

**The scale of inequalities
& challenges of
reaching people with
common mental health
conditions**

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ASH webinar: Falling between the cracks

~8.5 million

adults in England have symptoms of a common mental condition*

Women
22%

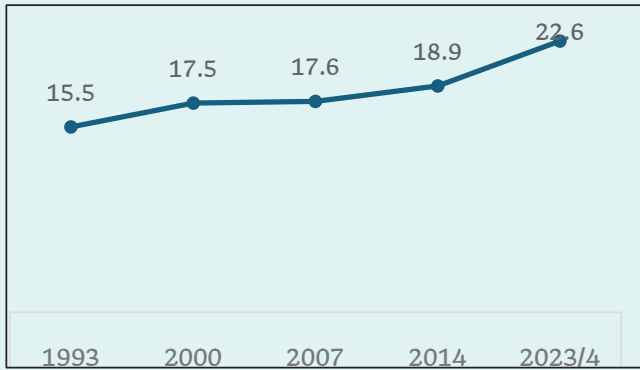
Men
14%

Common Mental Health Conditions

- Depression
- Generalised anxiety
 - Panic disorder
 - Phobias
 - OCD

*Clinical Interview Schedule – Revised score of 12 or more

Prevalence of mental health conditions is increasing¹



CMHC are more common among people¹

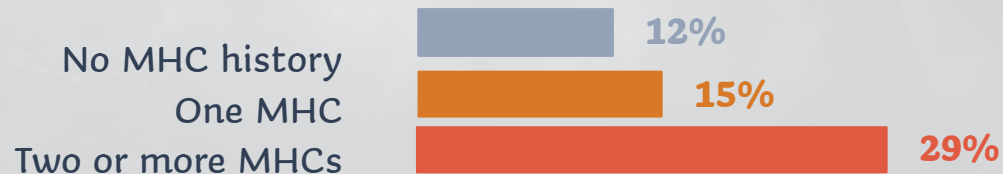
- living in more deprived areas
- with problem debt
- unemployed
- economically inactive

← So is smoking!!

ASH estimate that there are ~ 1.5million people with depression & anxiety who smoke²

n=27,437 participants from the Smoking Study Toolkit

Smoking prevalence rises sharply with comorbidity³



1. NHS England: Adult Psychiatric Morbidity Survey: Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing, England 2023/24.

2. ASH (2026) Falling between the cracks 3. Eve Taylor et al. (2023) BMC Medicine <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12916-023-02890-y>

People with MHCs are **more dependent on smoking (and possibly vaping).....**
more determined to quit smoking...but quit attempts are **less likely to succeed**

Why don't quit attempts succeed?

CHALLENGE

The invisible challenges of having a mental health condition

Fatigue getting in the way of taking proactive steps

Loss of a perceived coping strategy.
Fear that quitting will worsen mental health

Shame & symptom-driven avoidance

Financial strain & competing survival crises

Anxiety & dread regarding clinical appointments

Low bandwidth – little reserve capacity

Lack of up-to-date population level data about of tobacco prevalence among people with mental illness (and other inclusion health groups).

Lack of data about quit attempts and quit success by mental health diagnosis in SSS


Among 272 stop smoking practitioners in 120 LAs

- 62% said they were working with people with CMHC
- 47% said they were working with people with SMI

Pharmacological	Combination NRT	Single NRT	E-cigarettes	Varenicline	Cytisine	Bupropion
CMHC	94%	83%	82%	51%	25%	25%
SMI	95%	84%	84%	36%	19%	19%

Behavioural	One to one	Telephone	Digital	Group (in person)	Allen Carr	Group (online)
CMHC	90%	76%	18%	12%	4%	1%
SMI	90%	76%	19%	13%	4%	2%

- People with common mental health conditions are more likely to smoke, often more dependent, usually living with multiple pressures, and often less well served by standard models of support.
- We need to turn motivation into quit attempts
- Quit attempts into quit success
- Find new and better ways to do this - in a way that feels relevant and achievable - rather than another burden or source of shame



Falling through the cracks

Closing the gap in stop smoking support for people with common mental health conditions

mental health smoking partnership

ash.
action on smoking and health

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