



Creating a national picture of preconception health to inform priorities & monitor impact of interventions and policies

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[@D_Schoenaker](https://twitter.com/D_Schoenaker)

[@PreconceptionUK](https://twitter.com/PreconceptionUK)

Webinar in Preconceptual Health for the launch of the UBC Research Cluster:
Advancing the Science of Physiologic Birth

Lancet series on Preconception Health

1. Before the beginning: nutrition and lifestyle in the preconception period and its importance for future health (Stephenson et al)
Lancet 2018; 391: 1830-41
2. Origins of lifetime health around the time of conception: causes and consequences (Fleming et al)
Lancet 2018; 391: 1842-52
3. Intervention strategies to improve nutrition and health behaviours before conception (Barker et al)
Lancet 2018; 391: 1853-64

<https://www.thelancet.com/series/preconception-health>



THE LANCET

Series Preconception health

Why preconception health matters

How it affects future health

What we can do about it

Policy recommendations

Recommendation 1

- Primary care and Public health agencies should plan interventions that **support individuals planning pregnancy**
- Public health agencies should mount **population-level initiatives** to reduce determinants of preconception risks

Recommendation 3

- **Use existing platforms** for delivery of interventions that are context specific
- Ministries of Education should encourage schools to work alongside Primary care to **raise public awareness**, and **facilitate access** to context specific resources and support

Recommendation 2

Harnessing motivations to engage with preconception health across the life course:

- **Ministries of Education:** adapt school curricula
- **Reproductive health clinics:** promote a Reproductive Life Plan
- **Primary care and Public Health staff:** require training in motivation skills

