

London Tobacco Alliance

Smoke Free App – LGBTQ+ Users

Evaluation Report

May 2026



A qualitative evaluation of the Smoke Free App, London, amongst LGBTQ+ users.

Objectives were to

- understand why members of the LGBTQ+ community are over-represented amongst users of the app
- explore if anything about the app appeals to, or works particularly well for the LGBTQ+ community
- within this context, provide an overview of the quit experience using the app.

Specifically, this work builds on existing research regarding the app's user experience, but looks at this from an LGBTQ+ perspective.

All respondents were users of the Smoke Free App and recruited through a built-in dashboard pop-up.

- All residents of a London Borough
- All identifying with the LGBTQ+ community
- All had used the app for 14+ days at the time of interview.

10 x 1:1 Depth Interviews

- *Telephone calls*
- *Lasting 20-30 minutes*



Background to Quitting



Most started smoking as teenagers, but one respondent first started at 10 years old.

For for some, it was the norm - family and others around them smoked. This sparked curiosity; some talk about youthful fascination with smoking, and even that they were 'destined' to smoke.

Several described early 'dabbling' in smoking becoming a heavier habit - and addiction – without really noticing.

Some started a little older, and were influenced by workplace smoke-breaks, and social groups smoking, for example outside the pub.

Evidence [also seen in other work] of smokers getting 'free breaks' at work which are unavailable to non smokers, and this both encourages workplace smoking and deters quitting.

"When I was younger, yeah, it was because I wanted to fit in and be cool."

Man, Gay, White British/Irish

"I guess I was always surrounded by smokers... my parents smoked. And I remember the first time I was curious. I was like, really young. My dad had, like, flicked his ciggy that was like, finishing. And I waited till, like, they weren't looking, and I ran and picked it up and, like, took a puff. So, I guess just, like, surrounded by smokers, made the curiosity a little bit more intense."

Woman, Lesbian, Mixed background

"I think that obviously, apart from being addicted, at the time that all of my friends were smoking kind of made me feel, I don't know, made me feel more superior, if that makes sense. I did really like it."

Man, Gay, White British/Irish

"It was probably because of the environment. I don't know, maybe going out to a pub or something like that and then someone would smoke and kind of share with me, and I was, like, 'Okay, why not?', and yeah, that's how it started."

Woman, Bisexual, White non-British/Irish

"So I guess, just like socially, like my friends did when I was like 18. But then the job I had, like, when I was like 24 like, basically everyone smoked, and everyone used to go for cigarette breaks, so I just kind of started through that."

Man, Gay, Mixed background

There were mixed opinions as to whether being LGBTQ+ has impacted their smoking in any way.

Several felt that the higher incidence of smoking in the LGBTQ+ community has contributed to them continuing to smoke, and some feel that it has encouraged them to smoke **more**, and perhaps for **longer** that they might have done.

Others feel that whilst social circles do impact, it's not necessarily linked to being LGBTQ+.

"I think so in some respects. Like, you know, it's a little bit more, like, in terms of the culture of, like, parties and, you know, kind of going out and being on that kind of fringe, you know, and wanting to be part of it."

Man, Gay, White British/Irish

"Yeah, I'd say so, like, I guess, not so much now, but, like, without quite a lot, like gay bars and stuff, and I think generally, like a lot of the gay people I've met, like a lot of the gay friends I've had, always smoked. So yeah, I guess there's that."

Man, Gay, Mixed background

"Yes, I feel like so many, especially when I was in my 20s, all the way through my 20s, everybody was smoking. It's still, you know, still quite a big thing within the community. Less so now that a lot of my friends are getting older. Loads of people have started to stop now, but at first, yes, for sure."

Man, Gay, White British/Irish

"It's maybe not the queer community... I'm just using shorthand that I feel kind of connected to. I would say it's more of the art world which is where... that's probably the broader umbrella ...the people I'm spending most of my time with. But then within that there's sort of like a subset of people who are my closer friends who I would say, like, we collectively share the sort of belonging to the LGBTQ community... so within those spaces, these sort of creative spaces, I suppose, that's much more hedonistic and libidinal."

Man, Bisexual, Mixed background

Like many smokers, some in this cohort simultaneously love and hate smoking.

Stress management was heavily mentioned as something that encouraged the initial development of the habit, but has also contributed to continuing to smoke, and to relapses in previous quit attempts.

Motivations to quit centre around health and fitness. One respondent had been motivated into this quit by a cancer scare, another was triggered to quit by a COPD diagnosis.

Cost also mentioned as a driver.

Several described smoking as disgusting – the smell plays strongly into this.

"I used to love it, and, like, I do love it, but I know that it's also disgusting, if that makes sense."

Man, Gay, Mixed background

"Yeah, I only felt negative about it during the end of last year. The end of last year is when I fully like sat back and I was like down. Like every time I smoked, I enjoy it, but like afterwards, or a few days afterwards, I feel really, really bad. Like my body just feels horrible, I was struggling to breathe. It just, like, wasn't worth it."

