

Smoking Cessation Report 2022/23



healthwatch
Blackburn with Darwen



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Background



Smoking Prevalence in Blackburn with Darwen

As of 2021, smoking prevalence among adults (18+) in Blackburn with Darwen is estimated to be at around 15.5%, although the true figure could lie in the range between 11.8% and 19.1%. The estimate is higher than the England average (13%), although not statistically significantly different.²⁵ Smoking rates are estimated to be higher amongst those classified in 'routine and manual occupations' and 'long-term unemployed and never worked' socio-economic groups.

34.6% of adults with anxiety or depression in the borough are smokers (2016/17 data) compared to England average of 25.8%. 92.4% of adults admitted for treatment for alcohol and non-opiate misuse in the borough are smokers (2019/20) compared to England average of 64.6%.

Blackburn with Darwen continued to have close to 209 smoking-attributable deaths per year during the 2017-19 period, and was in the worst quartile for 8 out of the 12 mortality indicators in PHE's Local Tobacco Control Profile.²⁸ Smoking-attributable hospital admissions in 2019-20 were also higher than the national average and the overall rate has slightly increased since 2017-18.

At least ½ of the borough's smokers will die prematurely if they do not give up smoking.

For 2021-22, Action on Smoking and Health (ASH) put the cost to society of smoking in Blackburn with Darwen at £41.2m. The biggest element is lost productivity (£31.2m), followed by costs to the NHS (£5.7m), cost of social care (£3.2m), and cost of fires (£1m).^{30,31}

If allowance was made for the people made ill by tobacco but not receiving formal care, the estimated cost of purchased care from formal sources would be over £21.9m annually.

Local Smoking Cessation Services

In its Tobacco Control Plan for England, the Department of Health and Social Care has pledged to get adult smoking rates down to 12% by the end of 2022. The Green Paper, 'Advancing our health: prevention in the 2020s', reiterates this goal, and announces an ambition for England to go 'smoke-free' by 2030.

However, the use of 'Stop Smoking' services continues to decline, both locally and nationally. In 2021/22, 462 smokers in Blackburn with Darwen set a quit date for smoking. Of those, 197 successfully quit smoking - 43% of those setting a quit date compared to England average of 54%.

Our local smoking cessation offer in the borough is provided by specialist stop smoking advisors within 16 participating pharmacies across the borough. This offer is available for residents aged 13+ and provides one to one behaviour change support with nicotine replacement therapies (NRT) for a maximum of 12 weeks. The Service provides up to 2 smoking cessation attempts per person per financial year.

The provision is offered through the pharmacies listed in the table below.

Audley Late Nite Pharmacy	114-116 Audley Range, Blackburn, BB1 1TC
Beehive Pharmacy	Beehive Service Station, Haslingden Road, Blackburn, BB1 2EE
Chapel Street Pharmacy	62 New Chapel St, Mill Hill, Blackburn, BB2 4DT
Cohens Preston Old Road	33 Preston Old Rd, Blackburn, BB2 2ST
Cohens Little Harwood	101 Plane Tree Rd, Blackburn, BB1 5PA
Cohens Darwen	Darwen Health Centre, James Street West, Darwen, BB3 1OY
Curo Pharmacy	62 Haslingden Rd, Blackburn, BB2 3HS
Darwen Healthcare	11 Church Street, Darwen, BB3 2RE
Geloo Mill Hill	1 New Wellington St, Mill Hill, Blackburn, BB2 4DY
Karims Pharmacy Ltd	3 Pritchard St, Blackburn, BB2 3PF
Livesey Pharmacy	238 Livesey Branch Rd, Blackburn, BB2 4QL
Lloyd's Pharmacy	8 Bentham Road, Mill Hill, Blackburn, BB2 4PN
Morrison's Pharmacy	Railway Road, Blackburn, BB1 5BE
Whalley Range Pharmacy	1 Whalley Range, Blackburn, BB1 6DX
Village Pharmacy	365 Bolton Road, Edgworth, BL7 0AZ
4Court Pharmacy	Shell Blackburn Service Station, Whalley Banks, Blackburn, BB2 1NT

In addition to this offer, Active Lancashire currently provide a pilot project offering Quit talk Drop-in sessions across the borough in a range of community settings for residents wishing to discuss giving up smoking.

Rationale for Engagement

Although there is a clear offer to support residents to stop smoking, our quit rates are below the England average. Therefore, Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen were keen to understand how effective the local provision is, what signposting is made to it from other healthcare providers and what residents felt would be the best support to help them stop smoking.





Methodology

Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen underwent a number of lines of enquiry as part of this engagement to gain as full a picture of the current smoking cessation provision in the borough.

This included:-

- Desktop reviews of local GP and dentist practice websites for evidence of signposting of residents to the local smoking cessation provision
- Mystery shopping in the 16 pharmacies offering the smoking cessation provision
- Face to face surveys with residents
- Online survey of the 16 participating pharmacies

Desktop review of GP and dentist practice websites

NICE guidance on “Tobacco: preventing uptake, promoting quitting and treating dependence” (November 2021) recommends that primary care and community settings should,

“For people who want to stop smoking:

discuss with them how they can stop

provide stop-smoking interventions and advice;

if you are unable to provide stop-smoking interventions, refer them to local stop-smoking support, if available”.

As such, we are keen to understand what advice is given on GP and dentist websites on how to stop smoking and given that they do not provide stop-smoking interventions, what signposting is available on the websites to the Blackburn with Darwen smoking cessation provision.

Mystery Shopping in the 16 Participating Pharmacies

NICE guidelines on supporting people to stop smoking recommend that providers should,

“Tell people who smoke that a range of interventions is available to help them stop smoking. Ensure the following are accessible to adults who smoke:

- behavioural interventions: behavioural support (individual and group) and very brief advice
- medically licensed products: e.g. bupropion (see BNF information on bupropion hydrochloride), nicotine replacement therapy - short and long acting, varenicline
- nicotine-containing e-cigarettes

We want to understand from this engagement, how well pharmacies promote the stop-smoking offer, how well they explain to potential service users what the offer is and if this complies with NICE guidelines and whether residents have the opportunity to book their first appointment on the same day.

Face to face surveys with residents

We want to understand from a good cross-section of our community, how much they currently smoke, whether they have tried to give up smoking, either using the local pharmacy provision or otherwise, and what they found to be effective and how they feel support for smoking cessation in the borough could be improved. We will ensure that we engage with groups who are most likely to smoke through this engagement - 'routine and manual occupations' and 'long-term unemployed and never worked', including residents seeking support for alcohol and substance misuse, as well as seeking to gather feedback from different ethnic groups and genders.

Pharmacies Survey

We are keen to understand from the 16 participating pharmacies in the borough's smoking cessation provision, how effective they feel the offer is - what is working well, what barriers they face in being able to provide it and how could they be better supported to increase uptake amongst residents.

Areas for Further Exploration

The majority of residents we engaged with were from White British ethnic background therefore further targeted engagement with minority ethnic background groups to understand any specific barriers to quitting smoking for these communities.



Executive Summary



The aim of our engagement was to understand how effective the local smoking cessation provision is in supporting residents to quit smoking, how well it is promoted and supported by other health care professionals. Key themes of areas for improvement in the service came out through our engagement. These are summarised below.