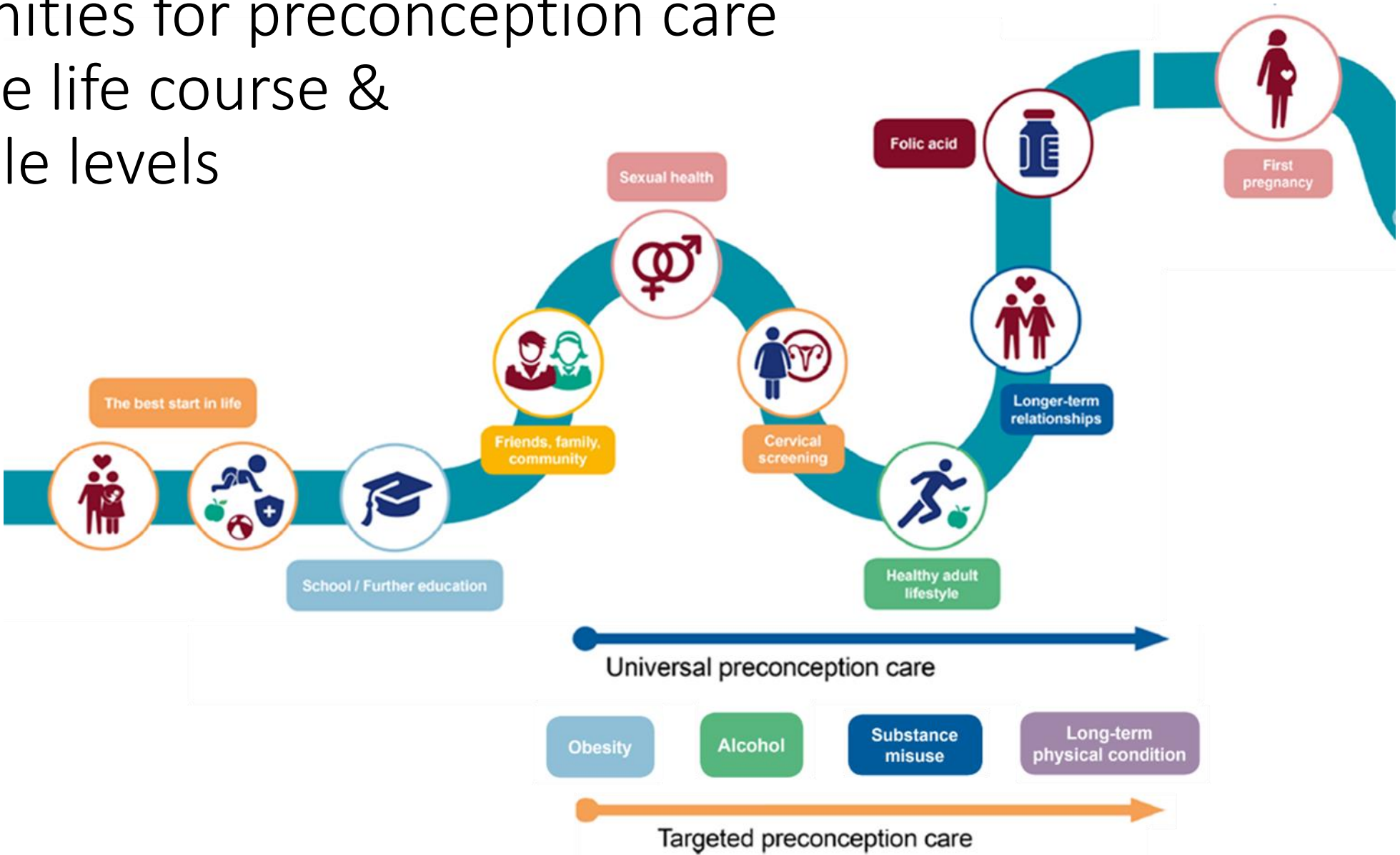
Recommendation 4

Food industry, government and non-government organisations and research institutions should form **advocacy coalitions** to create demand for preconception health support (social movement)

Vogel et al, J DOHaD, 2020

THE LANCET ■ Series **Preconception health**

Opportunities for preconception care across the life course & at multiple levels



UK initiatives to improve preconception health

Individual-level (targeted)

NICE National Institute for Health and Care Excellence **CKS**
Pre-conception - advice and management
Last revised in November 2019

Planning your pregnancy
Your pregnancy and baby guide **NHS**

Getting pregnant	+	I'm pregnant	+	Labour and birth	+	Your newborn	+	Babies and toddlers	+
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**Preconception
Counselling
Service**

Population-level (universal)



Department
of Health &
Social Care

Soft Drinks Industry Levy comes into effect

The 'Sugar Tax' will help to reduce sugar in soft drinks and tackle childhood obesity.

Folic acid added to flour to prevent spinal conditions in babies

Folic acid will be added to non-wholemeal wheat flour across the UK to help prevent life-threatening spinal conditions in babies.

UK Preconception Partnership

Purpose

- Translate the evidence presented in the *Lancet series* into policy and practice
- Develop and take forward an action plan to improve preconception health and care in the UK

Clinical, public health and charitable organisations



Who we are

Multidisciplinary coalition representing research, clinical practice, policy & public

Expertise

- Reproductive and sexual health
- Obstetrics and gynaecology
- Primary care
- Population health and epidemiology
- Behavioural science
- Education in school