Woman, Bisexual, Mixed background

"I was trying to quit, probably twice or three times, something like that. But I was never successful because I'm quite a stressful person, and every time, dealing with a stress was going to cigarettes, so yeah, that was kind of an impossible."

Non binary, Questioning sexuality, White British/Irish

"I just thought it helped with stress. Like when I was stressed, I'd have a cigarette, if I was having coffee with friends I'd have a cigarette. I think it just become a habit. It was a dirty habit, to be honest, because it stinks. My husband still smokes, so it's been a bit hard."

Preferred not to give gender, Bisexual, White British/Irish

"I've felt like I've wanted to quit smoking since I've started smoking."

Non binary, Queer, Black/Black British

There were mixed reports of experiences with GPs and other HCPs– from very positive to very negative.

Previous bad experiences were not usually smoking-related but have created a deep mistrust for a handful.

For a couple, the negative experiences were related to seeking help with MH issues.

Although one felt their issue with GPs stemmed from their LGBTQ+ status, another spoke positively of their experience with a GP [once they managed to get an appointment], putting it in the context of a closer relationship, because of being LGBTQ+ [and taking sexual health / checkups seriously].

One had had a good experience with quit support from pharmacists in the past.

"No, never. Yeah, I just think, I don't know, I'm a bit like a... I can be a bit GP sceptical, I think probably cos it comes with the territory of being queer, I'm a bit like untrusting maybe of like doctors and stuff, so if I can do something myself, I'd rather just do it myself. I've had experiences in the past around like mental health, neurodiversity, just kind of not being able to feel I can properly access support, or like being like fobbed off a bit, so, yeah, so it's like I just, it, to be honest, it didn't even really occur to me to speak to a doctor about stopping smoking."

Non binary, Queer, Black/Black British

*"I haven't approached them. They've approached me and I refused to work with them, for many reasons.... The only time they really gave a sh*t about me is when I tried to kill myself, and for two weeks they cared, because they don't want that to fall back on them. And then they just forget about me and give up and, like, 'Is it okay if we contact you, like, in three months?'. They waited a whole year to contact me about my mental health and so from that point I just refused to talk to my doctor or get help from my doctor because in all reality, they are there for a pay check. They don't care what I'm going to tell them, so I sort of just gave up with them."*

Woman, Bisexual, Mixed background

"I think that we're used to it more, especially with being part of the community taking sexual health very seriously and going for support checkups quite regularly, and the access to that is always very, very good."

Man, Gay, White British / Irish

All had tried to quit before this attempt, some seriously.

Others acknowledged that some of their previous efforts were more half hearted.

As is the case with many smokers, some of our respondents talked about not being 'mentally ready' in previous [unsuccessful] attempts, using terminology such as 'not in the right headspace' or 'right mindset'.

Stress often given as a reason for restarting. Others talk of restarting in social situations where others are smoking.

Most had tried cold turkey at some point, but several had also tried various quit aids: NRT, vaping, Allen Carr.

Some learnt from failed quit attempts - often that specific tools didn't work for them, but also that support helps.

Several approached this quit by cutting down first.

"Like the longest I've been able to quit was maybe like... like a couple of weeks."

Non binary, Queer, Black/Black British

"I gave up for eight weeks before, but then I just got stressed, and I went back to smoking, and I don't think that was the right time. I think it's got to be the right time. I think your your head's got to be in it. My husband's head weren't in it. He weren't ready to give up smoking. That's why he's gone back to it. It's got to be mindset. I think you've either got to have a really strong mindset or, like me, you've got to have a life threatening thing that actually starts you to give up."

Preferred not to give gender, Bisexual, White British/Irish

"I've quit a few times before the patches, but you know, for like a week or 2 weeks. Nothing long at all. I tried gum, and that didn't work. It made my throat tingle. I tried, like, the lozenges, but they also made my throat tingle. The Nicorette patches didn't make anything tingle, so I like them, really."

Man, Gay, White British/Irish

"Didn't use anything, went cold turkey, kept myself busy. But that's probably where I went wrong, because I didn't have the help, you know what I mean, you need to have help with the patches or the vape. You need something. Because going cold turkey, I think was the wrong way for me, because I felt quite ill giving up smoking, whereas this time I don't feel ill at all. I feel actually healthier."

Preferred not to give gender, Bisexual, White British/Irish

For several, this quit was fairly spur of the moment.

Triggers were health crises; family pressure; a sudden realisation as to how much they were smoking. These happened within a context that the individual had already contemplated quitting, or wanted to quit.

Some sought out aids in preparation - patches, mouth spray, Nicorette - before starting.

Around half are vaping, and there is some discomfort around this: not 'really quitting'; feeling there is another hurdle ahead to quit vaping; feeling that they vape more than they smoked. For some, it also feels like vaping has added another step to 'fully quitting'.

A couple looked for support – through the local council smoking cessation services; GP; via the app. One is taking medication prescribed by his GP [not specified].

On the advice of a Stop Smoking practitioner, one gave themselves a week to prepare, and felt that made a difference in comparison to previous quits, when they dived straight in.