Promotion of the smoking cessation provision

There was little promotion of the service within the pharmacies who provide it, therefore it is not visible enough to residents who might be considering quitting smoking. Only 25% of residents we spoke with had accessed support to quit smoking via the pharmacy provision. Pharmacies who responded to our survey referred to the need for more advertisements and leaflets both for their service and local businesses. One pharmacy also stated that if they had additional funding, they would invest in marketing to reach a wider audience.

Recommendation

There should be increased promotion of the service within all pharmacies across the borough, particularly those providing the smoking cessation service. Wider promotion of the offer within local businesses would also support increased take up of the service.

Signposting by other health professionals

The level of signposting by both GPs and dentists to the local smoking cessation provision is poor and does not meet NICE guidelines. One of the pharmacies who responded to our survey felt that better signposting by other professionals would increase take up of the service.

Recommendation

We would recommend that all GP and dentist websites include a link to the local pharmacy smoking cessation provision as well as providing a link to wider information about smoking cessation.

Ability to book an appointment on the same day

Feedback from residents was that lack of willpower and motivation were key factors in being able to quit smoking therefore if they are faced with a barrier of not being able to make a first appointment on the day they decide to take steps towards quitting smoking, they might not make a future appointment.

Recommendation

If pharmacies are unable to staff the smoking cessation service each day, it would be helpful for residents if they could make a referral to a nearby alternative participating pharmacy for a same day appointment, in order to support residents in their decision to quit.

Alternatives to NRT

The majority of respondents who had accessed the pharmacy provision to quit smoking felt that it was not helpful. One of the reasons for this was that it was mainly product support only and NRT made them feel sick and they felt that 'the patches were far too strong'.

Recommendation

Pharmacies to consider alternative smoking cessation support other than NRT which is off putting for residents.

People want behaviour change support in addition to clinical support

The other reason people gave for not finding the pharmacy provision helpful was that there was no motivational or behaviour change support available through this offer. Several of the residents we spoke with suggested that behaviour change or motivational support, CBT or group support would be beneficial to help them to quit smoking.

Recommendation

BwD Public Health should consider extending the pilot Quit Smoking drop in sessions provided by Active Lancashire or consider extending a behaviour change offer through the Refresh team health and wellbeing coaches which would supplement a clinical provision through pharmacies.



Desktop Review of GP and Dentist practice websites



We wanted to understand from review of GP and dentist websites, how well they provide advice to patients on how to stop smoking and what signposting is made on the websites to the Blackburn with Darwen smoking cessation provision.

GP practice websites

We have 23 GP practices within the borough (3 of which are covered on joint websites).

Whilst all of the GP practices shared a link to information about smoking cessation either via the Patient Access Info website, NHS Choices website or links to specific apps and smoking cessation websites, there was very little signposting to the local smoking cessation provision.

Only 2 websites made reference to the local pharmacy offer and neither of these specified which pharmacies offered smoking cessation support.

Dentist websites

We have 20 dental practices in the borough, 2 of whom do not have a website and 1 had a Facebook page only.

Only two of the dentists websites made reference to mouth cancer and gum health and neither of these had any information specifically around smoking cessation. None of the websites had links to NHS information websites.

None of the websites provided information about our local pharmacy led smoking cessation provision.

This does not appear to meet the NICE guideline on signposting to support:-

“if you are unable to provide stop-smoking interventions, refer them to local stop-smoking support, if available”.





Mystery Shopping Feedback

Members of our team visited each of the 16 participating pharmacies to assess the promotion of the smoking cessation offer and to understand how accessible this is to residents and if it complies with NICE guidelines.

We assessed at each pharmacy:-

- i) Whether there was promotional information about the service in the pharmacy
- ii) Whether there were any smoking cessation leaflets and posters on display
- iii) Whether nicotine replacement products were on display
- iv) The quality of response to our enquiry about giving up smoking
- v) The ability to make a same day appointment with a stop-smoking advisory pharmacist.

Service Promotional information

10 of the 16 pharmacies did not have any information about the smoking cessation provision on show within the pharmacy. The six pharmacies who did had a mix of posters and digital displays advertising the service and one also advertised the 'quit smoking' events being delivered by Active Lancashire across the borough.

Smoking Cessation Promotion

10 of the 16 pharmacies did not have any posters or leaflets on display about quitting smoking. The 6 pharmacies which did display information for patients had a range of BwD Council, NHS and Nicorette quit smoking posters and one had a poster advertising the BwD Challenge through Sport - Quit Talk Initiative.

Accessibility of Nicotine Replacement Products

12 of the 16 pharmacies did not have any nicotine replacement products on display on the shelves in the pharmacy. These pharmacies held the nicotine replacement products behind the counter. Where products were on display within the pharmacy, there was a mix of nicotine gum and patches available.

Quality of Support When Enquiring About Quitting Smoking

In three of the pharmacies, the pharmacist who runs the programme was not available so we were told to come back another time. In another pharmacy we were told that they are not currently offering the service but will once a new pharmacist is in post.

In all of the other 12 pharmacies, we were given a clear explanation of the provision and the costs associated with the support. The conversations were generally held in public in the pharmacy but in one pharmacy where the pharmacy assistant asked if we were looking to give up today, our member of staff was taken into a private consultation room. Pharmacists might want to consider asking whether patients are comfortable having the initial conversation in a public space and offer them a private room if preferred.