- Public policy

Preconception health in England: a proposal for annual reporting with core metrics

Stephenson et al *Lancet* 2019; 393: 2262–71


Individual-level

	Intervention approaches	Core metrics to monitor change
Planning	Normalising conversations about pregnancy intention (eg, during health-care visits for family planning, cervical screening, postnatal care and infant developmental checks, management of long-term medical conditions) and identification of high-risk groups	London Measure of Unplanned Pregnancy (scored from 0–12); primary care data (eg, Royal College of General Practitioners Research and Surveillance Centre; see figure 1) on BMI, smoking, long-term conditions (eg, diabetes, hypertension, common mental health problems, and medications not recommended in pregnancy)
Preparation	Offer support for healthy behaviour change to individuals who are planning a pregnancy; online interactive tools such as that offered by Tommy's charity; and referral to evidence-based services including smoking cessation and weight loss (eg, Weight Watchers ¹⁷ and bariatric surgery)	National maternity data (MSDS) and antenatal booking visit (figures 2, 3), to collect data on smoking ("did you quit before pregnancy?"), folic acid use ("did you start taking it before pregnancy?"), alcohol use, substance use, complex social factors, and mental health, and data on glycated haemoglobin level (in MSDS version 2); EuroMonitor-preconception supplement sales
Preparation	Training for health-care providers to have conversations about preconception health, such as through formal medical, health and social care staff training curricula and healthy conversation skills	Content analysis of health and social care staff professionals training curricula, and uptake of training in healthy conversation skills*

