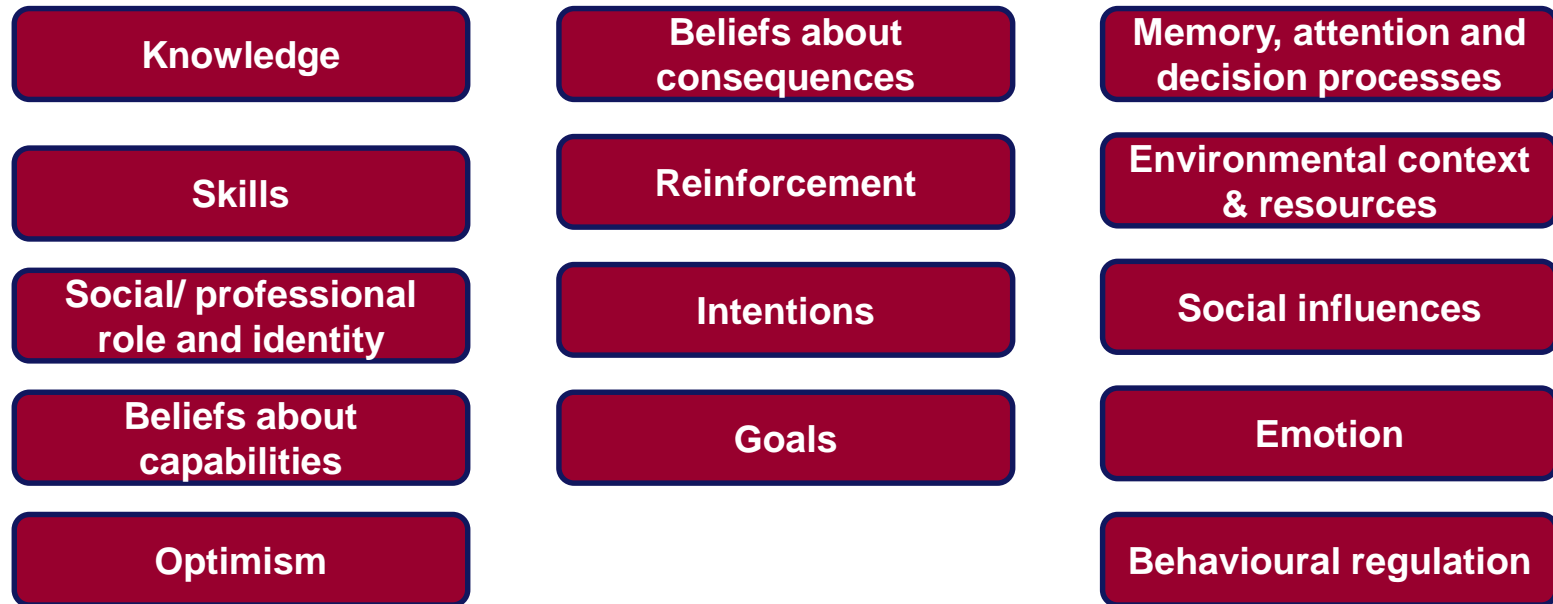
All studies published between 2009 and 2019

Range of study types



2. Code themes to a behavioural framework

Themes were coded to the Theoretical Domains Framework to systematically understand the drivers of smoking





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Key influences on smoking in young adults: preliminary findings

Literature review and behavioural diagnosis

Social influence

Social norms
established at
home

Changing
levels of
parental
control and
monitoring

Relationships
with peers
that smoke
(imitation not
pressure)

Romantic
partners
influence
substance use
in other areas

Social identity

Having control
over own life,
being an adult

Looking
“cool”

Social
smoking as an
‘in between’
identity

Endorsing
riskiness and
taking control
of risk

Optimism

Sense of invulnerability

Knowledge of risk is good but not associated with the age group

I will not become addicted or affected by health risks of smoking

It's temporary and I will stop smoking when I am a 'responsible adult'

