

The PROCESS Study

Understanding how smoking cessation services can be adapted to improve the uptake and success of smoking cessation for people in low socioeconomic status groups. A mixed-methods exploratory study.



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Background

Smoking is a **key driver of health inequalities** and is responsible for **nearly twice as many cancer cases in lower income groups compared to higher income groups**. Uptake and engagement of **Stop Smoking Services (SSS)** are particularly low amongst lower socioeconomic status (LSES) groups. It is important to **better understand how SSS can be better adapted for people from LSES groups**.

Aims

To explore the **appeal, acceptability, and accessibility of SSS for people in LSES groups**, and understand the barriers and enablers to uptake of SSS and areas of opportunity for service providers across the UK.



Methods

A **mixed-methods approach across three work packages**: **1)** an exploratory analysis of SSS uptake in areas with high levels of deprivation and smoking prevalence in routine and manual groups, **2)** qualitative interviews with SSS providers and **3)** qualitative interviews with SSS service users from LSES groups.

Findings



LSES groups face various challenges engaging with services including: **physical barriers** (e.g. session timings and location), **psychological barriers** (e.g. fear of being judged or lack of motivation to quit), and **literacy and language barriers**.



Service users are **not always aware of what SSS exist in their area or the services they provide**, with many holding **misconceptions** about the support available and **underestimating the potential benefits** of using SSS.



Long waiting lists due to staffing shortages and increasing demand act as a further barrier.



“Less than 50% of SSS provide immediate access to support after relapse”: this may disproportionately disadvantage those from LSES groups in their attempts to quit long-term.



A limited **range of Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT)** products were reported in some services.



LSES groups may be **unable to afford** their preferred NRT product themselves if they do not have access to it via SSS.



Conflicting public health messaging regarding e-cigs: service providers often find it difficult to know how best to support people using e-cigs to quit smoking.

Cancer Research UK is calling on the UK and devolved Governments to:

- ✓ Provide funding for the services and resources that help people quit smoking.
- ✓ Increase the visibility and reach of SSS to help people quit smoking.
- ✓ Increase the accessibility of SSS to encourage uptake.
- ✓ Ensure cessation tools, including e-cigarettes, are available and accompanied by support.