

NHS stop smoking services continue to save lives

March 12 2015



Stop Smoking Services run by the NHS in England saved as many as 18,000 lives in a year, a [new report](#) suggests.

Released to coincide with National No Smoking Day, the University of Stirling analysis found that [stop smoking services](#) are succeeding at reducing premature deaths.

More than 724,247 people in England used the NHS services between

April 2012 and March 2013 - including support and counselling, and medications.

Following an evaluation of 3,000 smokers using these services, researchers found that eight in every 100 (eight per cent) people surveyed still hadn't smoked a year after giving up.

It also suggested those who took specialist one-to-one or group behavioural support were three times more likely to quit than those who only accessed GP practice or pharmacy-based help.

Linda Bauld, Stirling Professor of health policy and lead author of the study, said the findings demonstrated the need for continued financial support for NHS Stop Smoking Services.

"The best chance of success comes from seeing specialists who are trained to give the best support. Some smokers need this extra help to quit and so continued investment in these services is vital if more people are to [stop smoking](#) for good," she said.

The figures come on the same day that the British Heart Foundation [released figures](#) showing more than a third of smokers still light up in the home, putting non-smoking family members at risk.

The research showed that despite the dangers of passive smoking, almost two thirds of people (61 per cent) were more worried about the health of the smoker. This concern has led to more than half of those questioned pleading with the smoker in their lives to quit.

They also found that just under one in five (18 per cent) of the 2,000 people surveyed wrongly believed that opening windows protects others from the harmful effects of [cigarette smoke](#).

The majority of [harmful chemicals](#) in cigarette smoke are invisible and opening a window does little to prevent the harm of passive smoking reaching other people.

Also youngsters who are exposed to smoking in their homes are more than three times as likely to smoke than those who are brought up in smoke-free environments.

Cancer Research UK's senior health information officer Nicola Smith said that kicking the habit is the single best thing a smoker can do for their health and the health of those around them.

"It's never too late to make positive choices for your health and stopping smoking is the best change you can make – especially as smoking around your loved ones puts their [health](#) at risk too," she said.

"So this No Smoking Day, be proud to be a quitter. There's a wide range of free support available on the NHS to give you the best possible chances of successfully stopping and this new data on the Stop Smoking Services highlights the real difference specialist support can make," Smith added.

The British Heart Foundation's associate medical director, Dr Mike Knapton, agreed, adding that the burden of [passive smoking](#) was clear.

"Every week, thousands of children are exposed to passive smoke in enclosed spaces, putting them at greater risk of respiratory infections, asthma, and sudden infant death. Simply opening a window does not protect your children from breathing in harmful chemicals," he said.

"Smoking is not healthy for smokers or for the people around them. If you're a smoker and looking to quit, reach out to your pharmacist or local stop smoking team on No Smoking Day for information and

advice. Join the nearly one million smokers in the UK who are expected to quit this No Smoking Day," he added.

On October 1, a ban on [smoking](#) in cars carrying children will come into effect in England. And MPs are set to vote later today on further measures that could see the introduction of plain, standardised packaging for cigarettes by 2016.

Provided by Cancer Research UK

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