"This time was very spontaneous. I just gave my boyfriend all of my cigarettes, went home, binned everything relating to the cigarettes, made him take all the lighters home with him. So absolutely nothing reminded me of cigarettes in terms of in the physical world, you know. Went through my drawers with a fine tooth comb for every single paper and filter to get it out so it wasn't there. And then, yeah, just stopped smoking."

Man, Gay, White British/Irish

"Yes, when I was going to quit, I decided that I wanted to download the app for the extra support and then go and see the GP. That's what I thought would help me the most."

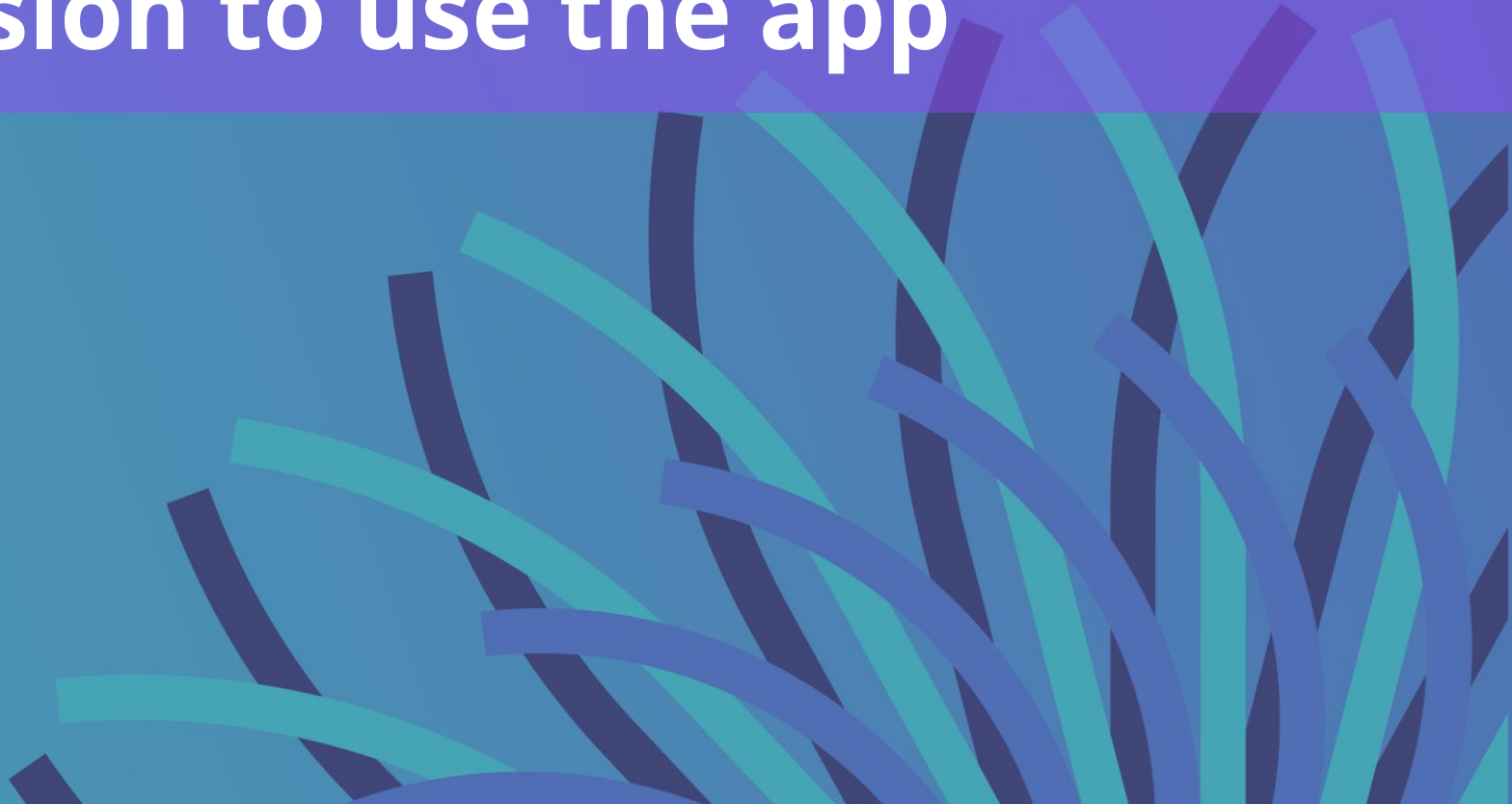
Man, Gay, White British/Irish

"And then when I went to the first meeting, they were like, 'You're not quitting today, but we recommend you give yourself a week. So set a smoking date where that's going to be your last day for smoking.' And I did. I gave myself a week, and I had never done it like that before. Like, I had never mentally prepared myself. And I think because the decision got made so quickly, and then I did have a week to sit with it and really reconsider, like, Wow, am I actually doing this? I think I am going to do this. I didn't, like, lose sleep over it. I wasn't stressing about it. I was also, like, trying to get quite excited about it."

Woman, Lesbian, Mixed background



Making the decision to use the app



Sources of awareness are mixed and come through both formal and informal channels. Not all were sure of how they first heard about the app.

Finding the app was a mix of passive reception of messaging and active looking.

Some users found the app by searching for one online. Google, App Store both mentioned.

