

## Starting Well

# Smoking in Pregnancy

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### Introduction

Smoking remains one of the few modifiable risk factors in pregnancy. It can cause a range of serious pregnancy-related health problems including complications during labour and an increased risk of miscarriage, premature birth, still birth, low birth-weight and sudden unexpected death in infancy. Smoking during pregnancy also increases the risk of infant mortality by an estimated 40%.

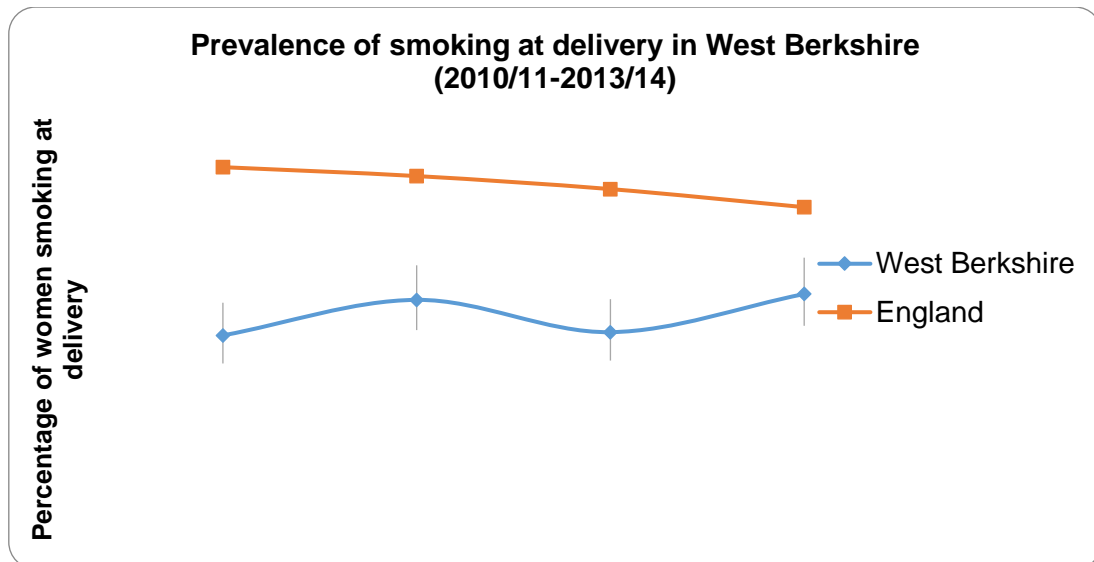
Babies born to mothers who smoke are more likely to develop respiratory illnesses such as asthma and pneumonia. In addition, evidence has shown a link between smoking in pregnancy and psychological problems in young children for example attention and hyperactivity problems.

### What do we know?

Smoking in pregnancy is measured by assessing a woman's smoking status at the time of delivery. This figure is based on the observations of maternity services practitioners, so may not include all mothers who smoke.

In 2013/14, 8.7% of mothers in West Berkshire were estimated to be smokers at the time their baby is born. This is lower than the national average of 12%. Although the rate in West Berkshire is marginally higher than in recent years, they are not directly comparable as the data from 2010-2013 is based on the old [Berkshire West Primary Care Trust \(PCT\)](#) boundary, whereas more recent data is based on women resident in West Berkshire.

Smoking prevalence is particularly high among pregnant women under the age of 20.



Source: *Public Health England Public health Outcomes Framework*

However, it is worth noting that the data from 2010/11 to 2012/13 was based on aggregated data for the Berkshire West PCT boundary. Therefore this may not accurately reflect the actual local authority. The data for 2013/14 is based on women resident in West Berkshire and cannot be directly compared to the previous year's figures.

### **What is the data telling us?**

Babies from deprived backgrounds are more likely to be born to mothers who smoke and to have much greater exposure to second-hand smoke in childhood.

Teenage mothers and younger mothers are also more likely to smoke in pregnancy and the period after birth than older mothers, with mothers aged 20 years or under being five times more likely to smoke during pregnancy compared to mothers aged 35 and over.

Although our rates are lower than the national average, there is still a need to reduce levels of smoking in pregnant women across West Berkshire.

### **Recommendations for consideration**

All health professionals who come into contact with pregnant women who smoke, should provide support and encouragement to help them stop smoking through signposting them to [SmokeFreeLife Berkshire](#). This can include GPs, practice nurses and midwives among others.

Mechanisms should be in place to identify all pregnant women who smoke and referring them to [NHS Stop smoking services](#). This could include measuring the level of carbon monoxide in all pregnant women

Ongoing support should be provided including interventions throughout pregnancy and after delivery. The use of Nicotine Replacement therapy should be considered when needed.

Services should be provided in a way which meets the needs of disadvantaged pregnant women which may include collaboration with other agencies supporting women with complex needs, such as substance misuse, teenage pregnancy support and mental health services.

Stop Smoking services should ensure that staff have the confidence and ability to raise the topic of smoking in an appropriate manner and have the information required to make the referral.

### **Other services and partner organisations**

[SmokeFreeLife Berkshire](#)

### **National and local strategies**

[NICE - Smoking: stopping in pregnancy and after childbirth](#)  
[Healthy Lives, Healthy People: A tobacco Control Plan for England](#)  
[Stoptober](#)

### **Other chapters you might be interested in**

[Access to the Antenatal Pathway](#)  
[Teenage pregnancy](#)

If you have any questions about this chapter, please contact Public Health and Wellbeing Team on [publichealthandwellbeing@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:publichealthandwellbeing@westberks.gov.uk) or 01635 503437