

Views on smoking from people living in housing association homes

Thoughts on messaging, smoking habits and the free NHS stop smoking service.



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About Us

We are an independent voice for the people of Derbyshire. We are here to listen to the experiences of Derbyshire residents and give them a stronger say in influencing how local health and social care services are provided.

Our mission

We are a strong, independent, and effective champion for people that use health and social care services. We will continue to influence health and care services and seek to improve joined-up care for the people of Derbyshire.

Our vision

We want to see consumers of health and social care services being put centre stage so that service providers and commissioners listen to what they have to say and use their voices to shape, inform and influence service delivery and design.



Summary

Between February and March 2025, we collected the views and experiences of 31 residents of housing association homes. We wanted to understand their views on the stop smoking service and stop smoking messaging, such as adverts and posters.

We used a survey to better understand the opinions of the residents. We advertised the survey on social media and sent it to our contacts. Our contacts were Derby City (Livewell), Derbyshire (Live Life Better Derbyshire) stop smoking services, and the housing associations.

This was a commissioned (paid for) piece of research with Public Health teams at both Derby City Council and Derbyshire County Council. This was funded by the Integrated Care Board (ICB) in the NHS.

We did this research to influence the summer 2025 messaging campaign with Diva Creative.

Diva Creative is a communications and marketing company hired by the NHS and both Derby City Council and Derbyshire County Council to put out stop smoking messaging.

We found that most people are persuaded by messaging that focuses on their physical health with smoking and also messaging that highlights the money-saving benefits of stopping smoking.

The survey also asked residents where they might go for information on stopping smoking.

Most residents answered they would go to a trusted source - a doctor, pharmacist, a friend/family member, or the free NHS stop smoking service.

They felt the stop smoking service provided a good service.

The residents expressed their need for help to also quit vaping.

Key information

- Most residents felt 'neutral' to 'very persuaded' by messaging on the physical health impacts of stopping smoking
- Most residents felt 'neutral' to 'very persuaded' on messaging about the money saving benefits of stopping smoking

- Most residents felt 'neutral' to 'negative' on the messaging about the mental health impacts of smoking
- Residents were aware of the free NHS stop smoking service and most felt 'positive' about it
- Residents would like a stop vaping service
- Residents, when looking for stop smoking information, would go to a trusted source. This included a doctor, pharmacist, friend or family member and a community centre.

Key findings

Residents were asked to rate on a scale of '1' (not persuaded) to '5' (very persuaded) how persuaded they would be to stop smoking if messaging was focused on:

The financial benefits to stopping smoking (18 respondents).

• 100% (18) residents rated this message a '3' or higher. With 50% (9) rating this message a 5/5 for persuasiveness.

The physical health benefits to stopping smoking" (18 respondents)

• 100% (18) residents rated this message a '3' or higher. With 44% (8) rating this message a 5/5 for persuasiveness.

Other questions we asked residents

If you were to look for information on stopping smoking, where might you go? (19 respondents).

Some of the top answers for this question included:

- 74% (14) said they would visit a GP surgery or a doctor when going to find information on stopping smoking
- 42% (8) said they would go to friends or family
- 37% (7) said they would go to a pharmacy or stop smoking service.

When finding out more about residents smoking habits we asked:

What kind of tobacco do you use? (20 respondents)

 60% (12) of the residents chose to smoke hand-rolled cigarettes. This was the most popular choice among residents, and the most cost-effective option

When you smoke, how many times do you smoke per day? (20 respondents)

• A majority of 50% (10) of the residents smoked 11-20 cigarettes per day.

Key suggestions

Messaging targeted towards those living in housing association homes should focus on:

- Saving money
- Physical health improvements
- Physical impacts of smoking
- Using Facebook as it is the most favoured social media platform.

For residents to feel the most benefit from the free NHS stop smoking service:

- Continue to build relationships across services, such as the housing association providers, to raise awareness and build trust with the residents
- Look into wider service offerings such as including stopping vaping as part of the stop smoking programme
- Look at building peer-to-peer support as residents trust their friends and family.

For a smoke-free community in Derby City and Derbyshire, information on stopping smoking should be readily available at places like:

- GP surgeries
- Community centres
- Pharmacies.
- Food banks.

These services should continue to strengthen their relationship with each other, and the free NHS stop smoking service.