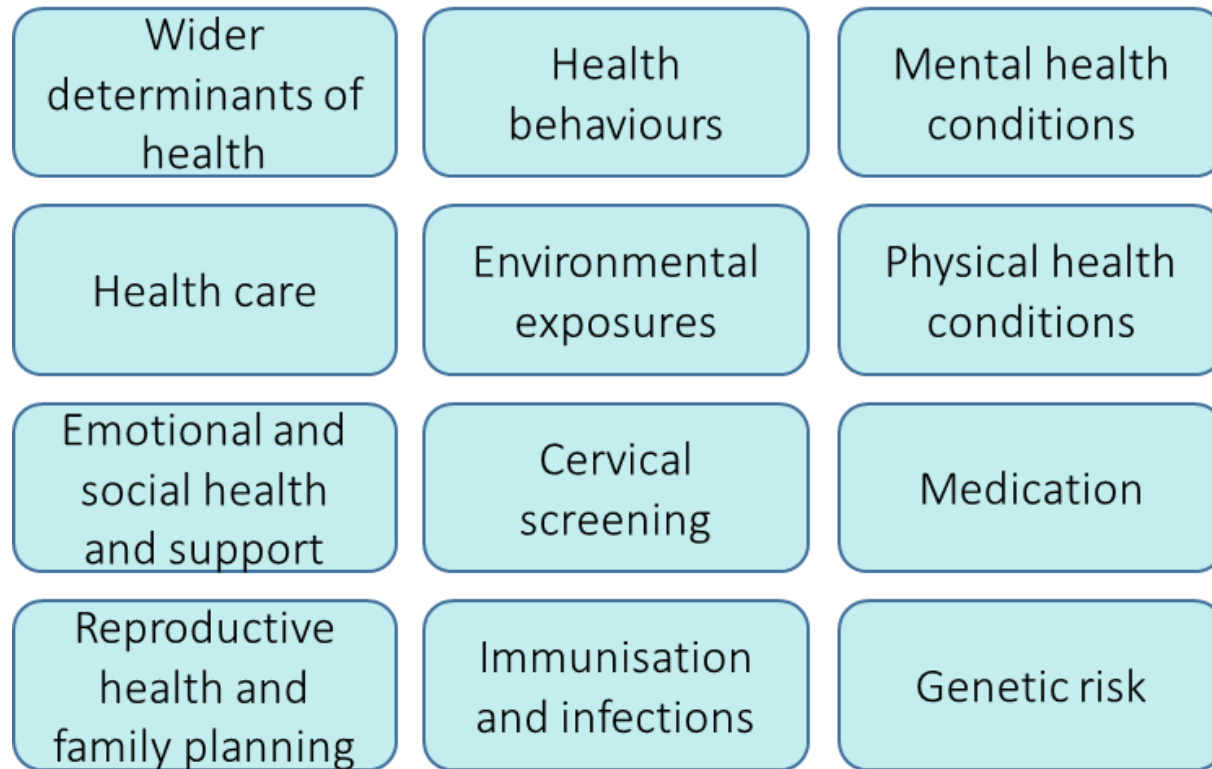
Goal: to hold governments and other relevant agencies to account for delivering interventions to improve preconception health

Characterising and monitoring preconception health in England: a review of national population-level indicators and core data

SOURCES *Journal of Developmental Origins of Health and Disease*

Danielle A.J.M. Schoenaker^{1,2} , Judith Stephenson³, Anne Connolly⁴, Sally Shillaker⁵, Sarah Fishburn⁶, Mary Barker^{2,7}, Keith M. Godfrey^{2,7,8}, Nisreen A. Alwan^{1,2,9} and the UK Preconception Partnership

66 preconception indicators across 12 domains:



20 population-based data sources

13 routine health datasets

(e.g. primary care, maternity and community services)

2 cohort studies

(e.g. Millennium Cohort Study)

5 surveys

(e.g. National Survey of Sexual Attitudes and Lifestyles)

Data on **65 indicators** are routinely recorded in national population-based data sources

First national-level report card on preconception health of women in England

Unpublished results to be shared when available.

