



Smokefree
Mental
Health



CENTRE FOR
HEALTH RESEARCH
AND EDUCATION

Bridging the policy & practice gap

Reclaiming Stolen Years

A survey report on barriers and opportunities to reduce tobacco related harms in the UK among the two million people with mental health conditions who smoke

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one. higher smoking rates among people with mental health conditions

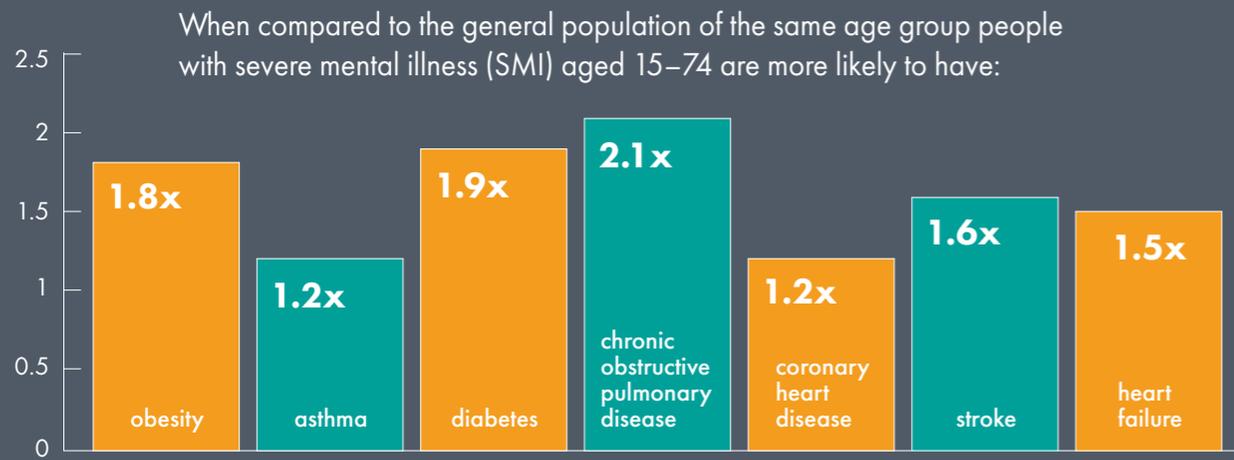


- The prevalence of smoking in UK's adult population has reduced from 20.2% to 14.1% over the last decade.
- Unfortunately, smoking prevalence is significantly higher among people with mental health conditions
- In England,
 - 40.5% of adults with serious mental illness smoke, a figure which has remained steady over the past twenty years.
 - People with depression or anxiety are twice as likely to smoke compared to the general population
 - People with schizophrenia are 3–7 times more likely to smoke compared to general population

Source:

- *Adult smoking habits in the UK: 2019.* Office of National Statistics
- *Health Matters: Smoking and mental health.* Public Health England 2020
- Szatkowski L, McNeill A. Diverging trends in smoking behaviors according to mental health status. *Nicotine Tob Res.* 2015 Mar;17(3):356–60

SMOKING INCREASES THE NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASE BURDEN IN PEOPLE WITH MENTAL HEALTH CONDITIONS

