

# Smoking and Mental Health

**A collaborative and innovative project aiming to support those with mental health conditions to quit smoking**

## THE PROPOSED CHALLENGE

**Can we prompt people with mental health conditions to take a positive action to quit smoking?**

## POTENTIAL IMPACT

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### Priority Audience

It is estimated that of the 7.6 million smokers in the UK<sup>i</sup>, around 2,510,000<sup>ii</sup> <sup>1</sup> have a mental health condition. In reality, this figure is likely to be larger as only two thirds of the 1 in 4 adults who experience a diagnosable mental health problem will actually visit their GP<sup>iii</sup>.

- Smoking is the single largest contributor to the 10-20 year reduced life expectancy in people with mental health conditions<sup>iv</sup>.
- Smoking rates among people with mental health conditions have not fallen, and have **remained at around 40%**<sup>v</sup> compared to the national average of 15.5%.
- **Around 1 in 3 cigarettes** are currently smoked by someone with a mental health condition<sup>vi</sup>.

Mental health problems are estimated to affect 21% of people with cancer<sup>vii</sup>.

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### Alignment with National Strategies/Activities

#### The Mental Health and Smoking Partnership

Established in 2016, the Mental Health and Smoking Partnership<sup>viii</sup> was created to achieve the ambitions set out in ASH's Stolen Years report<sup>ix</sup> - to reduce smoking rates among people with a mental health condition to 5% by 2035.

#### The Tobacco Control Plan, Department of Health

The Tobacco Control Plan for England<sup>x</sup> prioritises reducing smoking among people with a mental health condition, with a vision to create a smoke free generation.

With complementary aims, the Tobacco Control Plan and the Mental Health and Smoking Partnership provide the opportunity to scale successfully piloted solutions targeted at empowering people with mental health conditions in stopping smoking.

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<sup>1</sup> Estimated using the 33%<sup>ii</sup> of smokers having evidence of mental disorder and applied to the 7.6 million UK smoker population<sup>i</sup>.

## IMPLEMENTATION

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### Information Innovation

The Information Innovation team within Cancer Research UK will lead on tackling this challenge from a new perspective. This includes:

- Focus: we create and develop new ways to help everyone understand what they need to know about cancer and to take positive action for their health
- A test and learn approach: we test new ideas quickly and iteratively, and collaborate with others to innovate. This includes internal support from our Prevention and Health Information teams, and external support from organisations offering knowledge sharing and access to user networks in the first instance
- An emphasis on co-design: to truly understand what people need, we design with them, not with them in mind
- Recent expertise: the team has built up relevant knowledge and networks having worked on a project enabling smokers to self-refer themselves to local Stop Smoking Services through Cancer Research UK retail stores

### Timeframe

This project will run for approximately 4 months from January 2018 and will be funded with Cancer Research UK budget.

There will be 5 stages to the project:

1. Evidence gathering (qualitative and quantitative; 4 weeks)
  - a. Understand the landscape
  - b. Understand the audience
2. Refining the challenge (2 weeks)
  - a. Define the target audience
  - b. Define specific barriers and opportunities
  - c. Establish relevant partner organisations
3. Co-design (2 weeks)
  - a. Ideation of potential solutions
  - b. Selection of ideas to take forward to testing
4. Testing and pilot phase (6 weeks; potential for co-branding)
5. Evaluation and recommendations (2 weeks; potential for multi-funded scale-up and co-branding)

### Organisations Involved

In the first stage of the project of evidence gathering, it will be crucial to gain existing expertise on the population affected by mental health, known behavioural associations with smoking (both in people with and without mental health conditions), as well as gaining access to these different audience segments. We are grateful to the following organisations who have agreed involvement in this capacity for this first stage of work:

- ASH
- Autistica
- Mencap
- Mental Health Foundation

- The Mental Health and Smoking Partnership (involved throughout the project timeframe in a sounding board capacity)

All organisations involved in this first stage will receive the output of the evidence gathering, as well as receive acknowledgement in any resulting communications as a result of this piece of work.

As Public Health England (PHE) will work with the Mental Health and Smoking Partnership to consider how to reduce the prevalence of smoking among people with mental health conditions, the later stages of this project poses an exciting opportunity for organisations with aligned goals to the refined project challenge to work together to influence PHE's work in this area.

### Known Competitors

None.

## CONTACTS

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### Cancer Research UK Information Innovation Project team

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## REFERENCES

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<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/healthandlifeexpectancies/bulletins/adultsmokinghabitsingreatbritain/2016>

<sup>ii</sup> Royal College of Physicians, Royal College of Psychiatrists. Smoking and mental health. London: RCP, 2013. Royal College of Psychiatrists Council Report CR178, [www.rcplondon.ac.uk/sites/default/files/smoking\\_and\\_mental\\_health\\_-\\_full\\_report\\_web.pdf](http://www.rcplondon.ac.uk/sites/default/files/smoking_and_mental_health_-_full_report_web.pdf)

<sup>iii</sup> <http://www.counselling-directory.org.uk/stats.html>, accessed 2017

<sup>iv</sup> Public Health England. Reducing high smoking rates among patients in mental health units , 4 June 2015

<sup>v</sup> NHS Digital. Smoking rates in people with serious mental illness, 2016. Available at [Public Health England Tobacco Control Profiles](http://publichealthengland.nhs.uk/tobacco-control/public-health-england-tobacco-control-profiles)

<sup>vi</sup> ASH. The Stolen Years: Smoking and Mental Health Action report, 2016

<sup>vii</sup> Macmillan. Cancer and other long term conditions, 2015

<sup>viii</sup> <http://smokefreeaction.org.uk/smokefree-nhs/smoking-and-mental-health/>, accessed 2017

<sup>ix</sup> Department of Health. Towards a Smokefree Generation - A Tobacco Control Plan for England, 2017. Available at [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/630217/Towards\\_a\\_Smoke\\_free\\_Generation\\_-\\_A\\_Tobacco\\_Control\\_Plan\\_for\\_England\\_2017-2022\\_2\\_.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/630217/Towards_a_Smoke_free_Generation_-_A_Tobacco_Control_Plan_for_England_2017-2022_2_.pdf)