"My mumpassed in 2000, and I tried numerous times to quit. But with a job, a relationship, and housing issues at the time, there was never a right moment.

I thought I needed to try again and joined a free NHS stop smoking group. With their help I moved onto a prescription product. At seven weeks I hated tobacco, by 11 weeks I was clean ..."

Why we did this project

We wanted to hear from people living in housing association homes to understand their smoking habits, their thoughts on messaging around smoking and their views on the free stop smoking service offered by the NHS.

The goal was to help shape a stop smoking messaging campaign led by Diva Creative for residents in housing association homes. We also wanted to get feedback on the NHS's free stop smoking service and other wider services across Derby City and Derbyshire.

The free stop smoking service in Derby City is called 'Livewell.' Livewell provides a free ten week stop smoking programme with support from a stop smoking professional and free help to quit products.

The support from a professional is provided over the phone, or at regular dropin sessions across the city.

The stop smoking service across the Derbyshire area is called 'Live Life Better Derbyshire' (LLBD). LLBD provides a free 12 week stop smoking programme with support from a stop smoking professional and free help to quit products.

The support from a professional is provided over the phone.

This research was commissioned (paid for) by the NHS, Derby City Council and Derbyshire County Council.

How did we do it?

Working with partners and putting the survey out on social media

Diva Creative is putting a targeted messaging campaign out in June 2025, this meant they needed the information from us in April 2025. This gave us from February 2025 to March 2025 to complete this work.

Diva Creative shared the messages they wanted us to use and test with the residents. We then made the survey questions based on their feedback. We made sure the survey also had other questions about smoking habits and the free NHS stop smoking services, Livewell and LLBD.

If we had more time, we would have produced this work with people living in housing association homes, as well as with our volunteers.

Instead, we asked both the councils and the ICB for feedback when producing the survey.

In the future it has been agreed with decision-makers from Public Health, the ICB and Diva Creative that everyone would benefit from longer deadlines to provide a fairer and better understanding of the residents.

The survey was made available in the following ways:

- Online survey link
- Posters
- QR codes
- Paper format.

We then ran the survey on social media specifically targeting locations with housing association homes. The survey was shared across all of our social media channels. These include Facebook, Instagram, X (formerly Twitter) LinkedIn and BlueSky.

We also sent the survey to our local contacts; the free NHS stop smoking services and social housing providers. We also shared articles online in the press, on our website and in newspapers.

We included providers such as:

- Futures Housing
- Derwent Living / Places for PeopleDerby Homes / Derby City Council
- The Guinness Partnership
- Action Housing.

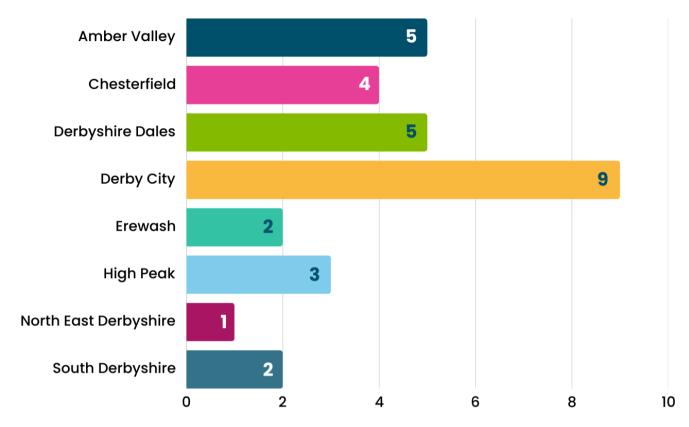
We also offered a prize draw where three people who filled in the survey could win a £50 Love2Shop voucher each if they completed the survey and left their contact details.

Who did we hear from?