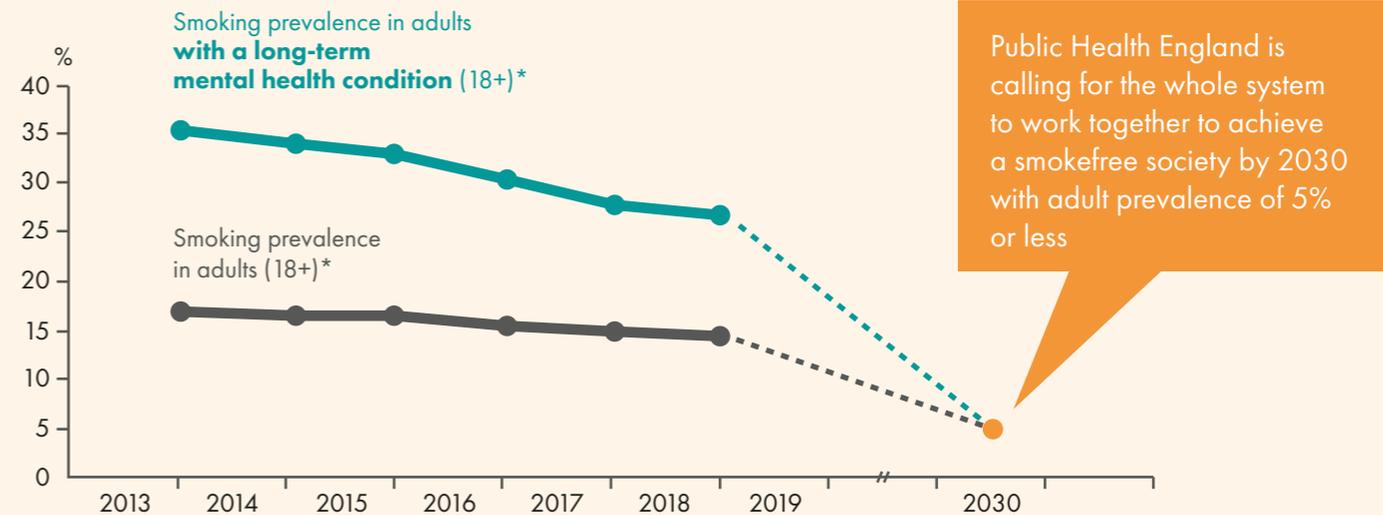


Source:

- [.gov.uk/government/publications/health-matters-reducing-health-inequalities-in-mental-illness/health-matters-reducing-health-inequalities-in-mental-illness](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-matters-reducing-health-inequalities-in-mental-illness/health-matters-reducing-health-inequalities-in-mental-illness) (Dec 2018)
- Liu NH, Daumit GL, Dua T, et al. Excess mortality in persons with severe mental disorders: a multilevel intervention framework and priorities for clinical practice, policy and research agendas. *World Psychiatry*. 2017;16(1):30–40.

Compared to the general population, adults with mental health conditions die on average of 10 – 20 years earlier due to smoking related diseases

Source: Smoking and Mental Health, Action on Smoking and Health UK, 2019.



Source: Public Health Matters: Reducing Health Inequalities in Mental Illness – Guidance, 2018

SMOKEFREE BY 2030 – LEAVING NO SMOKER BEHIND?

two. what was our research about?



Our goal is to accelerate achieving a smoke-free status for all, including those with mental health conditions.

We conducted research to better understand the experiences, attitudes and behaviours of current and former smokers ('consumers') with and without mental health conditions as well as those professionals with the potential to influence their smoking behaviours ('influencers'). Such a study would allow us to devise actionable interventions.

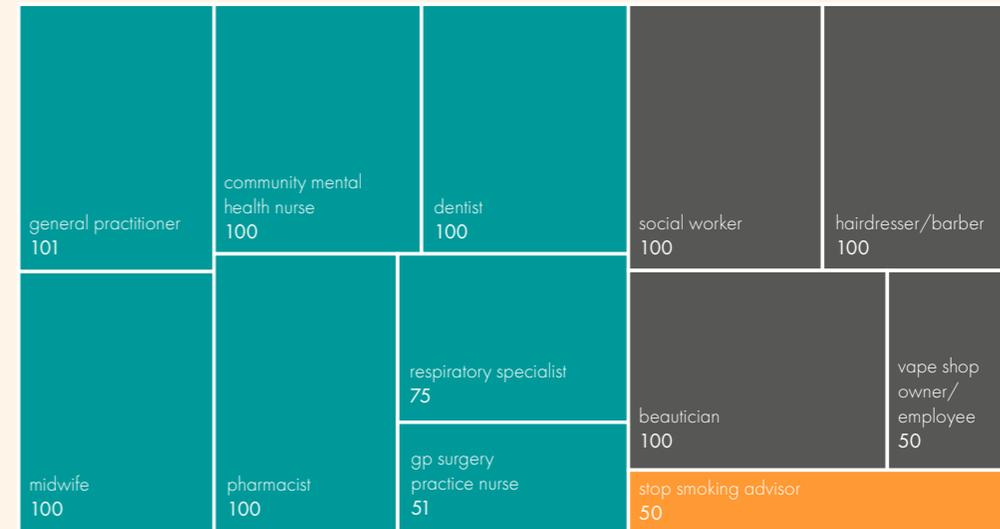
In this special report, we share the key findings relating to smoking and mental health.