Preconception domains and indicators recorded in the national Maternity Services Dataset

Wider determinants of health

- Ethnic minority
- Unemployed and seeking work
- Living in the most deprived area
- Complex social factors
- English not as first language

Emotional and social health and support

- No adequate support available during and after pregnancy

Reproductive health

- Maternal age
- Previous obstetric complication

Family history

- Inherited condition
- Diabetes

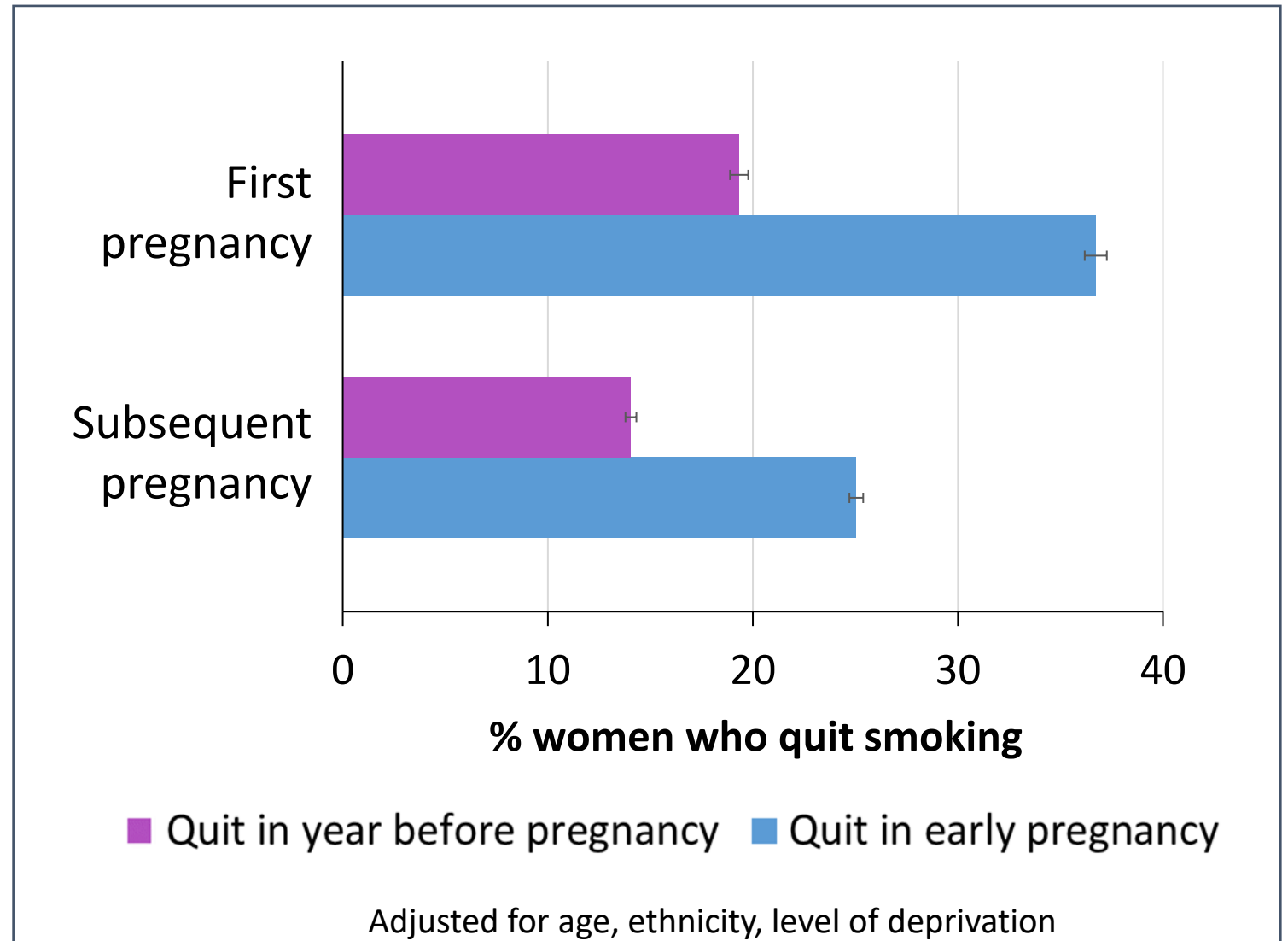
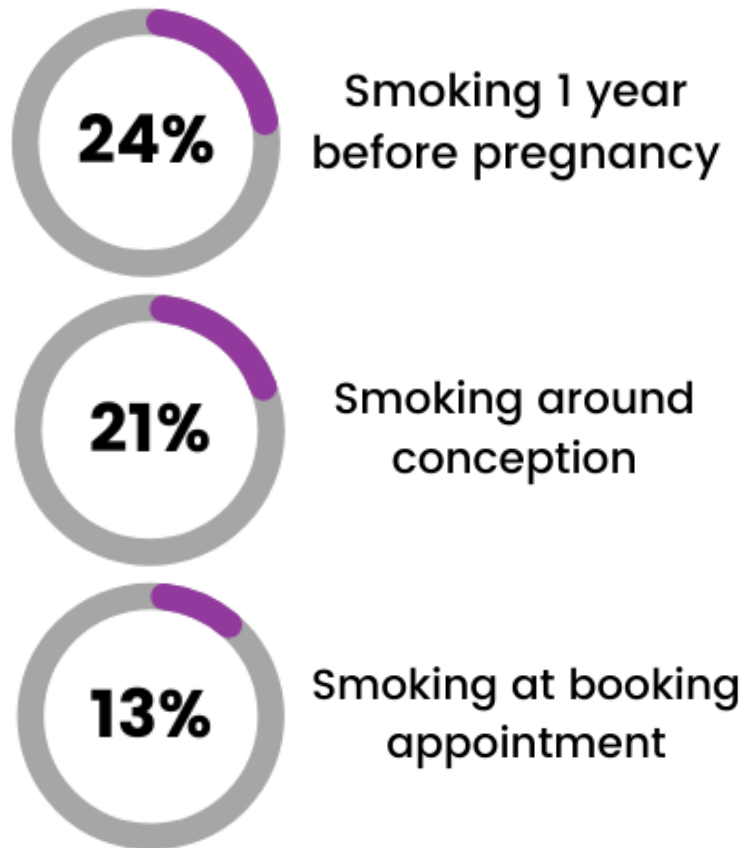
Health behaviours and weight