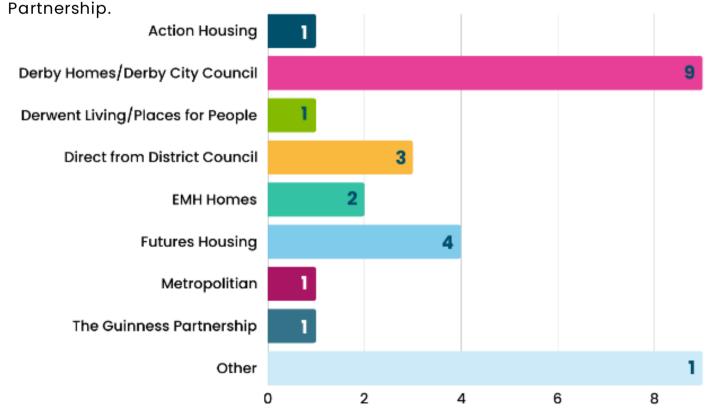
Housing association residents across Derby City and Derbyshire

We heard from 31 residents in total, with the most responses from Derby City. This was followed by the Derbyshire Dales and Amber Valley districts of Derbyshire.

Chesterfield had the third highest number of responses. Other areas we heard from included High Peak, North East Derbyshire, South Derbyshire and Erewash. We did not hear from anyone living in Bolsover.



We then asked which housing association homes the residents were part of. Most residents directly rented from Derby City Council. The other residents belonged to different associations, such as Futures Housing or The Guinness



The 29% (9) of residents who answered 'other' wrote in an open text box. These other housing association homes mentioned were:

- Platform Housing
- Your Housing Group
- Housing 21
- Local Council
- Trident
- Rykneld.

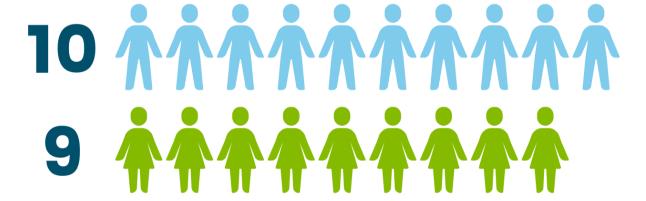
We asked some optional questions about people's:

- Gender
- Age
- Disability Status
- Ethnicity.

Of the 31 people that answered the survey 19 people answered the optional questions.

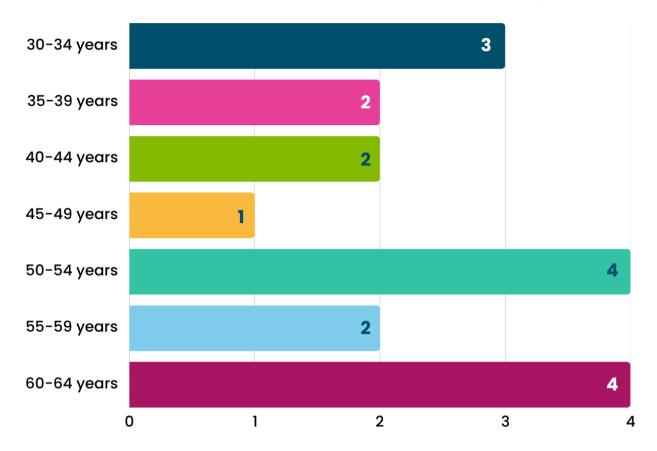
Gender of the residents

We heard from ten people who selected male, and nine who selected female.



Age of the residents

We heard from a wide range of ages, from 30 to 64 years old. We did not hear from anyone below 30. One person prefered not to tell us their age.



Ethnicity of the residents

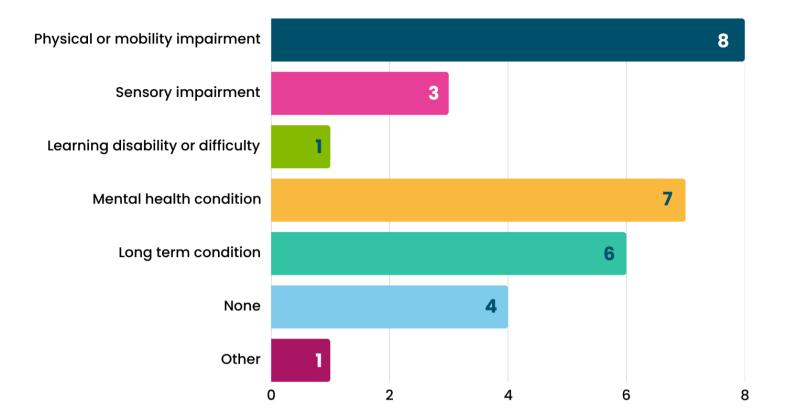
16 people who filled in this question said they were White British, the others selected:

- Black/Black British: African (1)
- White Roma (1)
- Prefer not to say (1)

Disability status of the residents

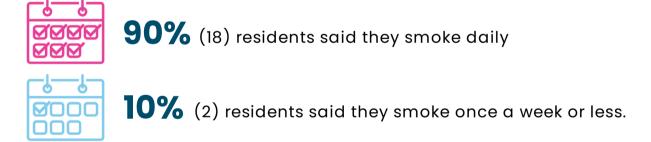
We also asked residents if they considered themselves to have a disability. Most residents told us they had a physical/mobility impairment.