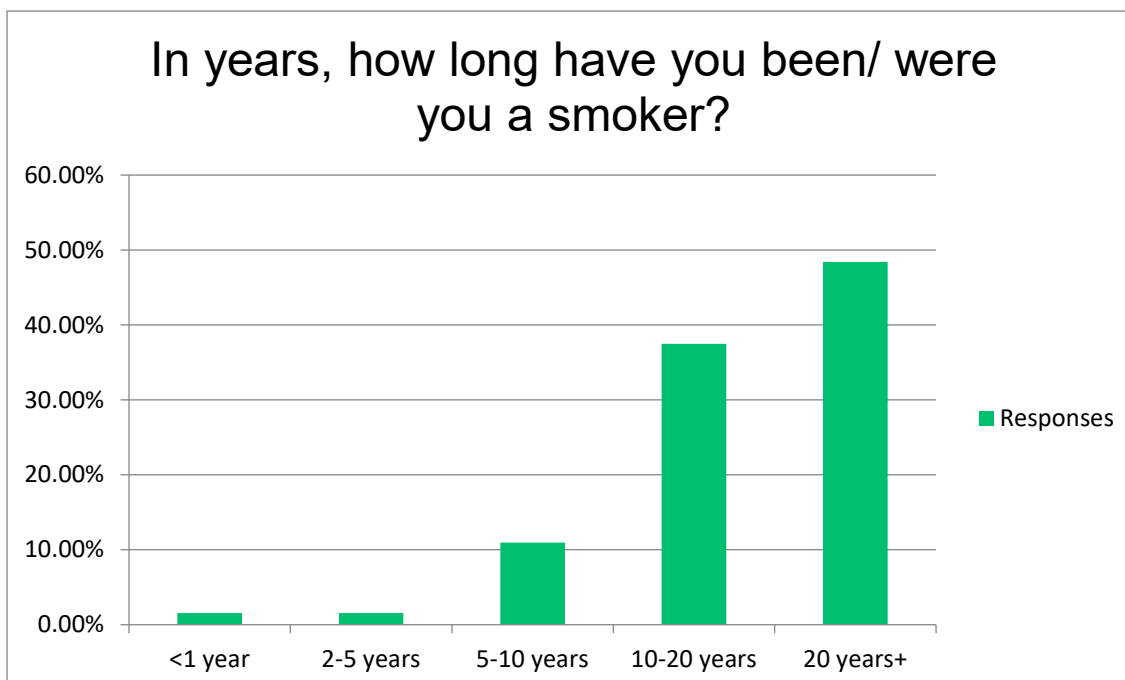
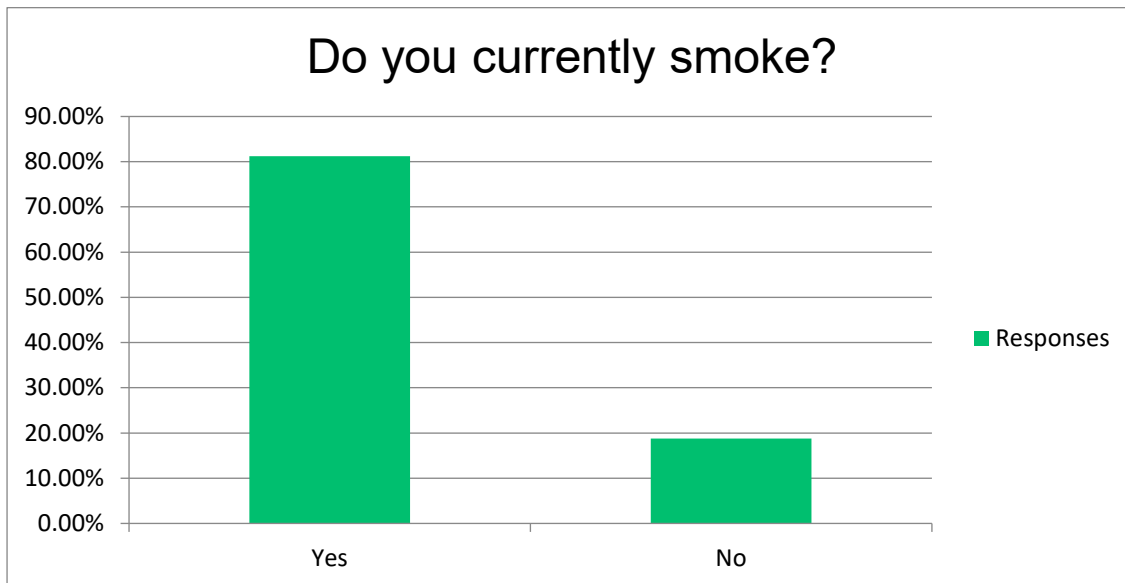
Ability to book a first appointment on the same day

We were able to book a same day appointment in half of the pharmacies we visited. This might prove to be a barrier to accessing support because feedback from residents focused on the need to be 'in the right frame of mind' to quit.

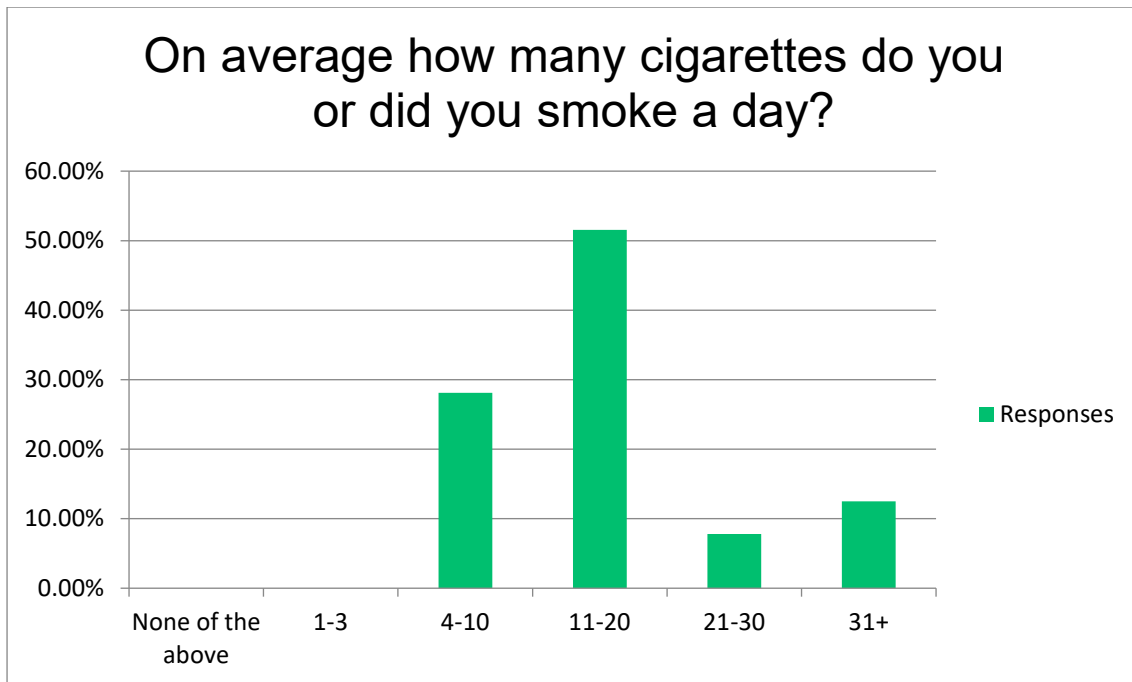
Residents' Survey Feedback



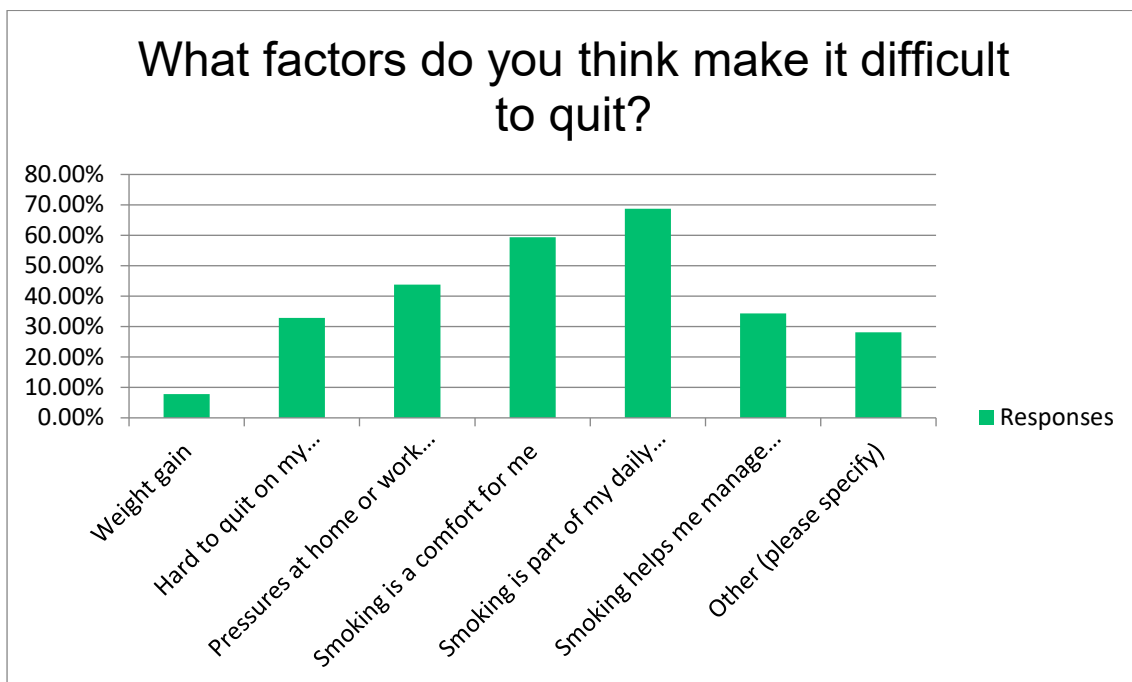
We carried out surveys with residents in various locations across the borough in order to speak with a good cross section of our community and attended Blackburn Food Bank and Spark Roots Community Group sessions in order to engage with residents who are most likely to smoke. We gathered responses from 64 individuals through this engagement. Please see their responses below.



