

# Vaping should be part of support to help smokers with mental health conditions quit

November 16 2017

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Credit: Cancer Research UK

A group of health bodies and charities has called for more to be done to help smokers with mental health conditions quit, including accessing e-cigarettes and other treatments.

In its [Statement on Electronic Cigarettes](#) , the Mental Health & Smoking Partnership said that smoking remains "part of the culture in too many

mental [health](#) settings", and that vaping and nicotine replacement therapies should be made an easier choice than smoking.

Professor Ann McNeill, co-chair of the partnership , said that people with a mental health condition are more than twice as likely to smoke as the [general population](#).

"This is a great inequality leading to early death and years of chronic illness for many," she said. "E-cigarettes provide a new opportunity for people to move away from smoking and avoid the terrible burden of death and disease it causes."

Smoking rates in people with [mental health conditions](#) have barely changed in the last 20 years, despite a steady decline in the rest of the population, said the statement.

It adds that on average people with mental health conditions die significantly earlier than the general population, with smoking likely contributing to this difference.

The partnership states that while there are many different mental health conditions, high smoking rates are a common trend among those affected.

Around 16% of adults in the general UK population smoke. But this can be [as high as 70% on psychiatric units](#) .

The partnership aims to reduce smoking rates among people with a mental health condition to 5% by 2035.

Alyssa Best, Cancer Research UK's policy adviser, said the Government has committed to tackling the extremely high smoking rates among people with mental health conditions in the Tobacco Control Plan for

England.

"E-cigarettes offer another opportunity for smokers with mental health conditions that haven't been able to stop using other methods. They should be offered as a legitimate method of quitting across all mental health settings," she said.

The evidence so far shows that e-cigarettes are far safer than smoking, but policies on the devices are inconsistent across [mental health settings](#).

McNeill said the statement aimed to address some of the widespread misunderstandings about e-cigarettes, and hoped it will support [mental health](#) staff and organisations in thinking about how they can encourage more of their service users to quit [smoking](#).

Lesley Colley, from the Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust, said that e-cigarettes and nicotine replacement therapies contributed to the trust cutting [smoking rates](#) from 43% to 28% since March 2016.

"Service users overwhelmingly requested the option to use [electronic cigarettes](#) during an in-patient stay and the trust supported this by offering free disposable electronic cigarettes on admission.

Provided by Cancer Research UK

Citation: Vaping should be part of support to help smokers with mental health conditions quit (2017, November 16) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2017-11-vaping-smokers-mental-health-conditions.html>

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