Many residents were also living with a mental health condition, and/or a long-term condition. We also asked about other disabilities as detailed below:



Smoking status of the residents

We also asked residents their current smoking habits.



What people choose to smoke

We asked residents what kind of tobacco they used, residents could choose more than one answer if they used multiple types.

Of the 20 residents that responded to the question. 12 residents chose to smoke hand rolled cigarettes, this being the most cost-effective and popular option when smoking.

This was closely followed by 10 residents choosing to smoke shop-bought cigarettes. Other options chosen included:

Shisha, waterpipe tobacco (1)

- Chewing tobacco (1)
- Vaping products (1).

Taking a closer look at who responded

Out of the nine residents who said they lived in Derby City:



- Three residents said they smoke and would like to quit
- Two residents said they smoke and had no intention of quitting
- Four residents said they had already quit.

Out of the 20 residents who told us they were from Derbyshire:



- 12 residents said they currently smoke and would like to quit
- Two residents said they would not be interested in quitting
- Six residents said they had already quit.

Most residents who had quit and answered the optional questions were women in both Derby City and Derbyshire.

Of the nine men who chose to answer the smoking status question:



- Three of them had quit smoking
- Six smoked daily.

Of the women who told us they smoked:



- Three smoked daily
- One smoked once a week or less
- One woman smoked more than 21 cigarettes per day
- Two women smoked between ten and 20 cigarettes per day
- One woman smoked less than ten per day.

What did people tell us?

Key messaging in smoking

We wanted to understand residents' views of messaging around stopping smoking and how persuasive or impactful they may find future messaging about stopping smoking.

Residents were asked to rate on a scale from 1-5 how they felt about each message. With 'l' being the least impactful or persuasive, and '5' the most impactful or persuasive.

For the first question we wanted to understand more about themes, for example mental health, or physical health. We then asked residents to comment further on what they felt.

Thinking more about stopping smoking, how persuasive might you find each of the following messages?

Messaging	Not at all persuasive	Slightly persuasive	Neutral/ Mixed	Persuasive	Very persuasive
There are mental health benefits to stopping smoking	5 people	1 person	6 people	4 people	3 people
There are financial benefits to stopping smoking	0	0	7 people	2 people	9 people
There are physical health benefits to stopping smoking	0	0	5 people	5 people	8 people
There are benefits for your family and those around you	1 person	0	4 people	5 people	8 people

Most residents were persuaded by messaging on the financial benefits of stopping smoking. 50% (9) of residents rated it a '5' with nobody rating it lower than a '3'.

They were also persuaded by messaging that focused on their physical health. With 44% (8) of residents rating it a '5' and nobody rating it lower than a '3'.

Residents had neutral to negative views on the mental health impacts of smoking with 26% (5) of residents rating it '1'.

When asked to tell us more, residents responded with:



"... I would also like to increase my physical health, as I get regular chest infections during the winter months and easily become breathless on dog walks."



Some residents also felt the messaging was familiar, responding with:



"I find all the statements persuasive. However, it's all facts, I've already known for a long while and have still not managed to quit."



Residents also felt they had been let down by other services leading them to take up smoking more regularly, with one resident saying:



"I probably would not smoke as much if I could get some help with my mental health and not have to wait so long to get ADHD medication."



Building on from this question, we asked residents how persuaded they would be by messages that focused on just one topic. For example, the messages would focus only on physical health.

The first topic we explored was mental health.

Residents had earlier expressed 'neutral' to 'negative' feelings towards being persuaded to quit if the messaging focused on mental health.

This was again shown when exploring the messaging on that topic, as shown below:

How impactful might you find each of the following messages about mental health and smoking?