We spoke with a large number of residents who have been smoking for a significant period of time, therefore would find it more difficult to quit.



Almost $\frac{3}{4}$ of respondents smoked over 11 cigarettes a day, again making it more difficult for them to quit.

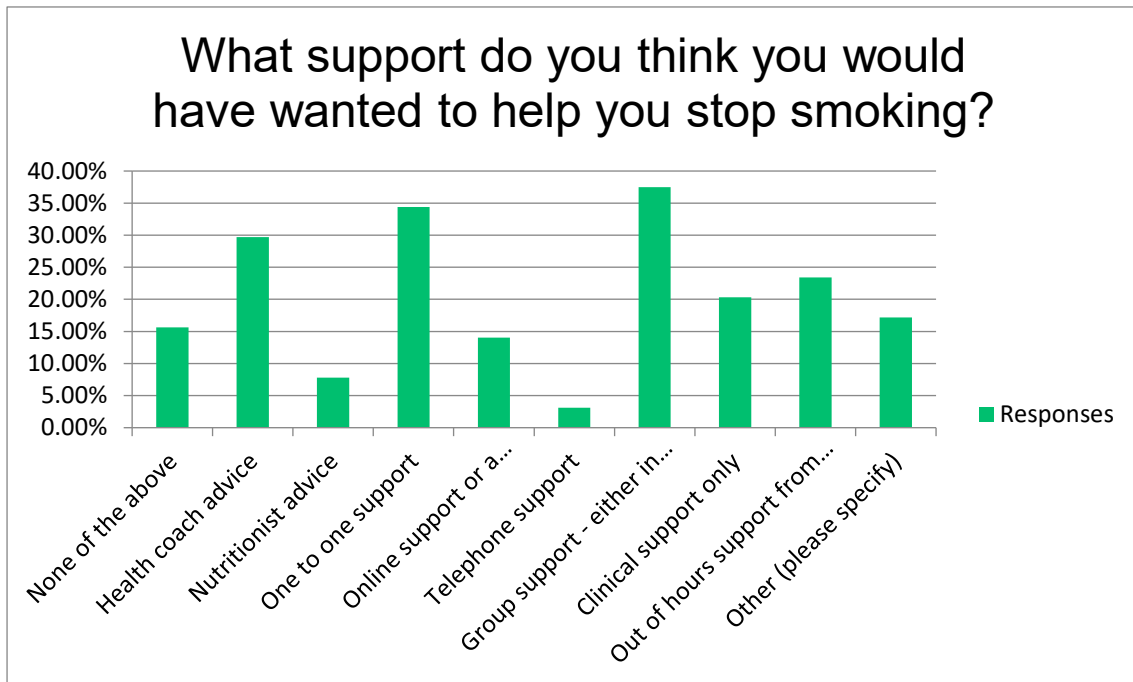


The most common factor for making it hard for residents to give up smoking was it being part of their daily life followed by smoking being a comfort for them. Pressures at home or work and smoking helping them manage their anxiety were also common factors as well as finding it hard to quit on their own.

Responses to “other” included:-

- Other addictions made it too hard to quit smoking at the same time
- Social smoking and influence of peers
- Loss of job and smoking is a comfort

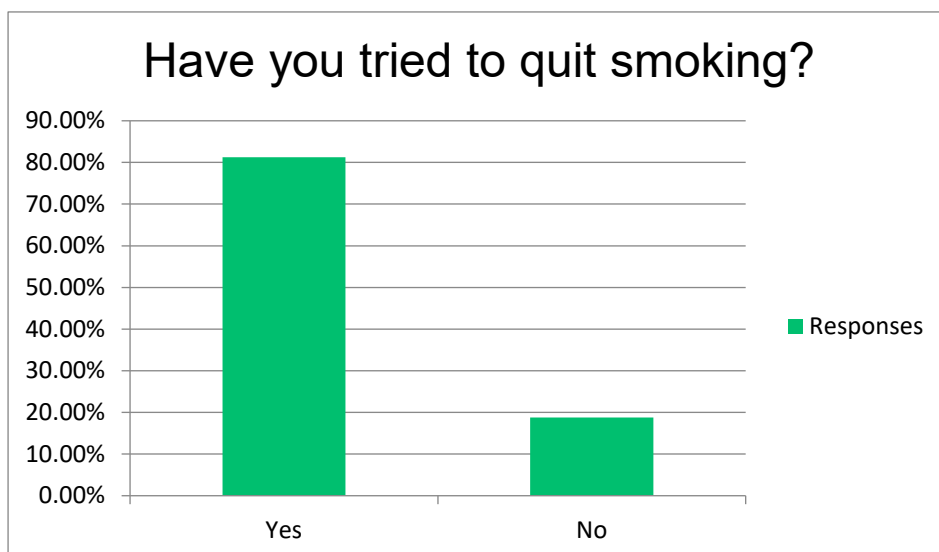
- I need to be in the right mindset to quit
- I don't want to quit