- Folic acid supplementation
- Tobacco use
- Weight

Pre-existing health conditions

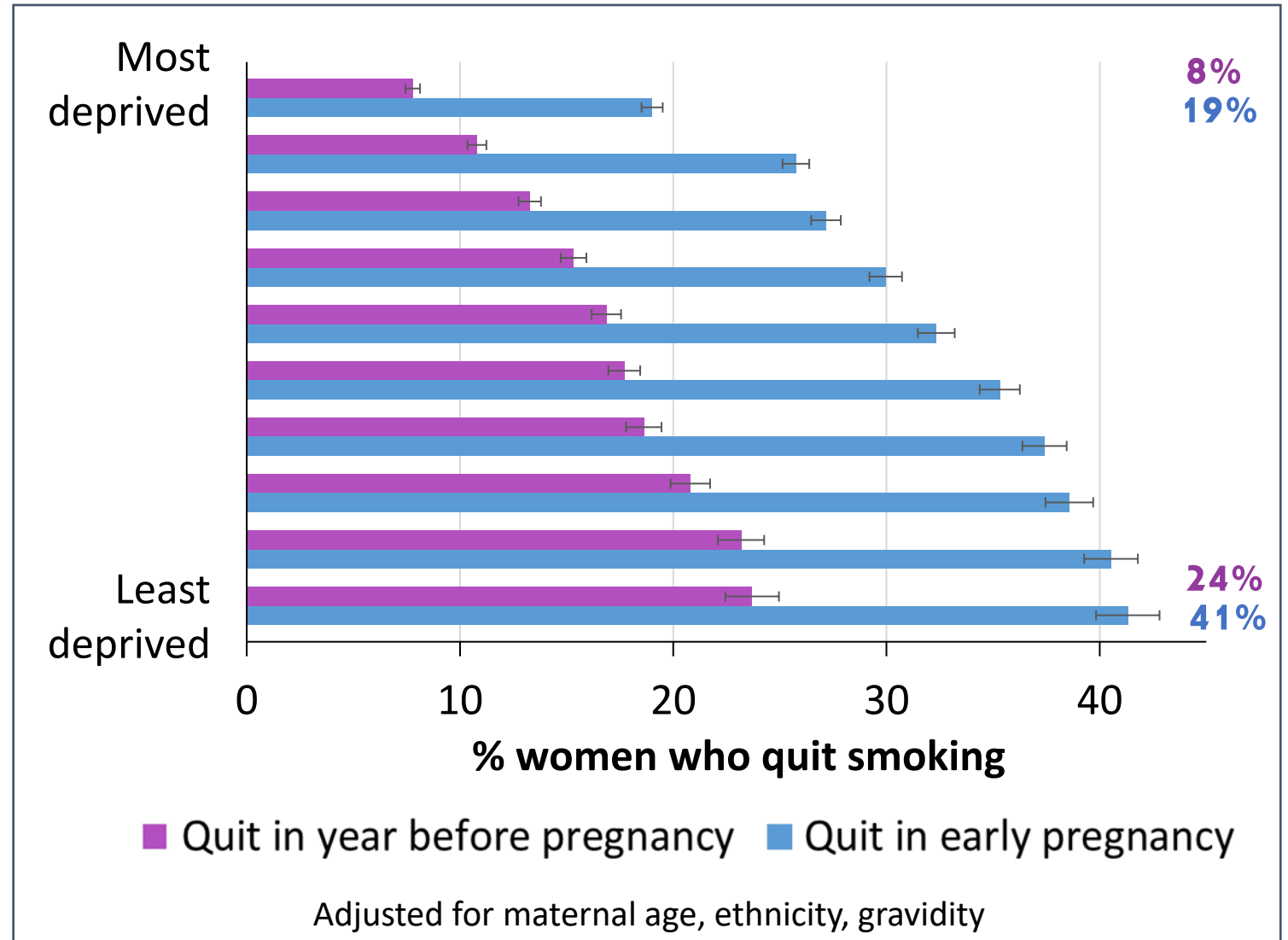
- Mental health condition
- Physical health condition
- Mental and/or physical health condition
- Diabetes
- Hypertension
- Cardiac disease
- Thromboembolic condition
- Renal disease
- Hepatitis B
- Cancer