Emotions

**Managing the
impact of
stress (new
challenges and
responsibility)**

**To calm down
when angry or
nervous**

**Positive affect
after smoking**

Impulsivity

External context and resources

**Smoking
areas create a
concentrated
area for social
interaction**

**Adverts create
curiosity,
associated
likability of
cigarettes and
intentions to
try them**

Influences on smoking in young adults

5 out of 14 domains were relevant facilitators or barriers to smoking



Summary

- Individual, social and contextual factors are all important influences on smoking in 18-25 year olds
- **Social influence** from both peers and family was the most commonly cited influence..
- Other key drivers were **identity**, wanting to overcome **negative emotions**, being **optimistic** about the consequences and ability to quit, and **impulsivity**
- These factors are often interlinked and influence one another.



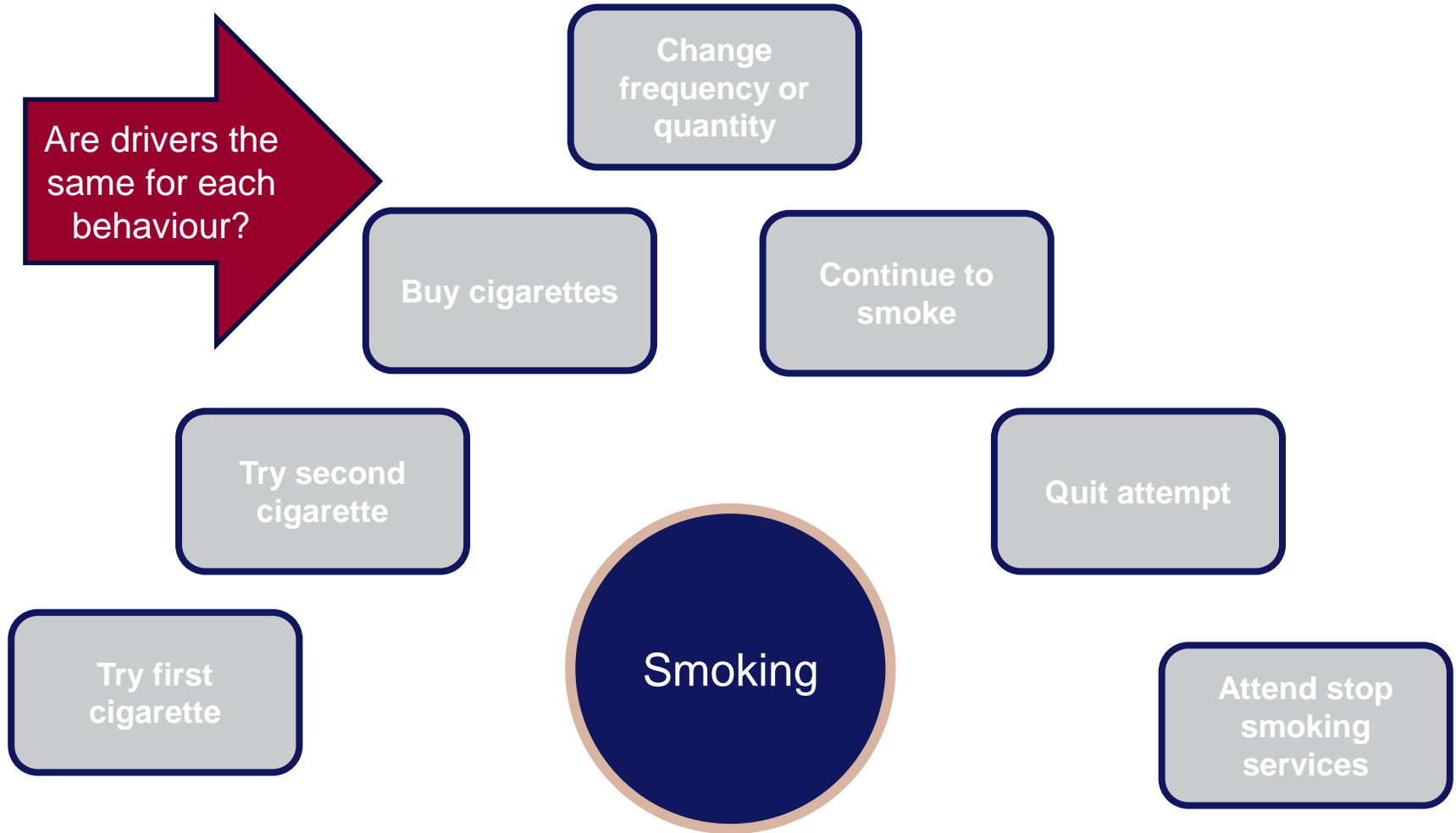
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Recommended next steps

