



TOPIC 3

Substances

Topic introduction

Background

Smoking remains the most important cause of ill health in the most deprived areas. Smoking cessation is a key element of reducing deaths from both lung cancer and heart disease, particularly in disadvantaged areas. While smoking prevalence has declined over many years, the number of smokers in poorer areas continues to be high.

Smoking is particularly common in individuals with Language, Literacy and Numeracy needs: 40% of men and 42% of women at Entry 2 smoke cigarettes daily, compared with 23% of men and 19% of women with Level 2 skills.¹ Thus, nearly a half of learners may be smokers. In a 2002 survey, 31% of the adult population smoked cigarettes and 70% said they wanted to give up.

The *Skilled for Health* programme provides an ideal opportunity to encourage and support learners who smoke to contact their local smoking cessation service, which can provide free nicotine replacement therapy to individuals receiving benefits. This service may well be interested in visiting groups of learners who wish to give up smoking.

National targets / policies

The Department of Health has issued targets for smoking cessation for each primary care trust.

- Reducing adult smoking rates to 21% or less by 2010, with a reduction in prevalence rates among manual groups to 26% or less.
- The 'average primary care trust' will have to produce at least 900 smokers a year who have been treated by their smoking cessation service and who stopped smoking at the end of 4 weeks of treatment.

The 2004 public health white paper, *Choosing health – making healthier choices easier* includes 'encouraging and supporting sensible drinking' as one of its six overarching priorities, alongside smoking, diet, exercise, mental health and sexual health.

1. Bynner J, Parsons S. *New light on literacy and numeracy: results of the Literacy and Numeracy Assessment in the age 34 follow-up of the 1970 cohort study (BCS70)*. London: National Research and Development Centre for Adult Literacy and Numeracy, 2006

This topic

The themes in this topic support learners to find out more about giving up smoking and sensible alcohol drinking levels. The themes in this topic are:

- Giving up smoking
- Giving up for life
- The cost of smoking
- Alcohol

Further information and suggestions

Contact your local smoking cessation service.

Mapping to the core curriculum

Topic 3 Substances				
Theme	Literacy	Language	Numeracy	Page references
Giving up smoking	SLlr/E3.5, SLc/E3.3, Wt/L1.5			140–154
Giving up for life	Rt/L1.2, Rt/L1.5, Rt/E3.7, Rt/E3.9, Rw/E3.1			155–166
The cost of smoking			MSS1/E3.2, N1/E3.4, N1/L1.3	167–173
Alcohol	Rw/E3.1, Rw/L1.1		MSS1/E3.7, N1/E2.4, N2/L1.8	174–188

Highlighted curriculum items [] = included in National Tests