Messaging	Not at all impactful	Slightly impactful	Neutral/ Mixed	Impactful	Very impactful
Smoking can trap you in a stress cycle	2 people	1 person	8 people	4 people	1 person
Smoking can make you feel more stressed, anxious and irritated	3 people	5 people	6 people	2 people	1 person
Smoking can make feelings of depression worse	4 people	2 people	9 people	1 person	0
Stopping smoking can help with depression as much as some medicines	4 people	2 people	6 people	4 people	0

Not many of the residents rated any of the messaging a '5' with most residents scoring the messaging a '3' or below.

The most persuasive messaging related to mental health and was that smoking traps people into a stress cycle:

A stress cycle is when nicotine gets to your brain quickly, making a smoker feel good and relaxed for a little while. However, that feeling doesn't last long.

As the nicotine fades away, the smoker might start to feel anger and anxiety. This often makes a person want to smoke again to feel better. (BetterHealth, NHS, 2025).

The next question looked at the costs related to smoking and the benefits offered to help people quit smoking.

Most residents were persuaded by the money that could be saved from stopping smoking. With 40% (6) of residents rating the statement a '5'.

How persuasive might you find each of the following messages about smoking?

Messaging	Not at all persuasive	Slightly persuasive	Neutral/ Mixed	Persuasive	Very persuasive
By stopping smoking you could save at least £2,500	1 person	2 people	5 people	1 person	6 people
People who smoke are less likely to work than people who don't smoke	7 people	2 people	5 people	0	1 person
You are three times more likely to quit for good using a stop smoking service	2 people	2 people	7 people	1 person	3 people

Residents felt the least persuaded by the statement that: 'Those who smoke are less likely to work than those who don't' with 46% (7) of residents rating this statement a '1'. This was the lowest rating any statement received.

The next question focused on other people's health that could be impacted by smoking. For example, children who live in a smoking household.

How impactful might you find each of the following messages about other people's health and smoking?

Messaging	Not at all impactful	Slightly impactful	Neutral/ Mixed	Impactful	Very impactful
Being around smokers when you're pregnant can put you at risk of loosing your baby. You're also at higher risk of having a difficult birth.	4 people	1 person	5 people	1 person	4 people

Messaging	Not at all impactful	Slightly impactful	Neutral/ Mixed	Impactful	Very impactful
80% of smoke is invisible and odourless. It can stay in the air for up to three hours. It can stay on surfaces for longer.	2 people	3 people	6 people	2 people	3 people
A child who lives with parents or siblings who smoke is much more likely to become a smoker themselves.	1 person	1 person	6 people	5 people	2 people

Overall residents felt quite 'neutral' regarding these statements, with the highest rating in each of the statements being a '3'. This could be because when asked to give a comment some respondents replied by saying they "lived alone."



"I live alone but I am aware of the health risks to my family and friends who visit."



Some residents who answered this way felt this messaging was not relevant to them because they live alone and nobody visits, or that they were already aware of the risks to people who do visit them. Therefore, they were not overly persuaded by these statements.

The final question in this section focused on the physical benefits to stopping smoking.

How persuasive might you find each of the following messages about health and smoking?

Messaging	Not at all persuasive	Slightly persuasive	Neutral/ Mixed	Persuasive	Very persuasive
You're less likely to get heart problems, cancer or lung problems if you stop smoking.	0	2 people	4 people	3 people	5 people

Messaging	Not at all persuasive	Slightly persuasive	Neutral/ Mixed	Persuasive	Very persuasive
Smoking is the primary cause of preventable illness and premature death, accounting for around 80,000 deaths a year in England.	0	3 people	6 people	3 people	3 people
If you stop smoking you're less likely to get dementia or diabetes.	3 people	1 person	5 people	4 people	2 people
Smoking can take at least 10 years off your life.	1 person	2 people	5 people	3 people	3 people
Smokers are more likely to have a heart attack. Smokers are also more likely to have a stroke or have problems with their veins.	0	2 people	4 people	4 people	4 people

Most residents felt 'neutral' to 'positive' towards these statements, with most statements receiving a majority rating of '3' or above.

The most persuasive statement was if a smoker stopped smoking, they would be less likely to get heart problems, cancer or lung problems.