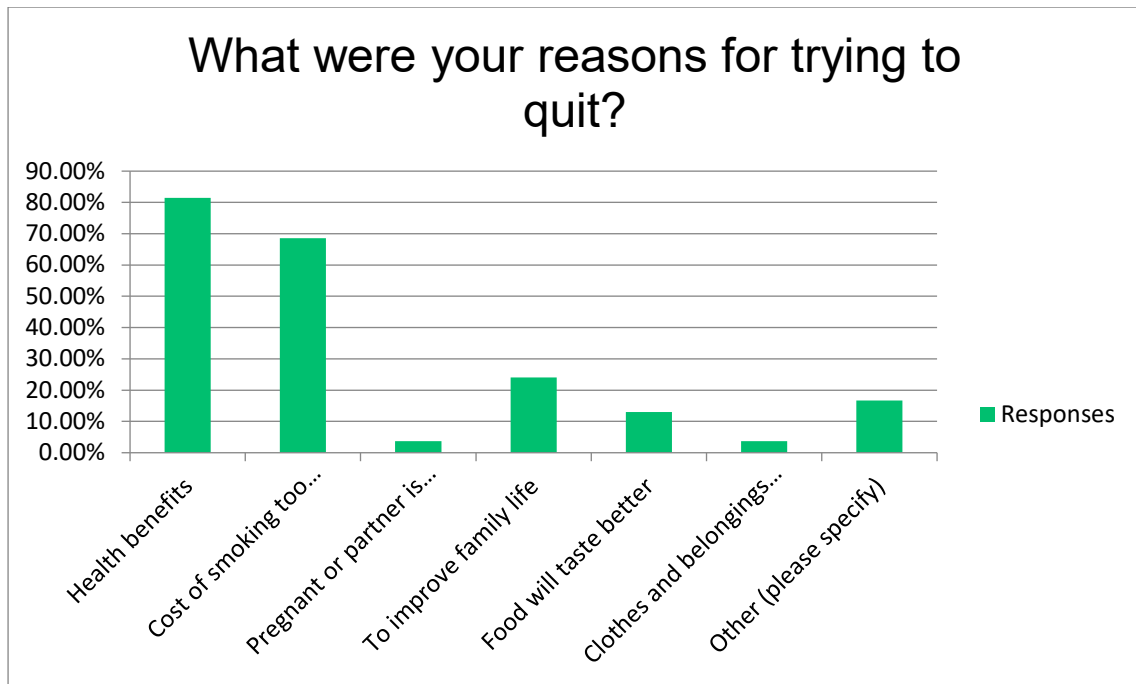


Whilst 15% of respondents stated that they would not want any support to stop smoking, it is clear that residents would want some form of support to help them quit. 20% wanted clinical (pharmacy) support only, however group and one to one support gathered the highest responses followed by health coach advice.

“Other” responses included:-

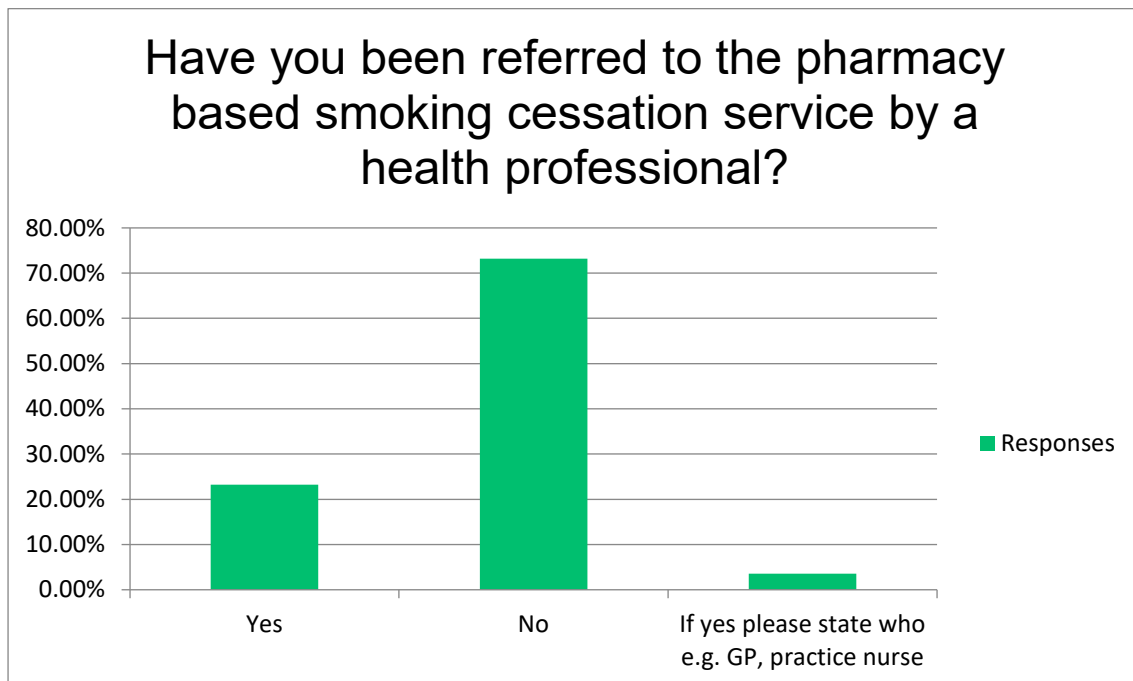
- Behavioural support including CBT
- Wanting to break the link between eating and smoking
- Own willpower and being in the right mental place to quit
- Make it not as easy to get cigarettes!



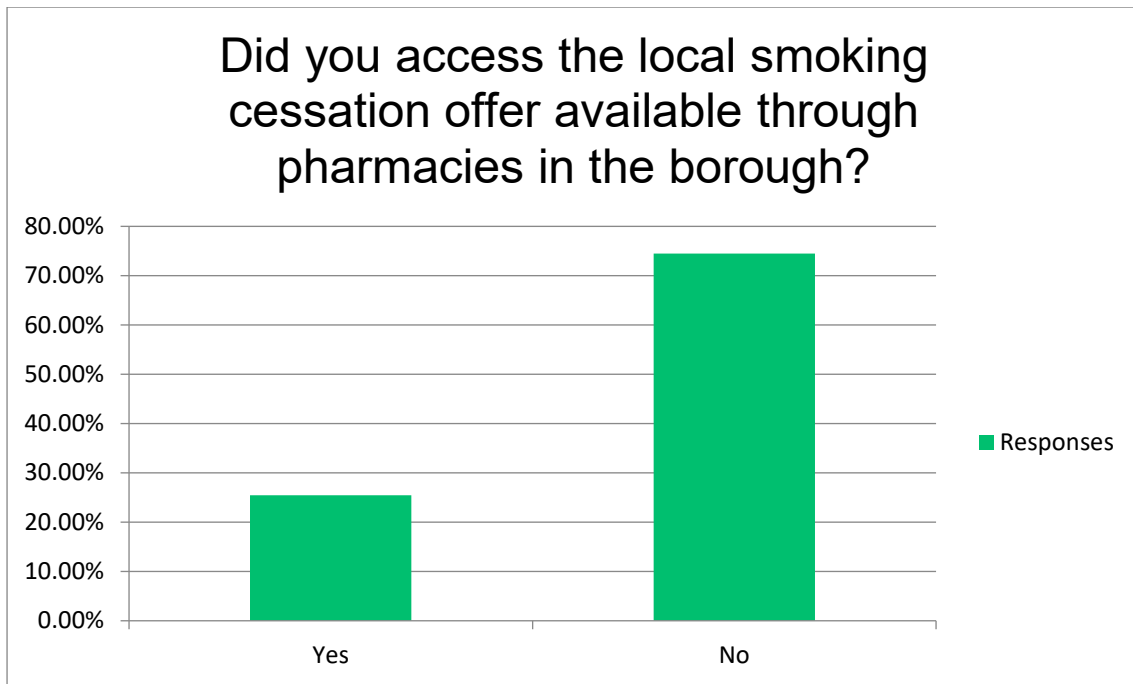


The cost of smoking to people’s health and the financial cost were the most important reasons for wanting to give up smoking. Responses included within “other” were:-

- “I just decided I’d had enough and went cold turkey”
- “Quality of life”
- “To improve my mental health”
- “Just because I could”



Those who responded to who made the referral stated that it was their GP practice.