SURVEY 1 had a total of 1027 influencers who were identified by their reported profession and were grouped, as shown:

Healthcare Professionals (HCPs)

Non-HCPs

Stop-smoking advisor



SURVEY 2 had 954 consumer respondents. This report focuses on 203 smokers and dual users among those with self-reported current or previously diagnosed mental health condition 'MH Consumers'

MH consumers n = 203 (%)

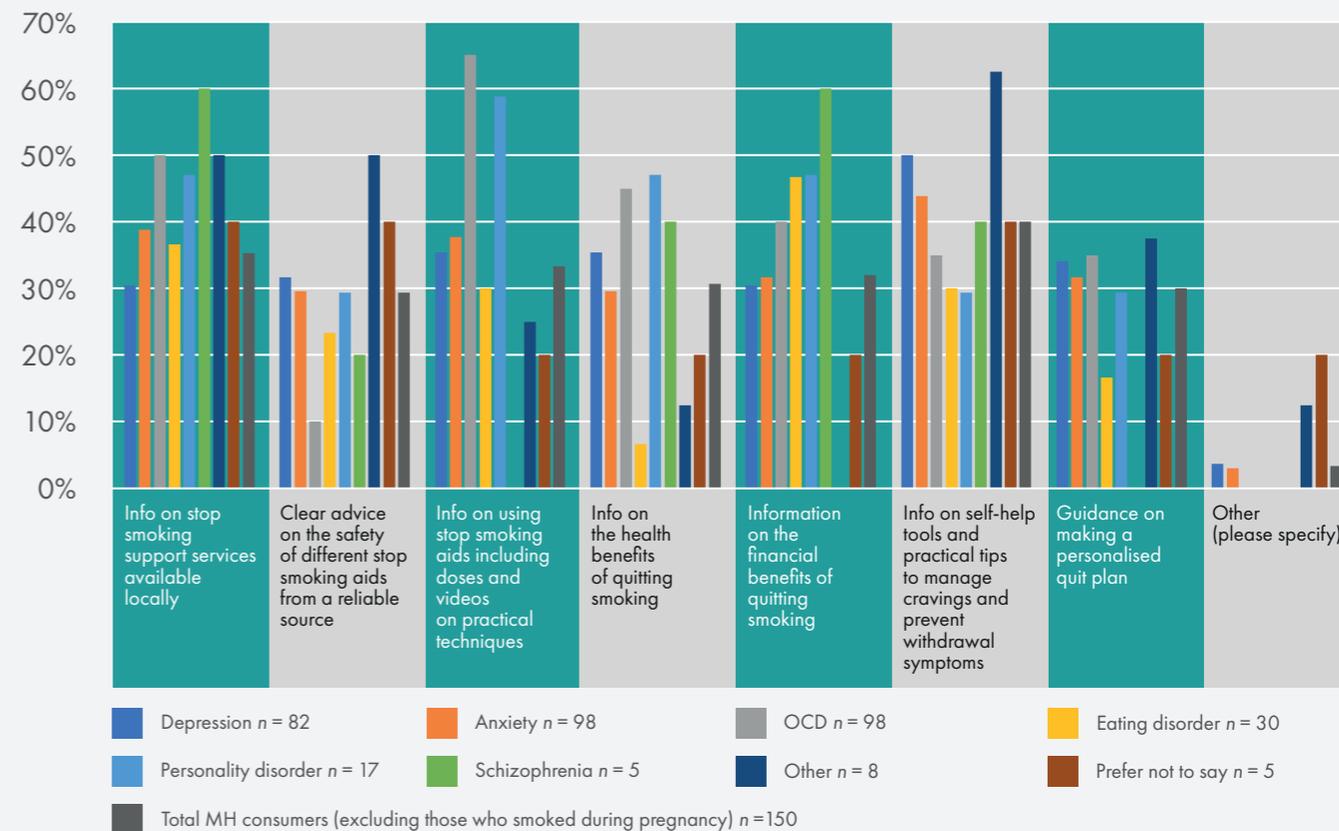


three. questions and key results

CONSUMERS NEED ACCURATE INFORMATION AND TIMELY SUPPORT

People with mental health conditions who smoke showed great interest in knowing more about the reasons to stop smoking and the tools and support services available to help them quit.

Question to MH consumers: When you are trying to quit, or thinking about quitting smoking, what information would you find most helpful?



Question to MH consumers. Which of the following would be most effective in helping people with mental health conditions who have quit smoking to stay smoke free?

