

# LEAVING NO SMOKER BEHIND: SMOKING BEHAVIOUR AND E-CIGARETTE USE IN HOMELESS SMOKERS

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## Background

Premise of 'Leaving No Smoker Behind':

Public Health England (1) and the Cochrane Addiction Group state there is a need to address inequality in tobacco use. Tobacco control, policy and cessation support has had the least impact on the lowest socio-economic groups. Scope to develop tobacco harm reduction to homeless groups in the UK including the use of reduced harm products, such as e-cigarettes.

## Smoking and the homeless

- Smoking is the most prevalent form of addictive behaviour in this group
- High incidence of risky smoking practices, e.g., smoking unfiltered roll-ups, sharing cigarettes, picking up butts from the street. (2, 3)
- 20% of income spent on cigarettes (4)
- Higher incidence of poor respiratory and cardiac health (5)

## Aims

To explore patterns of smoking and quitting behaviour and interest in e-cigarettes, in homeless adult smokers across the UK.

## Methods and participants:

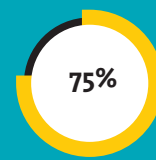
Cross-sectional survey (N = 237) and informal interview data (N = 15) with homeless adults accessing homeless support services and support staff across the UK (N=10) (Edinburgh, London, Northampton & Kent).



## References:

1. Department of Health (2017). Towards a smoke-free generation: a tobacco control plan for England. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/towards-a-smoke-free-generation-tobacco-control-plan-for-england> [Accessed 18 July 2017].
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  3. Tucker, J.S., Shadel, W.G., Golinelli, D., Mullins, L. and Ewing, B., 2015. Sniping and other high-risk smoking practices among homeless youth. *Drug and alcohol dependence*, 154, pp.105-110.
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  6. Reitzel, L.R., Kendzor, D.E., Nguyen, N., Regan, S.D., Okuyemi, K.S., Castro, Y., Wetter, D.W. and Businelle, M.S., 2014. Shelter proximity and affect among homeless smokers making a quit attempt. *American journal of health behavior*, 38(2), pp.161-169.
- Conflicts of interest:**  
SC, AF, DR and LB have no conflicts of interest. LD has also provided consultancy to the manufacturers of smoking cessation medications and acted as an expert witness in an e-cigarette patent infringement case.

## Results of service user survey data



smoke roll-your own



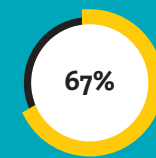
smoke pre-rolled



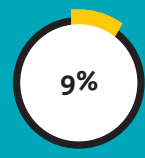
share cigarettes



smoke discarded butts



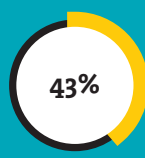
want to quit



have tried to quit in last 12 months



would like to try an e-cigarette



have tried an e-cigarette

Participants report being able to spend £5 – 10 on an e-cigarette



## Conclusion:

- Smoking can be considered an overlooked and 'silent' killer amongst the homeless, with other health and social needs taking priority.
- Homeless smokers are likely to engage in risky smoking behaviours.
- Desire to quit is reported as high but engagement in quitting is low.
- Barriers to using an e-cigarette include: cost, high nicotine dependence, product knowledge, availability of charging facilities, no vape policy at support services.
- Training and attitude of support staff, plus free initial product availability may overcome some of these barriers.



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