Smoking cessation before and in early-pregnancy



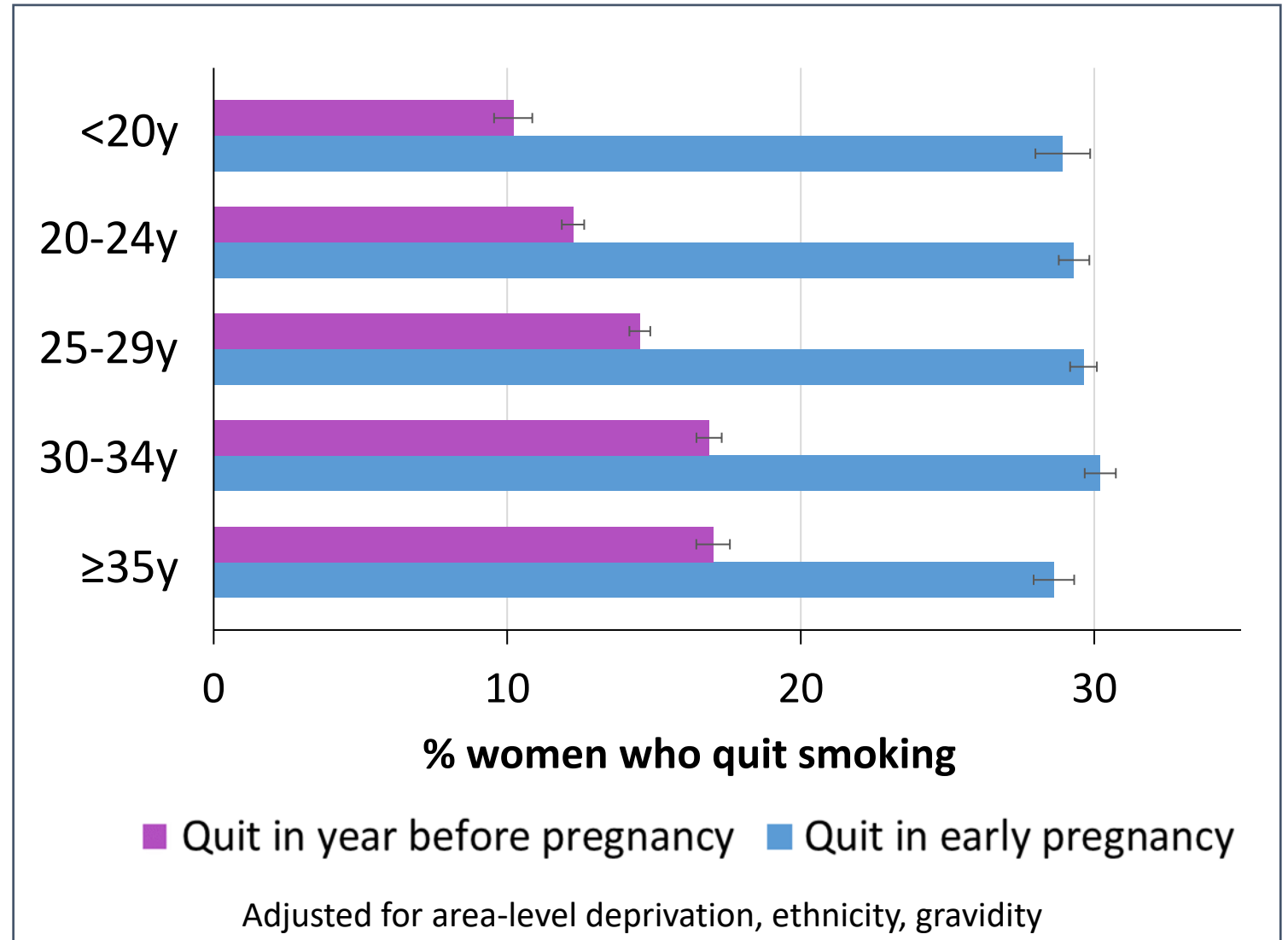
Smoking cessation before and in early-pregnancy

By area-level deprivation (Index of Multiple Deprivation)