Others think they recall seeing something on TikTok, or other social media sites. One user saw it recommended on a Reddit stop smoking group.

Professional recommendations also feature with mentions of both GPs and local Stop Smoking Services.

A couple of users were recommended by friends – and a comment was made that a recommendation from another LGBTQ+ user has particular resonance.

“Basically, I opened the app store and I searched for an app for quitting smoking. I was sure an app would exist for this.”

Female, Bisexual, White non-British/Irish

“I think... ah, it was to do with I was searching for an app to help track how long I'd been smoke-free for, because I wanted to put goal stones... goal stones? A goal post in place so that if I reached, for example, three months, every three months basically, I can treat myself with something. And I saw this app...and I was like, oh, you know what, this will probably be good to use. So, yeah, I started using it.”

Female, Bisexual, Mixed background

“It was on Year's Day that I downloaded it. So, I was just either Googling it or on social media. I can't remember where exactly and then I must have seen the app and then downloaded it.”

Non-binary, Queer, Black/Black British

“When I messaged the GP, and they sent me to originally the local Stop Smoking Service. They were the ones that recommended the app.”

Male, Gay, White British/Irish

“The app actually got recommended to me by a friend who has been using the app for like, four years. She hasn't been smoking for four years. And she was like, mate, you need to get the app. Like, it's so helpful. And I had no idea about this app, and I signed up.”

Female, Lesbian, Mixed background

"Well, word of mouth is one thing, like queer people trust other queer people, I would say most of all. Like, I think probably since I've had the app, like, I've probably told like five people about it. So that might be part of it."

Non binary, Queer, Black/Black British

DECIDING TO USE THE APP

Users had various reasons for deciding to use the app:

- Professional recommendation
 - Free quit aids
- Wanting to track progress
 - Access to support
- That this app seemed to have more depth and detail than others around
 - NHS/council endorsement
 - Convenience
 - That it's free

"I love that it was for free, because nothing is really free anymore these days. Usually it's like, you know, you always got to be paying for something, and it's not about the money, but it's about if something's really going to be helping someone, I don't think it always needs to be about money. So that was one really good thing."

Woman, Lesbian, Mixed background

"Because it actually did say that there was a section, to kind of go in there where you could speak to someone and then, like, get like, you know, nicotine replacement stuff."

Woman, Lesbian, Mixed background

"I think I've seen that you could request, like patches and stuff off there, which I didn't realise they were free. I thought they were, like, cheaper. But I think it had said that, like, they can in certain postcodes or whatever they can provide you with cheaper Nicorette stuff, which obviously is quite expensive. So I think that was kind of the main reason. And you can kind of chat, like I've used the chat function on there to order the patches and stuff."

Man, Gay, Mixed background

"Yeah, I feel like because it gave into a lot more detail. I think there's so many apps and stuff out there that just say, like, the days that you stopped and how much money you saved, whereas this is a lot more of that, and it also has the coaching and that you can access, like, all the benefits that you need."

Man, Gay, White British/Irish

"That it was connected, I think, with NHS or London Boroughs or something like that. So, that's why I chose it."

Woman, Bisexual, White non-British/Irish

Most agreed that an app fits well with their lifestyles.

Several were clear that an in-person commitment would not work for them, and so the app delivers something that would otherwise be unavailable to them.

Reasons for this included the general busy-ness of people's lives, but also stretched further into a reluctance amongst some to engage face to face.

Digital is the way life is these days, especially for young people.

The benefit of being able to be part of a community outside of social media was mentioned.

The ever-presence of the app appeals, and the immediacy of being able to engage with it, for example, to get through cravings.

Anonymity is important to some, it can create the feeling of a safe space. For most, though, it's fine that it is anonymous, but not terribly important.

"I just don't think I... well, I wouldn't attend like a physical service. It's just not, yeah, it's not something that's interesting to me. I think, yeah, there's probably layers to why, but I just... and it gives me the ick a bit of like going into somebody's office and all of that."

Non binary, Queer, Black/Black British

"The in-person stuff, you know... all well and good if you've got the time to do it, but I just don't have any time. I've been on 12 hour days every day this week. I'm losing my marbles."

Man, Gay, White British/Irish

"I could be anywhere in the world really, like, if I go on holidays, like, the support is still there, like, I'm not going to be missing out."

Woman, Lesbian, Mixed background

"Yeah, because it's something you can have close to you, isn't it? Like you can have it on your phone, and you know, look at it, or say filling in your cravings... It's just so useful. It's right at your home. Then like you can use the little widget that they give you, you can just track it by that, and it just makes it ten times easier."

Woman, Bisexual, Mixed background

"If you're talking about younger people trying to quit, then they're more likely to do it digitally because we... I think a lot of people nowadays, they don't like talking to people."

Woman, Bisexual, Mixed background

Several had no view on why the app has been taken up in such positive numbers by the LGBTQ+ community...

...with some stating they felt there was no specific link, that the app had *universal* appeal.

A couple referenced a drive across the community for health improvement – feeling that an app like this sits neatly with the desire to improve health, especially with a cohort that tends to smoke.