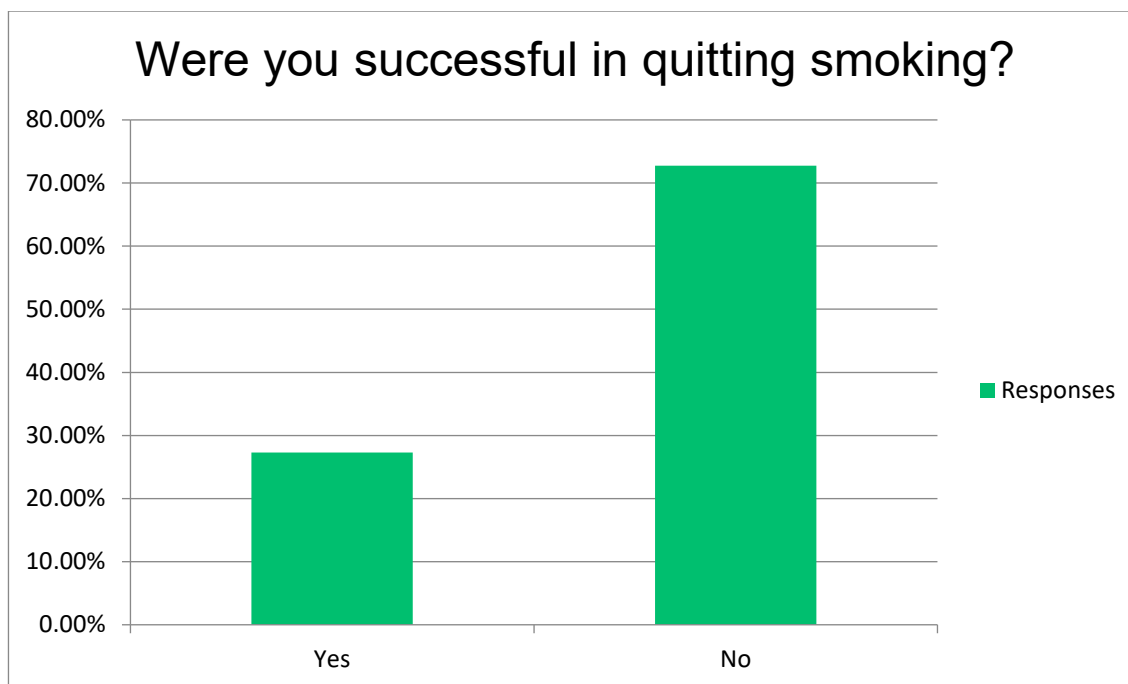
The majority of respondents had not accessed the borough’s smoking cessation provision in local pharmacies.

In response to ‘how would you rate the support you received from the pharmacy’, the following ratings were provided

Rating	%
Very poor	7
Poor	57
Average	22
Good	7
Excellent	7

Reasons for the poor ratings were given as below:-

- “Product support only - no motivational support.”
- “NRP made me feel sick and didn’t work for me”
- “Nicotine patches were far too strong”
- NRP only service and the patches made me feel sick. I tried and didn’t go back.”
- “Military approach”
- “Not much help”
- “They cut me off”



We asked those who were successful in quitting smoking, to what extent they felt that "The pharmacy based smoking cessation service has been important in helping me quit smoking". The 8 respondents provided the following responses:-

Rating	%
Strongly disagree	25
Disagree	25
Neither agree nor disagree	12
Agree	38
Strongly agree	0

We then asked respondents what additional support would have helped them to quit smoking.

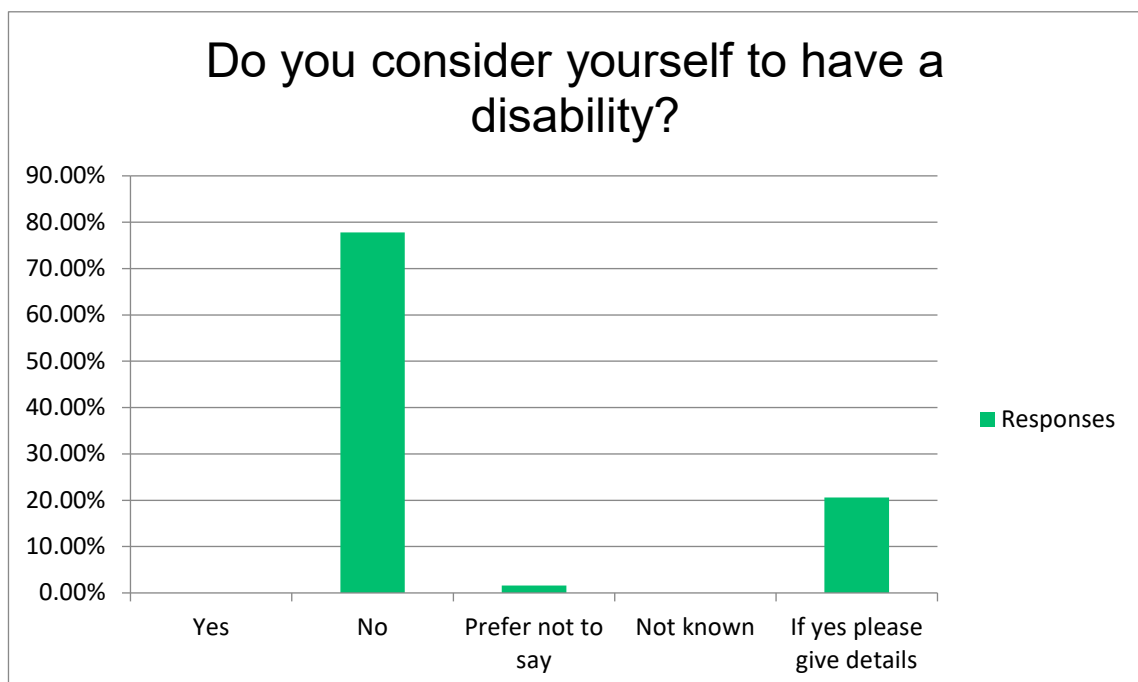
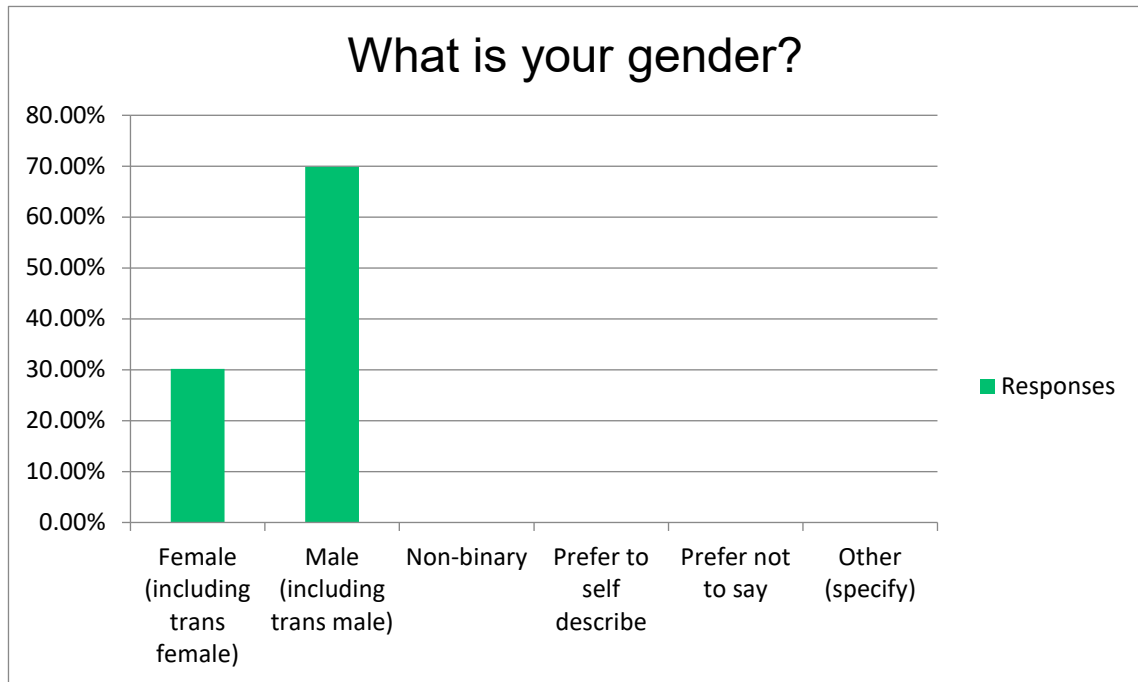
- Five respondents felt that group support would be beneficial "peer support where you feel cared for, and family members and friends quitting too."
- Four respondents felt that mental health support at the time of quitting would help them.
- Behavioural coaching and motivational support were raised by 8 respondents as something they would find beneficial in helping them to quit smoking.
- CBT was also raised by 8 respondents as something that would help them break the habit.
- 6 respondents felt that they just needed to quit by themselves without support
- 2 respondents felt that they needed other distractions to stop them from wanting to have a cigarette.
- 2 felt that they would be able to quit by vaping.