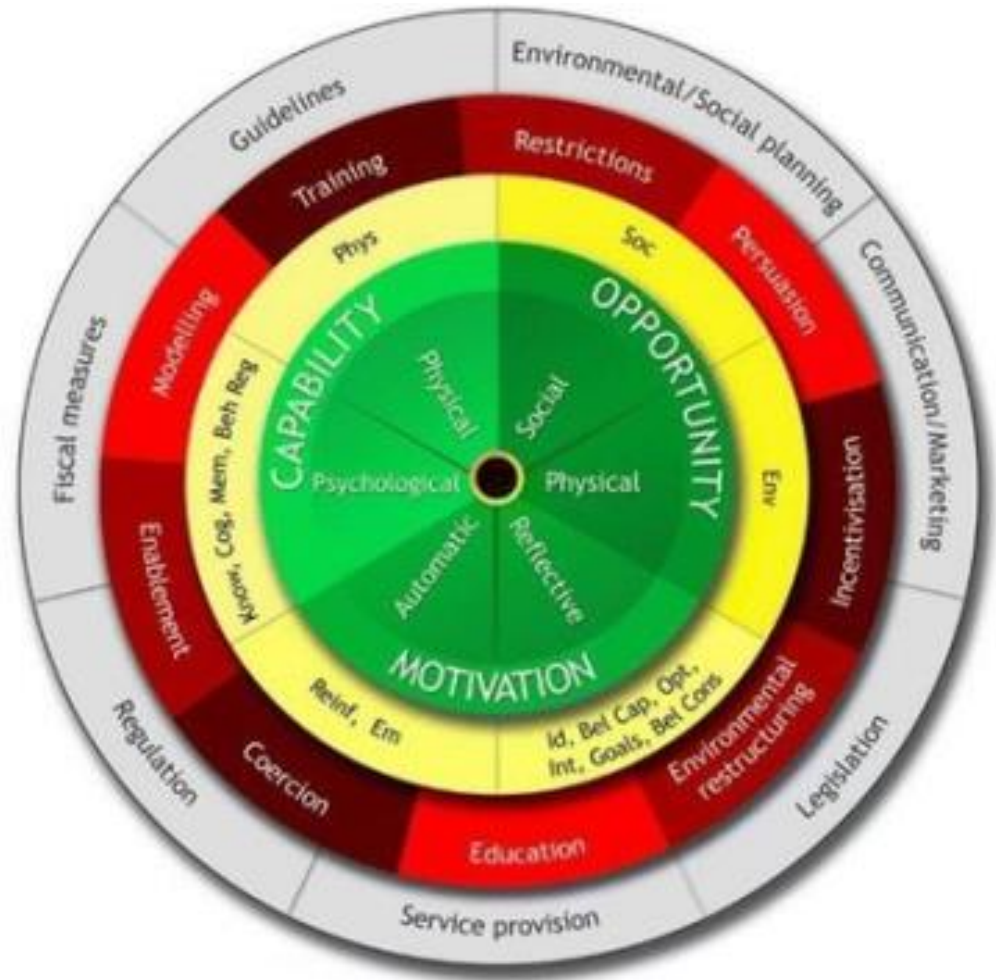
Literature review and behavioural diagnosis

Understand drivers of related behaviours



Identify intervention components

These initial findings suggest that future interventions should **explore** restructuring the environment, enablement, restriction **as well as** modelling





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Questions