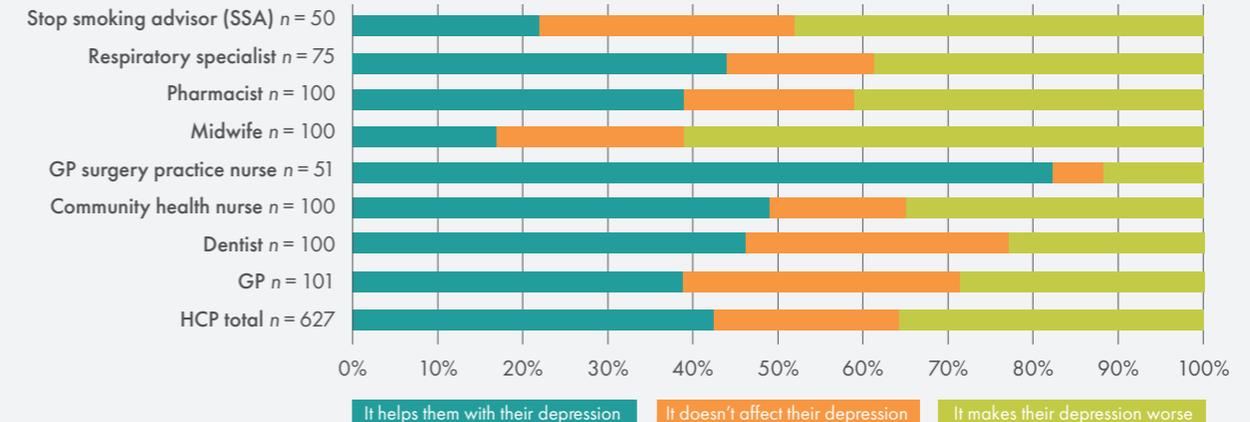


Using influencers to help MH consumers quit

In total 79% of MH consumers (n= 150) agreed or strongly agreed that they would be more likely to try or continue with stop smoking alternatives if recommended by an HCP.

MH CONSUMERS NEED RELIABLE INFORMATION ON CESSATION TOOLS AND SUPPORT FROM HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS (HCPs)

Question to healthcare professionals (HCPs) and stop smoking advisors: How does smoking affect people with depression?



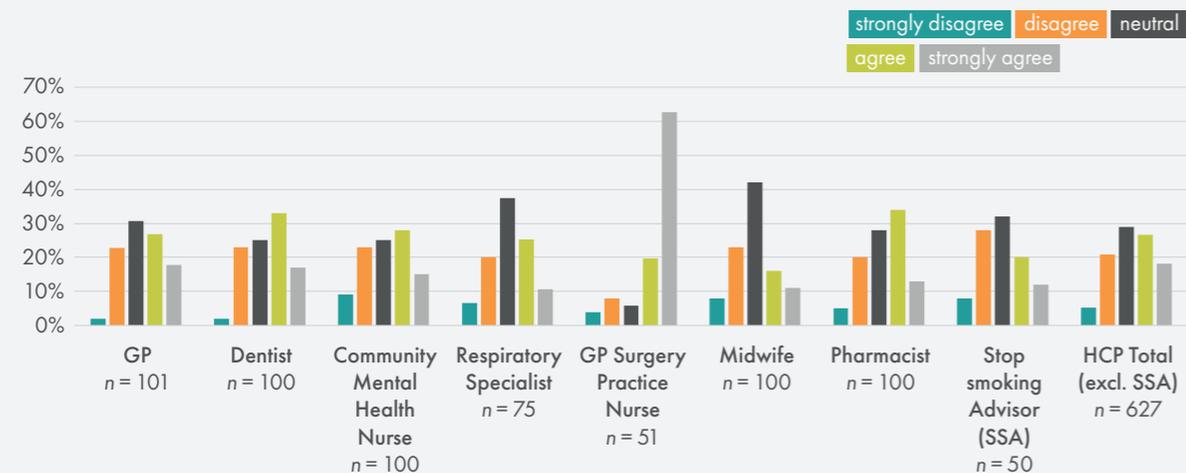
Influencer views and practice for smoking cessation amongst mental health patients

Only 36% of HCPs (n=627) believed that smoking makes their patients' depression worse. There were significant

differences in views of the impact of smoking on depression amongst HCPs. In total 82% of practice nurses (n=51) believed that smoking helps people with their depression, the highest proportion of any group, including non-HCPs.

SMOKING IS STILL WRONGLY PERCEIVED TO BENEFIT MENTAL HEALTH BY HCPs AND SSAs

Question to healthcare professionals (HCPs) and stop smoking advisors:
Most mental health patients lack the willpower and motivation essential to quit smoking, so I don't spend much time persuading them to quit.