The next highest rated statements were that smokers are more likely to have a heart attack, and smokers are more likely to have a stroke or problems with their veins.

The statements very much reflected what we saw within the very first question about messaging, such as, saving money is more persuasive. Residents are also interested in the physical health benefits of stopping smoking.

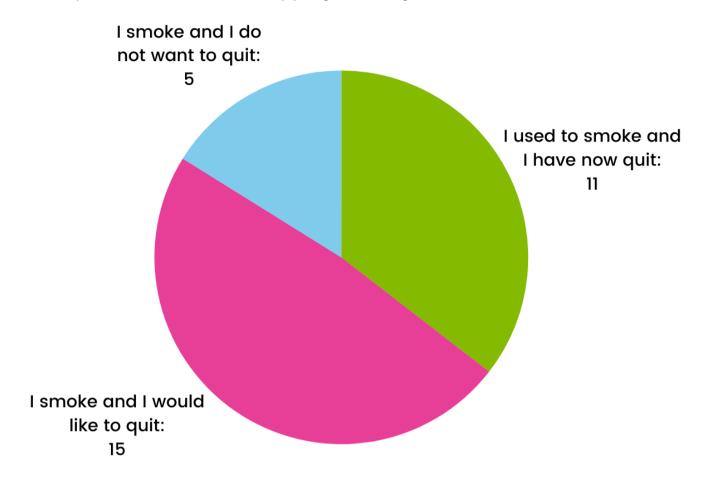
They feel quite 'neutral' when it comes to the benefits of others when stopping smoking, as it may not be relevant.

Finally, residents are not persuaded by the mental health benefits, feeling 'neutral' to 'negative'.

Thoughts on the free NHS stop smoking service

We asked the residents about their current smoking status and found that most of our residents would like to quit smoking.

This is the same as national data which says that around 60% of smokers would like to quit (Health matters: stopping smoking – what works? Gov.UK, 2019).

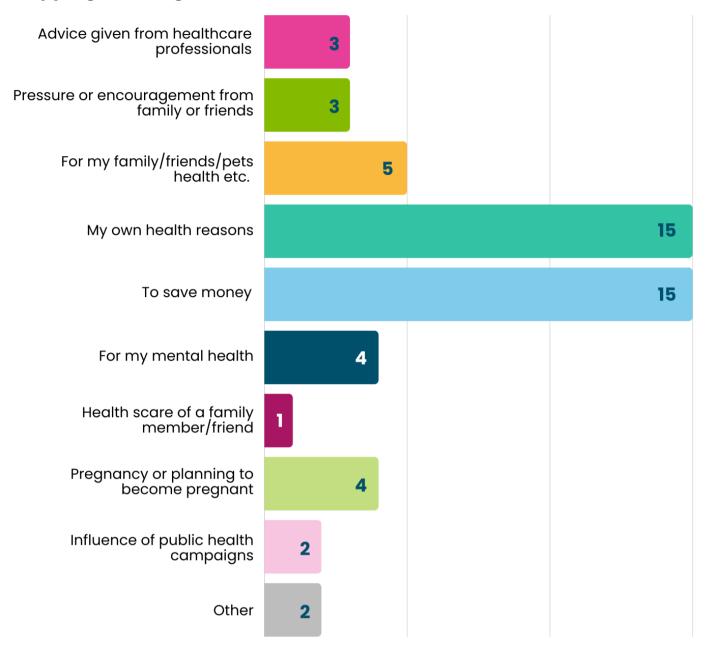


In our survey 48% (15) of residents said they would like to quit, whilst only 16% (5) of residents would not want to quit. This shows that there are many residents willing to give up smoking.

When asking residents if they had made a quit attempt previously and what their reasons for doing so were:

- 65% (15) of residents told us they quit for their own health reasons
- 65% (15) of residents said they quit to save money.

If you ever made an attempt to quit, what were your reasons for stopping smoking?



This is like the messaging we saw before. As most residents would be persuaded to quit with messaging centred around saving money, or around their physical health.

Other residents also told us more about their reasons for quitting and why they had started again saying:



"I quit during each of my pregnancies but began again within weeks of baby being born as I felt stressed, and my husband still smoked, so they were easily available."



We also asked residents if they were aware of the free NHS stop smoking service to which 84% (21) of residents replied they were aware of the services available to them.