When asked what were the barriers to success in quitting smoking, the key themes in responses from residents were:-

- Stress and mental health issues - 21 respondents cited this as a barrier
- 10 respondents felt that the habit of smoking made it hard to quit
- 8 respondents felt that other addictions were a barrier to giving up smoking

- Lack of willpower and motivation were cited as barriers by 7 respondents
- 6 respondents felt that social influences were a barrier to quitting smoking
- 3 respondents felt that it was hard to quit alone
- 3 felt that smoking was a too longstanding addiction to be able to stop

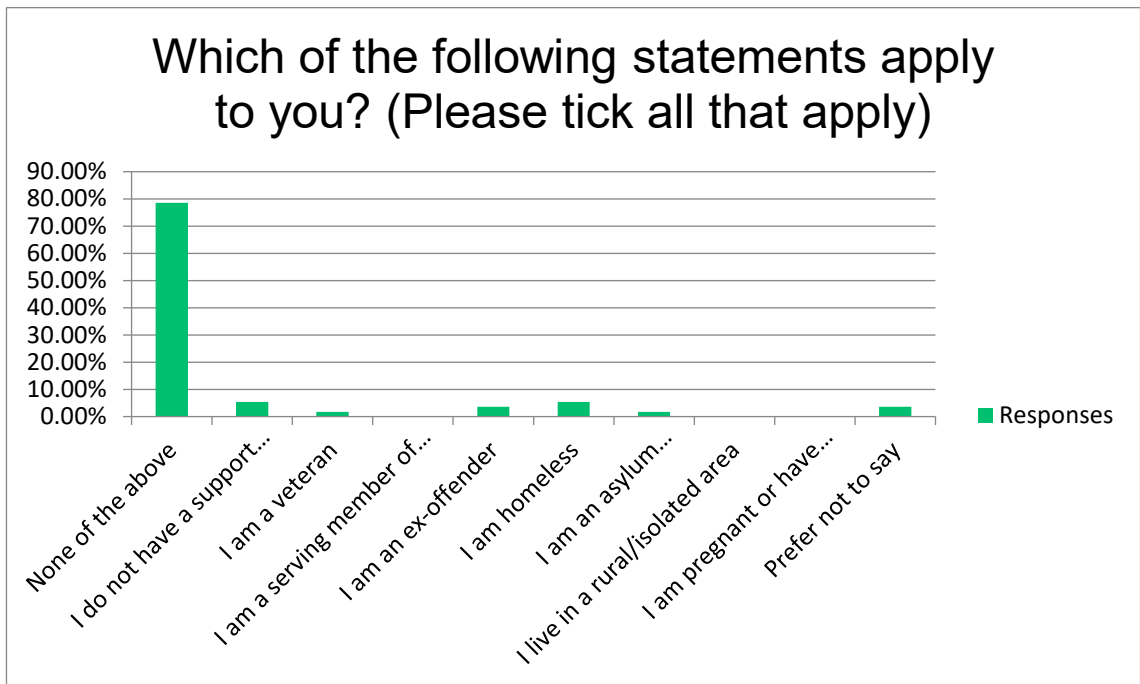
Demographics of Respondents

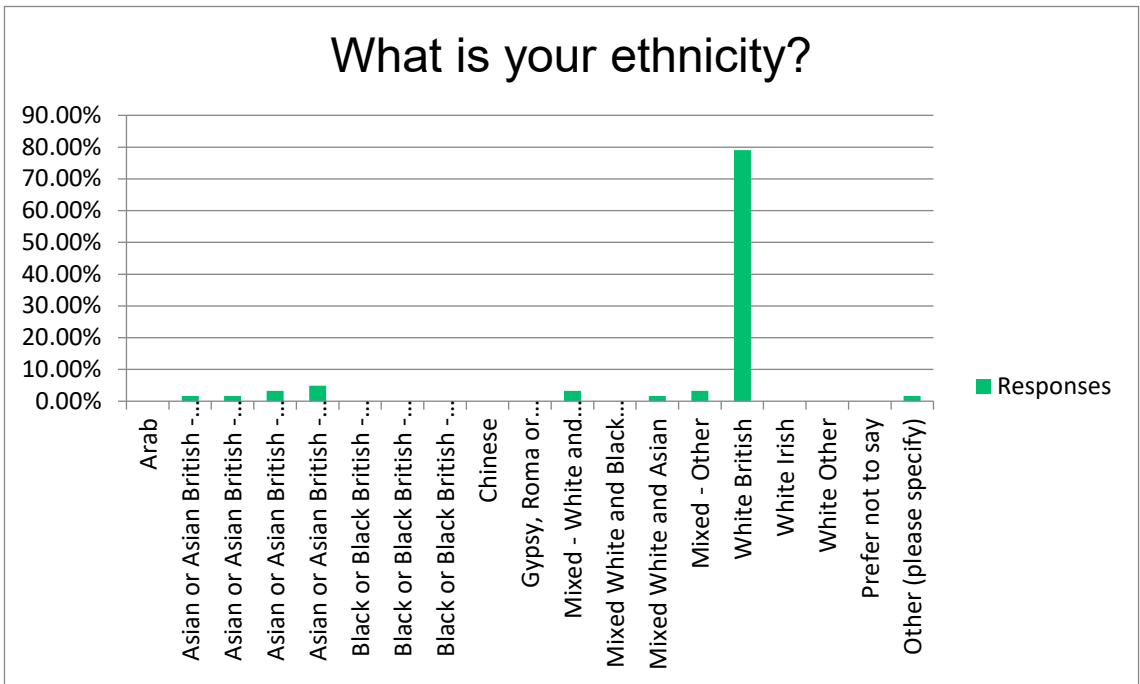
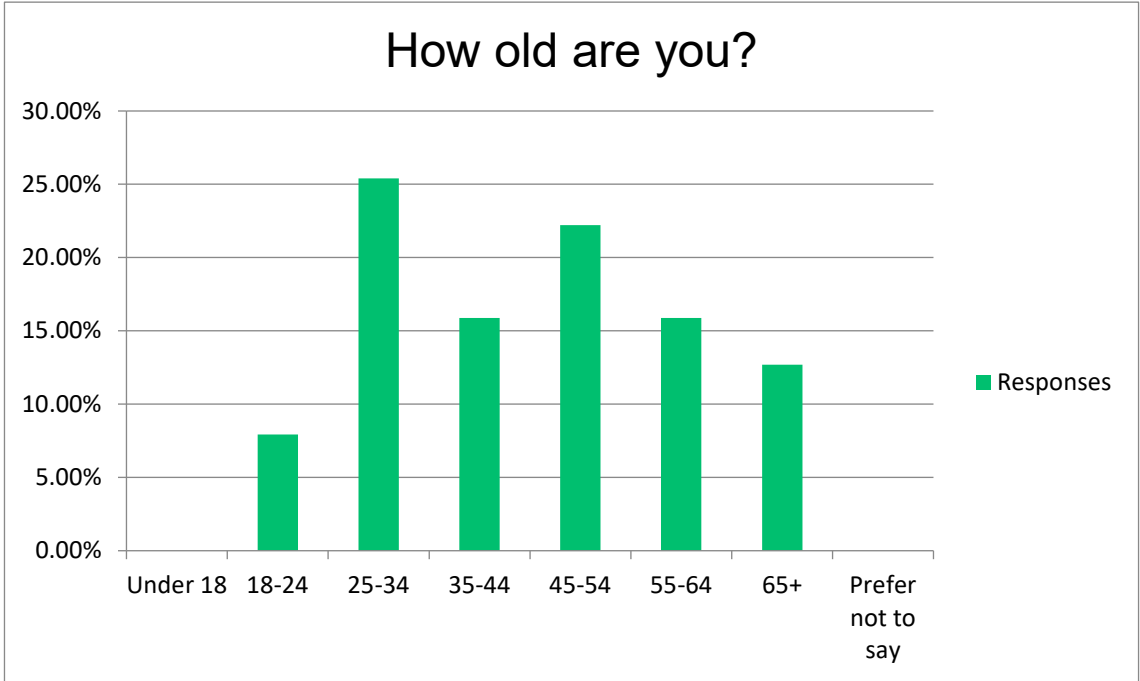