The anonymity and poor experiences with health professionals made the app more appealing for a couple of users.

That the app is wholly non judgmental was mentioned a few times, and can be important to those who can often feel judged.

One user felt that the app's strength in providing a community with a common purpose resonated with LGBTQ+ users for whom community is important.

"I can't draw any lines between the two. Personally, I can't think of any."

Man, Gay, White British/Irish

"I think there is a lot of people within the community that do smoke or have smoked, and it does seem that people are trying to take their health a bit more seriously now. For example, so many of my friends who are also like within the community have stopped or started to stop or planning to stop."

Man, Gay, White British/Irish

"I don't exactly have like an idea on why it is particularly the LGBT community, but I'd say, if I was looking at something, a lot of people are very health conscious now and so they are looking for ways to try and combat the bad habits that everyone seems to have. And I do believe that a large majority of the LGBT community, you know, either dabbles in, you know, smoking to some degree or something else."

Woman, Bisexual, Mixed background

"I would say that first of all would be the anonymous option of talking with the advisors and getting a plan for quitting smoking. And I think that's the key point actually."

Non binary, Questioning sexuality, White British/Irish

"And I think as well, like sometimes people within the community doesn't always have a supportive network, and I think relying on that app to have that encouragement is really important."

Man, Gay, White British/Irish

"I think there's also like maybe like a bit of shared trauma around accessing like any kind of like medical intervention. That can be, I mean, it can be really tricky for people to like navigate like their various identities and stuff within like the NHS. So, I think having like a quite, like anonymous and digital service, it's probably quite helpful for people to feel like they've got autonomy over their care and their needs. That's certainly a big thing for me. I think those are probably like the main two that spring to mind."

Non binary, Queer, Black/Black British

The app is seen as wholly inclusive, with several recognising this as not only an attraction for LGBTQ+ users, but for anyone and everyone.

Again, a feeling of having a safe space is important, and the consensus was that the app generally delivers this.

Some commented that sexuality was irrelevant as the bond that forms this community relates to quitting; another commented that they felt able to share their sexuality and talk about it without judgement on the app.

Suggestions were made regarding improving [already positive] inclusiveness and increasing that feeling of safety:

- Somewhere to indicate preferred pronouns
- Inclusivity statements for chat forums

"Yeah, I would say a hundred percent because everyone can use it very easily. It is very easily accessible. As we said, it's very anonymous as well, so I believe everyone can use it, no matter what."

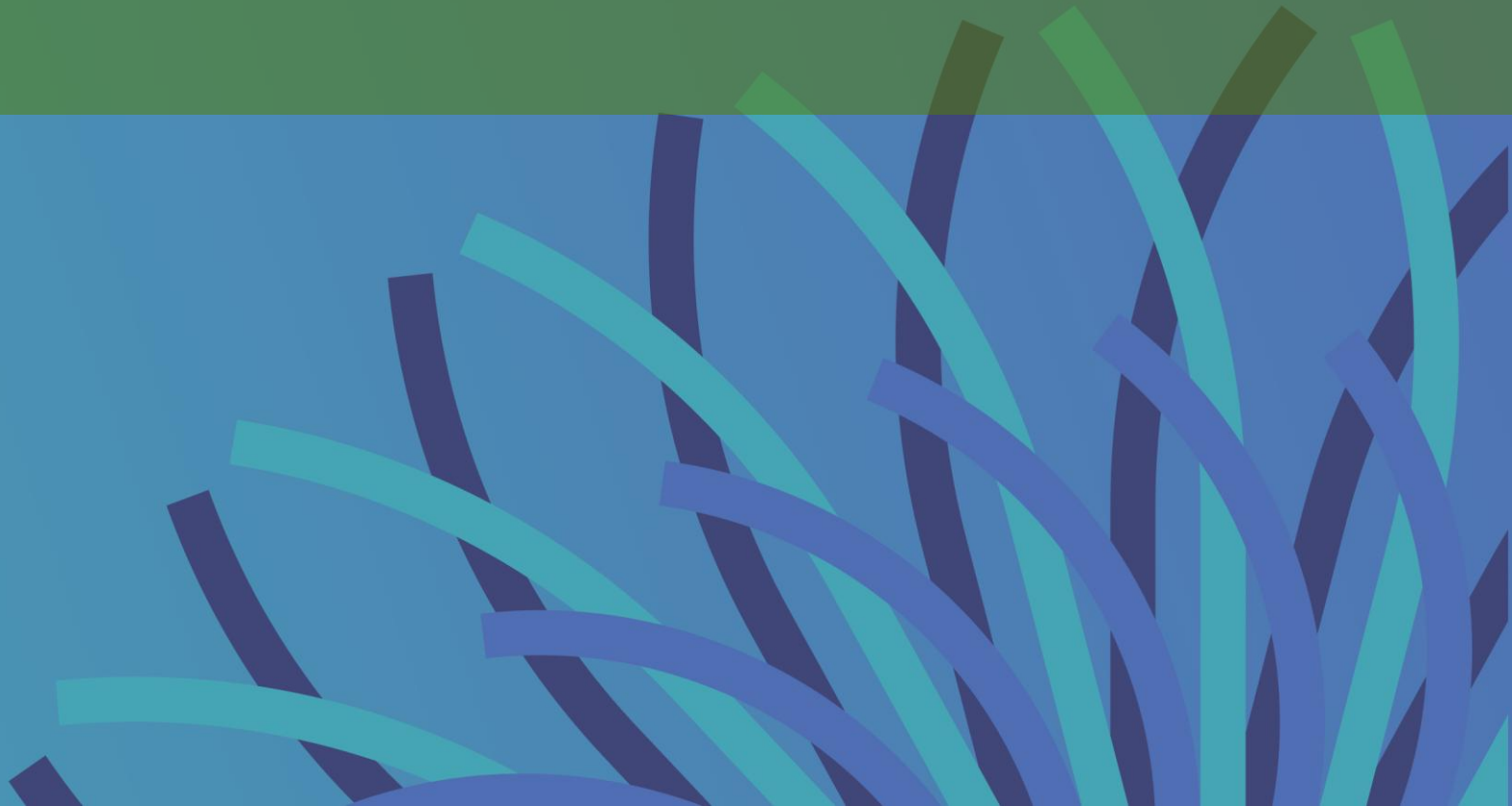
Non binary, Questioning sexuality, White British/Irish