When asked their thoughts on the NHS stop smoking service the residents told us:



"The stop smoking service didn't work for me as I am too busy to commit to anything. However, I think it's an excellent service."



Some residents felt more negatively towards the service telling us:



"If I were to stop smoking it would be something I did myself. Not everyone is suited to the stop smoking service offered. I would not enjoy being monitored and questioned."



We also worked with the free NHS stop smoking service within Derby City and Derbyshire on the survey. Both Livewell and LLBD were happy for us to refer any residents to them who highlighted they would like to join the stop smoking programme.

16% (4) of residents said they would like to be referred to the programme.

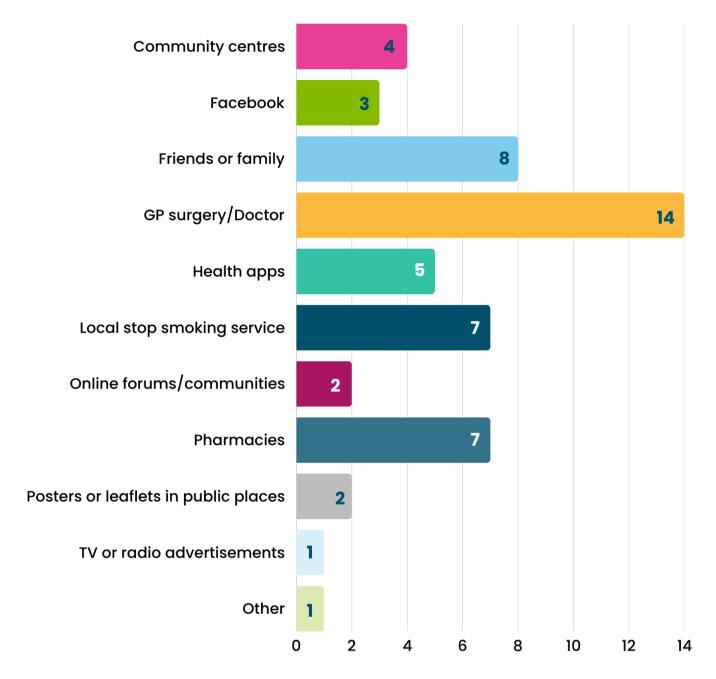
Therefore, it has been excellent to be able to have that partnership and encourage use of the stop smoking service. This way we have been able to refer residents that may have been unaware of the service, and/or not signed up.

Information for the wider services involved in stopping smoking

We also wanted to understand what may be useful for other services when thinking about a smoke-free community in the future. We first wanted to know where residents may go when looking for information on stopping smoking.

74% (14) residents said they would go to a GP surgery or a doctor for information on stopping smoking. 42% (8) of residents said they would also go to a family or friend for information.

Residents would go to a range of services or areas to locate information on stopping smoking:



It is clear from this that residents would like to get information from trusted sources such as doctors, friends, family, and pharmacists.

This is like previous research that LLBD shared with us. Their research highlighted the potential value of building peer-to-peer support groups. (Stay Well Smoking Sprint, February 2024).

This means that residents could turn to someone they knew for support, who had been through the stop smoking service before. This could help to build trust and encourage more use of the free NHS stop smoking service.

We also asked residents if there was anything else that they wanted to say during the survey.

A few residents suggested they had increased their use of vaping products, and now needed help to quit saying:



"I smoke very rarely; however, I have now found myself with an addiction to disposable vapes and would like to completely stop everything."

"I'm now on vapes and would like to guit them."



This was also highlighted in our previous report: <u>Student's Experiences of Smoking and Vaping</u>. We found that more students had taken up vaping and had found quit support limited.

Conclusion

Saving money is really at the forefront of residents' minds and they felt most persuaded by messaging related to this. Residents are often choosing the most cost-efficient ways to smoke, like choosing roll ups, rather than shop bought cigarettes.

Saving money by quitting smoking is something that can happen quickly. Which gives a nice boost of motivation. Many of the residents said they had tried to give up smoking before to save money.

One resident stated:



"I switched to vaping and feel a lot better for it. Financially I have a lot more money to spend on other things. I no longer have yellow fingers. I went from cigarettes to rollies to vapes."

Showing that saving money is a real incentive to stopping smoking, as well as the physical benefits residents may feel.

