



## Let's talk about smoking

### Mental Health Strategy: 2017-2027

The Scottish Government's 10-year Mental Health Strategy for 2017-2027 describes their vision for mental health services across Scotland, where people can get the right help at the right time, expect recovery and fully enjoy their rights, free from discrimination and stigma.

There are numerous mentions about smoking and its effect on mental health within the strategy. The strategy describes 40 different actions, including those relating to the physical wellbeing of people with mental health problems:

#### Action 29

*"Work with partners who provide smoking cessation programmes to target those programmes towards people with mental health problems."*

This Action Point goes on to say: *"While the general smoking rate is declining, smoking rates among those with mental health problems have changed little during the past 20 years. One in three people with mental health problems in the UK smoke, as compared with one in five of the general population. Smoking can negatively affect the efficacy of medication taken for mental health problems, thereby increasing pharmaceutical costs. Stopping smoking can reduce depression, anxiety and stress and can reduce the long term risk of cancer – all of which can have a positive impact on the individual and a reduction in healthcare costs. Making a difference to smoking rates can help tackle premature mortality."*

#### Vision

The strategy describes the Scottish Government's vision for mental health provision in Scotland: *"That there should be parity of esteem between physical and mental health is widely accepted, and through this Strategy we aim to ensure that it is more than just a worthy ambition and can be made real. Over the 10 years of this Strategy, we must see, and be able to measure, the following for mental health compared to physical health:*

- *Equal access to the most effective and safest care and treatment*
- *Equal efforts to improve the quality of care*
- *Allocation of time, effort and resources on a basis commensurate with need*
- *Equal status within healthcare education and practice*
- *Equally high aspirations for service users*
- *Equal status in the measurement of health outcomes".*

And specifically about smoking: *"Including addressing higher rates of premature mortality by targeting efforts at higher smoking rates and improving access to physical healthcare for people with a mental illness."*

#### Ambitions

*"That the rate of smoking amongst people with a diagnosed mental health problem should decline at the same rate as the rate for the general population."* It is unacceptable that people with severe and enduring mental illness may have their lives shortened by 15 to 20 years because of physical ill-health. This is a significant health inequality.

Scottish Government. Mental Health Strategy: 2017-2027 (online) Edinburgh: Scottish Government 2017. Available from: <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2017/03/1750/0> (accessed 11 September 2017)