"I think, like things like inclusivity statements go a really long way, particularly around like any community forum stuff, so just like in terms of what... like knowing like that community space is monitored for like certain language use and things like that is like appealing. So maybe, yeah, some something like that. I can't remember, because it's been a couple of months, like if there is some kind of like statement or something that already says that, but that's something that maybe I would think about including."

Non binary, Queer, Black/Black British



Using the App



As has been seen in other evaluations, a key strength of the app is that it allows for individualised patterns of usage.

Like other users, some report app usage being built into daily routines.

Other access it as and when they feel the need. A key strength is the 'always-there' nature of the app, and this proves particularly beneficial in moments of greater stress, or cravings. In these moments, communities and advisors are the go-to.

Usage tends to drop off over time as cravings decrease, and confidence increases.

"It's become almost like a ritual of, like, I wake up in the morning, I open it up and it's a reminder, because it's like, the first thing that pops up, it has the date, you know, like one month and however many days, or two months, or whatever. So it's like, okay, that's how I start my day now, you know, a reminder of like, you've been clean for this long, so don't even think about it."

Woman, Lesbian, Mixed background

"Yeah, I was definitely commenting and stuff. That first couple of weeks it was really hard, like I would just like post in there and be like 'Has anyone got any advice?' Or I think one time I posted about... because I was at work and basically I work from home and like sit in front of a laptop all day, and not smoking was just like torture. And I was like 'Has anyone experienced this, has anyone got any like good habits or like things that they do?'. And people would be like 'Oh, yeah, like if when that happens try and like go for a walk' or like whatever, sip some water, like that sort of thing. And that was really helpful because, again, like I needed to speak to someone that was also experiencing the same thing. I think that like goes a really long way."

Non binary, Queer, Black/Black British

"To be honest, when I first started using the app, I was more involved in it. Now I literally just use it for the tracker thing. But I like how it motivates you. It gives you like its little... the little dragon thing and you can collect like the clothes and stuff for it."

Woman, Bisexual, Mixed background

A wide range of features are used. Preferences vary across individuals – again pointing to the ‘something for everyone’ and customisable strengths of the app.

Tracking the quit is important, and this is something that attracts people to the app initially, and keeps them engaged and motivated.

Several had interacted with advisors [and the coach] and were full of praise for the help and support they received.

A few mentioned the dragon, which delivers motivation, distraction, reward. One more longer-term user tends to only visit the app infrequently now...just to look after the dragon.

Above all, this cohort of users talked about the community, the sense of shared goals, the powerful sense of not being alone.

"Everything about it, the way, you know, user interface is designed to, kind show you the improvement that's happening. You know, the percentages go up. And that's nice, you know, when you haven't been smoking for a while

Man, Gay, White British/Irish

"It's like the best feature, and the best highlight that I would say is that it's very easy access and they are very, very professional advisors who know what they are doing.

Non binary, Questioning sexuality, White British/Irish

"Where I've had a craving, I've thought 'Oh let's go talk to the dragon, he can breathe with me for 5 minutes'. So yeah I have done that, And I mean, the coach is brilliant. I mean, everyone's going oh it's only a robot. Don't care if it's a robot. They ask me every day, they say that they're proud of me. And, you know, keep going along and cheering and that keeps you going."

Preferred not to give gender, Bisexual, White British/Irish

"There's like loads of tools on there and, and stuff like that, and then like the community stuff. Like, so it ended up being more helpful, I guess, or like there was more on there than I thought there would be that was helpful."

Non binary, Queer, Black/Black British

Most felt they couldn't suggest areas for improvement, and those improvements that were suggested were generally down to specific personal preferences.

Some felt the dragon and other games were not for them.

One felt particularly strongly against the promotion of NRT and vapes – who was particularly driven to be nicotine-free.

Missions can be a lot of reading.

