

Key findings and recommendations from the report

Smoking and social housing: Supporting residents addressing inequalities

Robbie Titmarsh

Senior Policy Officer, Action on Smoking and Health (ASH)

robbie.titmarsh@ash.org.uk

ASH receives funding from:



Report context and development

- Clear need to address smoking-related inequalities in social housing to prevent further inequalities
- Local authority public health teams engaged in agenda, with 2 in 5 (43%) reporting doing work on smoking and social housing in 2021
- Collaborative report by ASH and Housing LIN with significant sector engagement and evidence base:
 - Roundtable with 10 social housing providers
 - ‘Depth interviews’ with 9 social housing providers and key sector professionals
 - New research from UCL and insights from research conducted by Landman Economics for ASH on smoking’s impact on poverty, employment, earnings, social care and wider economic insecurity
 - National survey of local authorities on their work with social housing providers
 - Feedback on report drafts from social housing providers and key sector organisations
 - Forewords by Jeanelle De Gruchy, Deputy CMO and Martyn Hale, Director of Care and Support at Citizen Housing



Key points from the report

1. Smoking rates among people living in social housing are substantially higher than other population groups, resulting in health and economic inequalities
2. Inequalities in smoking rates between social housing residents and others have worsened in recent years
3. Tobacco control is a valuable and missing piece in social landlords' existing health and wellbeing activity
4. Successful collaboration between social housing and public health is already underway in England but activity is inconsistent – greater action and further support are needed
5. Effective action would improve social housing residents' lives whilst delivering on shared ambitions for social landlords, central and local government, and the NHS

Why addressing smoking matters for social landlords

1. A missing link in existing health and wellbeing activity
2. A rare opportunity to support residents' financial security

"A lot of organisations already have a big emphasis on wellbeing, and it is part of what sprung from the roots of social housing anyway, so I think you could be pushing at open doors. But it never hurts to understand where the organisation itself will benefit from its tenants being supported by this [smoking cessation]. You can see a tie up with quitting smoking and supporting your tenants' financially but also how that helps the financial stability and income streams of organisations."

"One of the issues a lot of organisations will be thinking of as we come out of COVID-19 and we wait to see what some of the impacts are for tenants in terms of employment, in terms of income levels, is finance, and something that helps support this could be a real win for everyone."

— Housing sector professional quotes from research interviews

Smoking, poverty, and economic insecurity

- Smoking costs on average £1,954 per year (around £38 per week)
- Average social renter who smokes loses an eighth (12.4%) of total disposable income to smoking costs
- Over a quarter of a million (246,000) social rent households in England are in poverty as a result of income lost to tobacco
- **Supporting someone to stop smoking can be an unusually rapid and substantial boon to personal finances by returning income directly to households**

Recommendations

Social housing providers

1. Recognise and embed support to help smokers quit, in consultation with residents
2. Establish and build relationships with local authority public health teams
3. Explore options for delivering stop smoking support and aids directly to resident

Local government public health teams and the NHS

1. Engage social housing providers to help support residents who smoke to stop
2. Support the implementation of tobacco control approaches in social housing in consultation with residents
3. Embed social housing-based tobacco control programmes within ICS level prevention and inequalities strategies

Central government

1. Provide funding for targeted programmes supporting people to quit in social housing
2. Set targets for reducing smoking prevalence in social housings

Recommendations for social housing providers

1. Recognise and embed support to help smokers quit, in consultation with residents
2. Establish and build relationships with local authority public health teams
3. Explore options for delivering stop smoking support and aids directly to resident

“As we already provide health and wellbeing support, signposting residents to stop smoking services requires little additional resource, we just need to know where these services are and which ones are most effective.”

“We would never have been able to do it without those [local authority] partnerships to be honest, we don’t have the expertise and we wouldn’t have resourced the training. With the local authorities it’s all been made easy and possible [...] Every hurdle that we’ve come across we’ve managed to get over, but it just shows that it can be done. I’ve been really surprised by the sheer amount of support, time, and resource they’ve given.”

What next

What you can do with this report

- Use this to build relationships and begin exploring options with local authority public health teams/local social housing providers

What we will be doing with this report

- Supporting practice, wherever possible
- Upcoming publication of case studies and insights work with social housing residents
- Continuing to advocate for prioritisation of this agenda at national level

Contact: robbie.titmarsh@ash.org.uk or admin@smokefreeaction.org.uk

Website: www.ash.org.uk

The Khan review

Making smoking obsolete

Independent review into smokefree 2030 policies
Dr Javed Khan OBE

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