Smoking cessation before and in early-pregnancy

By maternal age





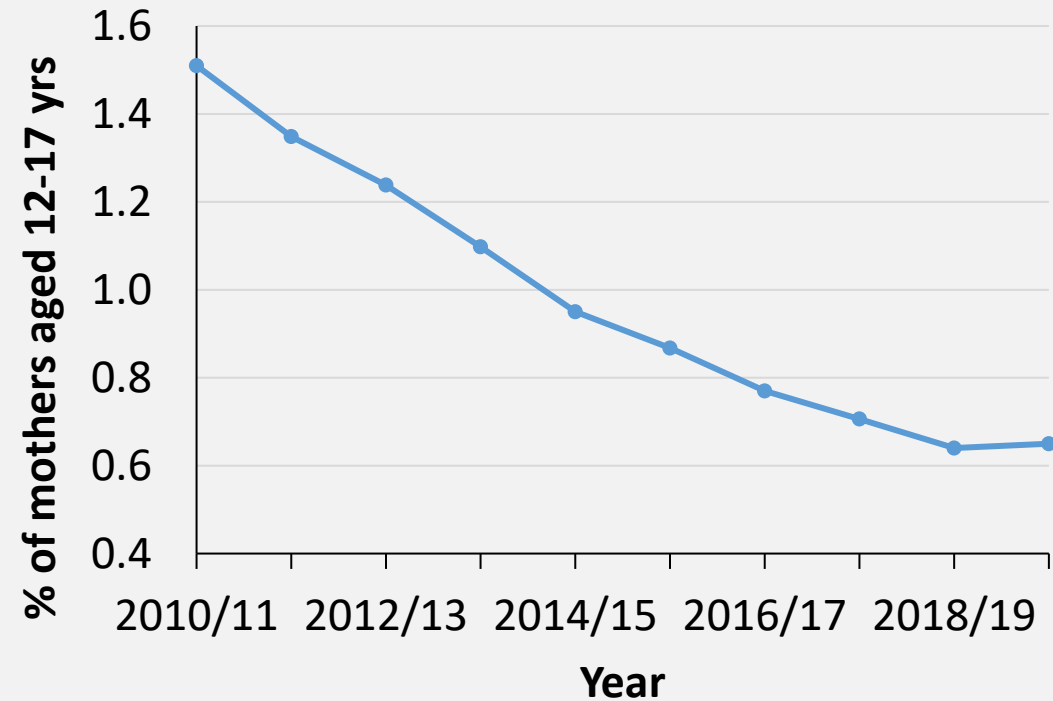
Public Health Profiles

Existing surveillance dashboard

Public Health England
Home > Introduction > Data
Technical Guidance Contact us Your data
Child and Maternal Health
Search for indicators
Domain: Pregnancy and birth
Overview Compare indicators Map Trends Compare areas Area profiles Inequalities England Population Reports Definitions Download

<https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/child-health-profiles>

Trends in the proportion of teenage mothers (12-17 years) in England



Initial priority preconception indicators for ongoing surveillance using national Maternity Services Data

Unpublished results to be shared when available.

Community-based model combining contraception and preconception care

Public Health England-funded project led by Dr Jennifer Hall, UCL

Unpublished results to be shared when available.

Public Involvement and Engagement

The public's thoughts on the term 'preconception health':

- Incorrectly assumes that you know when conception is going to happen
- Not specific enough, unclear what the timeframe is and why it is important
- The word 'conception' is too difficult, too clinical, can have a different meaning, and refers to women's health only

When communicating with the public:

❌ “preconception health”

✅ “health and wellbeing before pregnancy and parenthood”

- Avoid unfamiliar terms
- Use language that - where possible - is positive, encouraging, inclusive and gender-neutral
- Use messages that are specific and realistic

#ReadyforPregnancy campaign



A poster from the UCL Institute for Women's Health titled "Thinking of having a baby - now or in the near future?". It lists 7 steps for a healthy start in life. The steps are: 1. Start taking folic acid tablets, 2. Eat plenty of fruit and vegetables (aim for 5 portions a day), 3. Exercise each week, 4. Reduce or stop smoking, 5. Get closer to a healthy weight, 6. Quit alcohol & recreational drugs and limit caffeine, 7. Speak to your GP several months before you or your partner are trying to get pregnant if... The poster also includes a QR code and the text "7 steps before pregnancy to help you & your baby".



Health in Preconception, Pregnancy, and Postpartum
Early- and Mid-Career Researcher Collective

HiPPP Early- and Mid-career Researcher Collective

- Formed in 2019 by a national group of Australian-based early- and mid-career researchers and mentors in the **Health in Preconception, Pregnancy and Postpartum (HiPPP)** field
- Opportunities for multi-disciplinary collaboration, networking, career development, taking on leadership roles, mentoring & more

Get involved



<https://hipp.org.au/hippp-emr-c-international>



hippp.emrc@gmail.com



[@HiPPP_EMR_C](https://twitter.com/HiPPP_EMR_C)

We are expanding internationally!



5th European Conference on Preconception Health and Care (hybrid)



22 & 23 September 2022

Online & in person at UCL,
London

Abstract & workshop submission
deadline: 30 June 2022



<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/womens-health/5th-european-conference-preconception-health-and-care>

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www.ukpreconceptionpartnership.co.uk