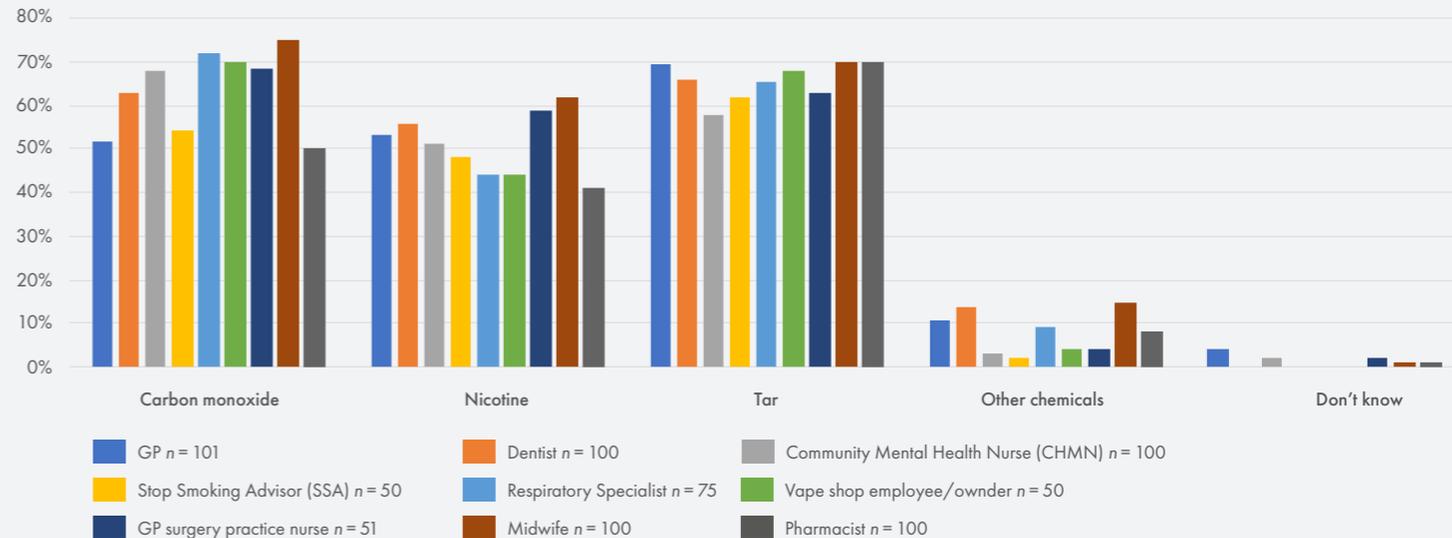
Influencer attitudes towards MH consumers

In total 45% of HCPs (n=627) and 32% of SSAs (n=50) agreed or strongly agreed that "most mental health

patients lack the willpower and motivation essential to quit smoking" and therefore they "don't spend much time persuading them to quit".

HCPs UNDERESTIMATE MH CONSUMERS' MOTIVATION TO QUIT

Question to healthcare professionals (HCPs), stop smoking advisors and vape shop employees: Which components of cigarette smoke cause cancer?



52% of HCPs (n=627), 48% of SSAs (n=50) and 44% of vape shop employees (n=50)

wrongly believe nicotine is the component of cigarette smoke that causes cancer

NICOTINE MISPERCEPTIONS WIDELY PREVALENT AMONG KEY INFLUENCERS

four. urgent need to bridge the policy-practice gap in tobacco harm reduction

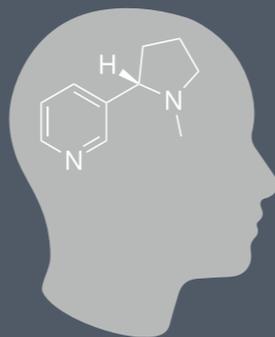
The UK boasts having a wide availability of safer nicotine products and other tools for smoking cessation. However our survey confirms that there is still a significant policy and practice gap in the support MH consumers receive to help them quit smoking.

Evidence shows that people with mental health conditions have same level of motivation to quit smoking as the general population and they have a right to same level of professional support to smoking cessation support and tools.

All influencers and stakeholders need to join hands to help people with mental health conditions reclaim the years stolen from their life by smoking!

We recommend that there is an urgent need to:

1. upskill healthcare professionals, stop smoking advisors and vape shop employees on up-to-date and evidence-based information on safety of nicotine, on principles of tobacco harm reduction (THR), and on smoking cessation interventions.
2. create awareness around providing smoking cessation support to people with mental health conditions.



five. about the study

METHODS

Both the influencer and consumer surveys were conducted online and implemented by Atomik Research, part of the 4Media Group, an independent creative market research agency that employs MRS-certified researchers and abides to MRS code.

The influencer survey was infield from the 15th of May 2020 to the 29th of May 2020, while the consumer survey was infield from the 15th of May to the 3rd of June 2020. During this time, the UK was under lockdown due to COVID-19 and had been since late March 2020. The infield date of the surveys also coincided with the ban of menthol cigarettes in the UK as of 20th of May 2020

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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ETHICS APPROVAL

The individuals who were assessed in this survey had consented to be contacted for further research and were not recruited from National Health Service organisations. It was confirmed with the Health Research Authority that HRA and HCRW Approval was not required for this study.

*To request the full report
please email info@chre-uk.com*



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