One suggested specific tailoring for LGBTQ+ users in the community area [but for others, this definitely wasn't needed].

A general thought was that the app should receive more marketing, and have a higher profile.

"To be honest with you, not really. Oh, maybe, like, the little game, maybe the little game could be a bit, if I'm being really picky, could be a bit better than the little dragon. Why I gotta wait a whole day, you know. And I understand why, because obviously, then that gets you to, you know, hold out your urges and blah, blah, blah. But no, I think it's like, it's perfect. It's got everything you need. It's got your little diaries you want to put in the stuff. The colours are great, like, not too dull. But also it's got some pops of colours. Like, I said, like, the support, being able to go right and, like, look at people's posts and like, I think is also really good."

Woman, Lesbian, Mixed background

"The only thing what I would say is it should be much more like promoted and be much more marketed, because I believe not many people really know about this app, to be fair. I'd never seen this anywhere in the city as an advertisement or anything. So, I believe that should be improved, really. Because, like I said, there are stop smoking services in a pharmacy. So, in a GP I would say probably... I'm not sure. But they don't really have these 24/7 advisors and they don't have these anonymous features. So, I believe if there are people who really want to quit but they're not really ones to go and seek like face-to-face help, that would be the greatest option. So, I believe that more people would try to attempt to quit smoking."

Non binary, Questioning sexuality, White British/Irish

All respondents were very positive about the app, and several attributed their success to it.

Overall views focused on:

- Intuitive ease of use
- The motivation – and accountability - it delivers through various features, but particularly the tracking
- Inclusivity and feeling of safety and community
- The ever-presence of support and immediacy of useful help, from both trained advisors and others in the same boat

"It's really helpful, and as I said, I'm not an easy person to reach for help and I'm always trying to do everything by myself. But in this, you know, I failed many times and it didn't work. So, now, I'm finally feeling very motivated and I know that I'm going to quit, and that's the only reason, because I'm using the app."

Non binary, Questioning sexuality, White British/Irish

"Yeah. I just think because it's worked for me and, I don't know, like for me, seeing the countdown, if I ever have been, like, a little bit tempted to have a cigarette, or think about having a cigarette or whatever, but I look at the countdown and think that I've come this far. It just holds me accountable a little bit."

Man, Gay, Mixed background

"I guess, in that way, in a moment of weakness, the app has been very helpful, I suppose, in that case, because you can kind of tangibly see, okay, this is where I am on this journey, that's not, you know, I'm feeling very stressful or I'm feeling very stressed right now, I'd like a cigarette, but then actually there's this stuff that has accumulated that you would be, sort of, you feel like you're throwing something away. Whereas if you don't have that reminder, it's just like I'll have a cigarette and you can, kind of, you know, two days later you can forget about the fact you've had the cigarette. I think the counter is a very kind of symbolically strong thing, a helpful thing to have."

Man, Bisexual, Mixed background

"Like I think it's the fact that like you can go onto the community and there will always, without a doubt, be somebody that's in their first like day or two of trying to stop or quit and then when you're like in week one, you're kind of like, oh, that was me like a week ago."

Non binary, Queer, Black/Black British

All would recommend the app, and a few already have.

The general consensus was that they would recommend to anyone, whether LGBTQ+ or not, although there was some reflection that the app was very LGBTQ+-friendly through its anonymity, sense of community and feeling of safety.

"Oh, yeah. A hundred percent. I've already [recommended it] a couple of times. And when I was in the club, I was talking to a couple of people as well and we were just discussing how I'm quitting the smoking and how is it going. I've already recommended it to probably more than twenty people. So, yeah, a hundred percent."

Woman, Bisexual, Mixed background

"Yeah, just recommend it to everyone. But also, I would maybe, if I knew or came across, like, people in the queer community that maybe are a bit sceptical about, like, online, you know, apps or online communities. Like, I would encourage there is a safe space. But again, like, I would recommend this to anyone, regardless of how they identify and you know, what community they think they're part of."

Woman, Lesbian, Mixed background

"I'd recommend the app to anyone to be honest. I was a heavy smoker for 38 years, and people say they can't give up. Well, you can give up. You just got to be willing to give up..."