Residents said they cared about their personal health. Many of them had made a previous quit attempt for their own health reasons. They were especially interested in messages about taking care of their hearts, as well as reducing the chances of stroke.

78% (14) of residents in the survey identified as having a disability and said they are facing various health challenges. So, messaging focused on the health benefits of stopping smoking would likely be persuasive, as well as encouraging positive changes.

It was clear that many residents would like to quit smoking and are aware of the free NHS stop smoking service. This has since lead to further referrals made to the service from this survey.

Some barriers to the service were residents' availability to make the time commitment. As well as, wanting to quit by themselves without the need to 'report' to the free NHS stop smoking service.

When residents go to find information on stopping smoking, they would go to a trusted source. This could be a doctor, friend or family member, pharmacist, or to the free stop smoking service.

This encourages all services to work together to share information. By services building relationships together, and with the community, residents can choose to get help from anywhere and not feel lost.

Finally, residents expressed their need for help to quit vaping. This may become more common as the disposable vape ban will happen in England in summer 2025.

What has happened so far?

Where is the feedback going?

The feedback from this report is with the Public Health teams at Derby City Council and Derbyshire County Council, and the NHS Integrated Care Board.

The information from this report will help influence the summer 2025 targeted messaging for residents from Diva Creative.

Diva Creative has said:



"Partnering with Healthwatch Derbyshire when gathering insights for the Social Housing Tenants project was great. Their flexible approach was really helpful, and we valued the consistent communication.

Overall, they were able to gather relevant insights for the project in a short time frame, which will be essential for developing the communications work over the next few months.

We look forward to working together again.

We will also be sharing this report with the free local NHS stop smoking services, Livewell and Live Life Better Derbyshire (LLBD).

We'll continue to direct anyone who wants to quit smoking to the free NHS stop smoking service.

We will be continuing this piece of work and building connections with different services in Derby City and Derbyshire to create a strong joined-up network.

Recommendations

Future messaging around stopping smoking

Messaging targeted towards those living in housing association homes should focus on:

- Saving money
- Physical health improvements
- Physical impacts of smoking
- Using Facebook as it is the most favoured social media platform.

In future we would like more time for doing research with people. As time was very limited and we were unable to reach the number of residents we would have liked to.

We would also like to have more time to do interviews and focus groups to gain a deeper understanding of current services and messaging.

Having built a relationship with Diva Creative, we now know what it takes to build a successful messaging campaign. In future will be able to contribute more effectively.

Free NHS stop smoking service

For residents to feel the most benefit from the free NHS stop smoking service:

- Continue to build relationships across services, such as the housing association providers, to raise awareness and build trust with the residents
- Look into wider service offerings. Such as, including stopping vaping as part of the programme
- Look into peer-to-peer support, as residents greatly trust their friends and family.

The potential of peer-to-peer support has also been highlighted in previous research on stopping smoking in Derbyshire (Stay Well Smoking Sprint, February 2024).

Wider service improvements

For a smoke-free community in Derby City and Derbyshire, information on stopping smoking should be readily available at places like:

- GP surgeries
- · Community centres
- Pharmacies.
- · Food banks.

These services should continue to strengthen their relationship with each other, as well as the free NHS stop smoking service.

This would help increase collaboration and make sure services are not working separately and increase the number of residents using the service.

This would help reduce health inequalities and make it easier to connect with more people.

Thank you

Healthwatch Derbyshire would like to thank all the residents who took part in this survey. We would also like to thank Diva Creative for their help in co-producing the survey and feedback.

We would like to thank Livewell and LLBD for their feedback on this survey, and providing us with previous research.

We would also like to thank the Public Health teams at Derby City Council and Derbyshire County Council, and the ICB.

Finally, we would like to thank all of those who shared the survey with their residents and appreciate how quickly this was done.

Disclaimer

The comments outlined in this report should be taken in the context that they are not representative of all housing association residents within Derbyshire but nevertheless offer useful insight.

It is important to note that the engagement was carried out within a specific time frame and therefore only provides a snapshot of people's views as shared with Healthwatch staff.

They are the genuine thoughts, feelings, and issues people shared with Healthwatch Derbyshire. The data should be used in conjunction with, and to complement, other sources of data that are available.



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