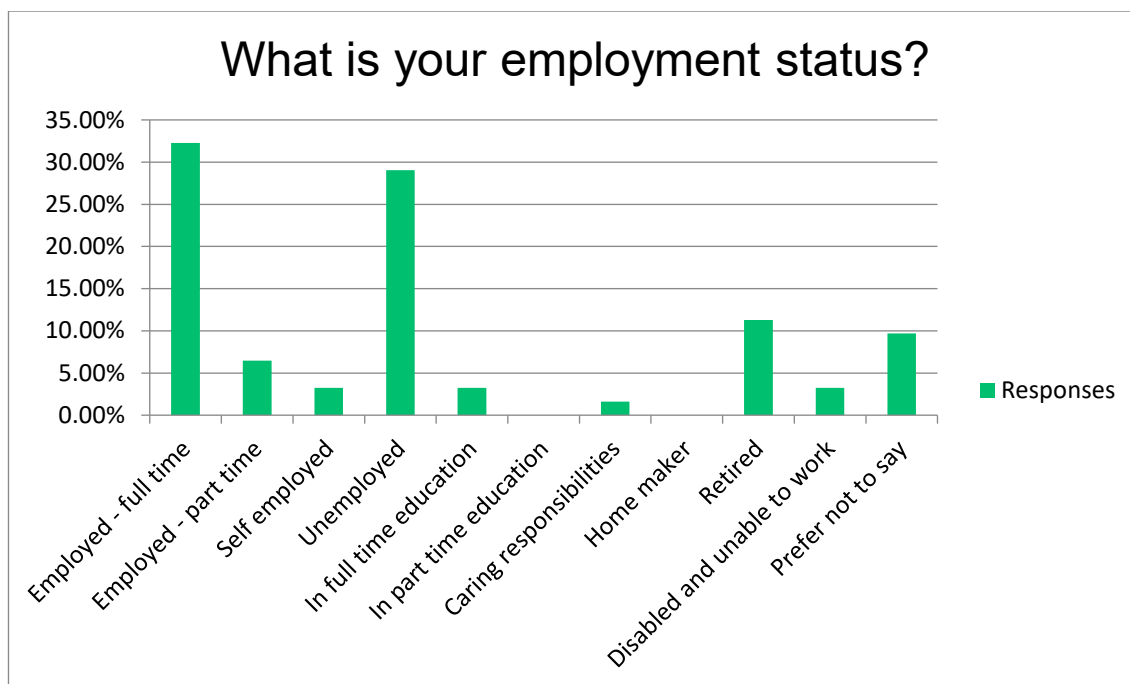
Those who responded yes included COPD, mental health issues, autism and ADHD, visual impairment, physical disabilities, arthritis and multiple sclerosis.



Those who responded yes included alcohol addiction, diabetes, mental health issues, arthritis and hypertension.







Pharmacies Survey Feedback

We received responses from 5 of the participating pharmacies to our online survey. Feedback from them is shared below.

To what extent do you agree with the following statements: - Your staff have sufficient time to deliver the smoking cessation provision

Rating	%
Strongly disagree	0
Disagree	20
Neither agree nor disagree	0
Agree	80
Strongly agree	0

Your staff have the confidence to deliver a smoking cessation provision

Rating	%
Strongly disagree	0

<i>Disagree</i>	20
<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	0
<i>Agree</i>	20
<i>Strongly agree</i>	60

Your staff have knowledge, skills and training to support behaviour change in residents wanting to quit smoking

Rating	%
<i>Strongly disagree</i>	0
<i>Disagree</i>	20
<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	20
<i>Agree</i>	20
<i>Strongly agree</i>	40

You have the space you need within the pharmacy to offer one to one support confidentially

Rating	%
<i>Strongly disagree</i>	0
<i>Disagree</i>	0
<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	0
<i>Agree</i>	60
<i>Strongly agree</i>	40

There is an interest from smokers in your local area in wanting to quit smoking

Rating	%
<i>Strongly disagree</i>	0
<i>Disagree</i>	40
<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	0
<i>Agree</i>	0
<i>Strongly agree</i>	60

You have sufficient capacity to follow up with people who have dropped out of provision

Rating	%
<i>Strongly disagree</i>	20
<i>Disagree</i>	0
<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	20
<i>Agree</i>	40
<i>Strongly agree</i>	20

Other local healthcare professionals actively promote the service

Rating	%
<i>Strongly disagree</i>	0
<i>Disagree</i>	40
<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	40
<i>Agree</i>	0
<i>Strongly agree</i>	20

You have sufficient educational/marketing materials to promote the service

Rating	%
<i>Strongly disagree</i>	0
<i>Disagree</i>	20
<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	0
<i>Agree</i>	60
<i>Strongly agree</i>	20

You gather feedback from residents on the effectiveness of your provision

Rating	%
<i>Strongly disagree</i>	0
<i>Disagree</i>	0
<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	40
<i>Agree</i>	40
<i>Strongly agree</i>	20

What community support would you find helpful in delivering your service?

- *“more advertisements or leaflets in other local businesses to raise awareness”*
- *“More advertising and referrals from other healthcare professionals”*

What additional support would you want from BwD Public Health team?

One respondent replied “More funding to support the service”

If there was additional funding for smoking cessation, what changes would you make to your current provision?

- *“have the clinic running for an extra hour or so in order to be more suited to patient timings of hours.”*
- *“Ensure to capture more of a market by investing in marketing and advertising”*