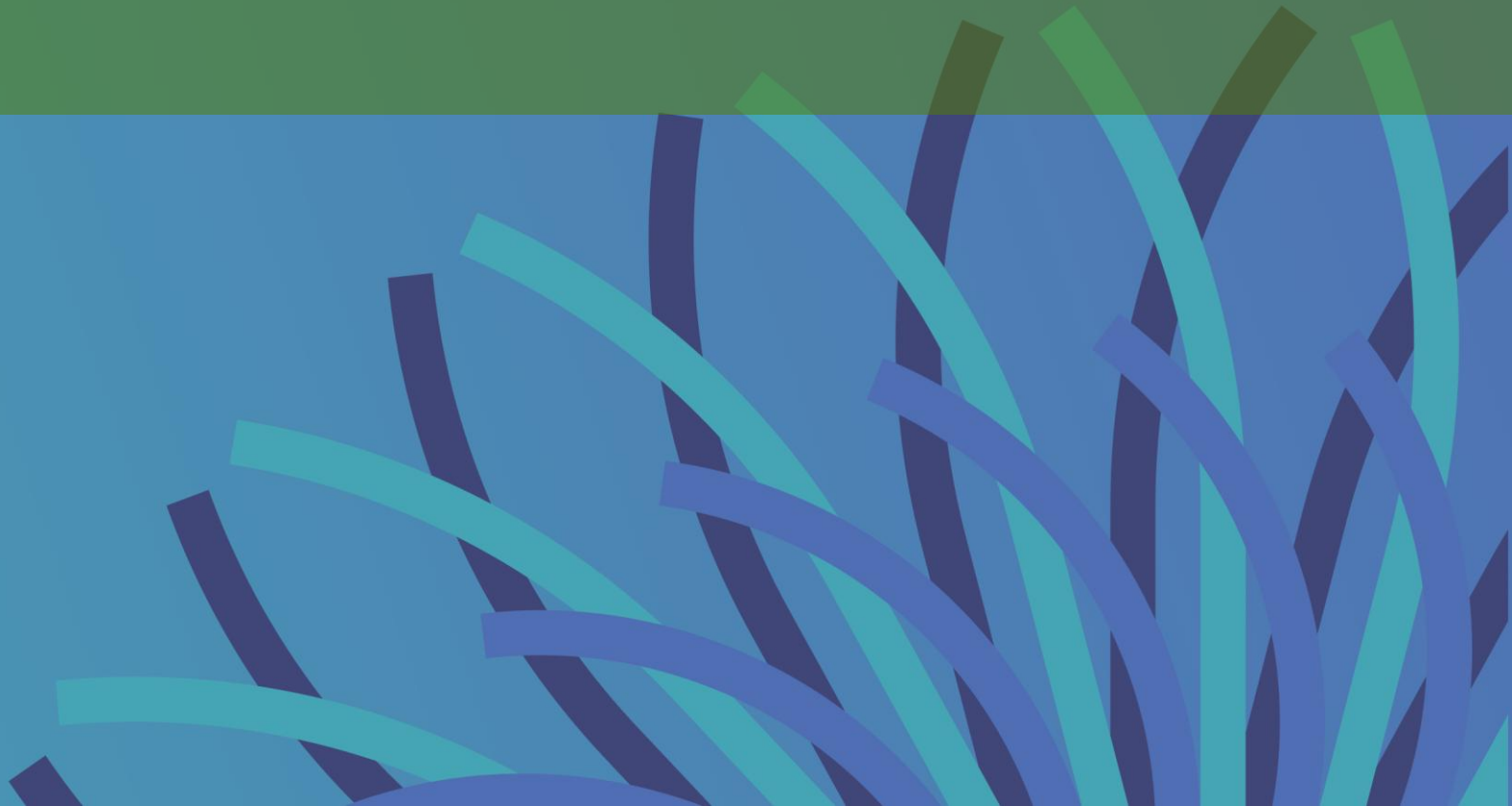
I found it hard, but then as soon as I got on the app, within two, three weeks, it was easy. It was easy because I was talking to all people, like I said, I was talking to other people. I had the coach, I had everything there.

It was hard at first, but as soon as I got onto this app, I felt more motivated. I thought more that I could do it. I think if I didn't have the app, to be honest with you, I think I would be smoking again."

Preferred not to give gender, Bisexual, White British/Irish



SUMMARY



LGBTQ+ users are fulsome in their praise of the app and often credit their successes in quitting to using it.

Much of what works well for them is what is evident in its strengths for all users:

- The convenience of an app
- The ability to tailor it, and its flexibility
- Its ever-presence and immediacy of support, advice, distraction
- Its ease of use
- That it's something-for-everyone, offering support; motivation; tools and advice; rewards; and for some, a sense of comfort and reassurance.

Usage patterns of the app amongst the LGBTQ+ community also seem to match that seen across the wider user cohort.

It is often built into a daily routine, and key features used include the tracking function; community chat; advisors and coach.

However, there are facets of the app that perhaps have greater - or a different - resonance for members of the LGBTQ+ community, encouraging both take up and use.

- Recommendations from within the LGBTQ+ community have a greater impact for some – and the effectiveness of the app may well be starting some sort of recommendation-snowball within the community.
- The fact that the app is digital appeals for the ‘usual’ reasons: easily accessible, convenient, always there, etc. However, for some, it provides a route to support that might otherwise feel unavailable, either because of bad experiences with HCPs in the past, or simply a reluctance to reach out or engage face to face.
- The much-praised, non-judgemental nature of the app – and its communities – has huge importance for a cohort who can often feel judged. This creates a feeling of inclusivity which for some is incredibly important: lots of positive references regarding the app being a ‘safe space’.
- The anonymity the app affords reinforces the feeling of safety and non-judgment, and allows those who want to stay ‘under the radar’ to tackle the quit in a way that works for them.
- Belonging to a community has huge appeal and importance for some; it adds a sense of support, and not being alone that is valued so highly.

"I can't afford a smoking dominatrix, so I have the app instead. It's like the next best thing."

Man, Bisexual, Mixed background

