Statistics on women’s smoking status at time of delivery: England, October to December 2011 (Q3 – Quarterly report)

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Background

Babies from deprived backgrounds are more likely to be born to mothers who smoke and to have much greater exposure to secondhand smoke in childhood. Smoking remains one of the few modifiable risk factors in pregnancy. It can cause a range of serious health problems, including lower birth weight, pre-term birth, placental complications and perinatal mortality.

This data collection is designed to provide a measure of the prevalence of smoking among women at the time of giving birth at a local level. It supplements the national information available from the quinquennial Infant Feeding Survey (IFS). The 2010 IFS: Early Results states that just over a quarter of mothers (26%) in England smoked at some point in the 12 months immediately before or during their pregnancy. Of mothers who smoked before or during their pregnancy, just over half (55%) gave up at some point before the birth.

Reducing smoking during pregnancy is one of the three national ambitions in the Tobacco Control Plan published in March 2011 (http://www.dh.gov.uk/prod_consum_dh/groups/dh_digitalassets/documents/digitalasset/dh_124960.pdf), which is “to reduce rates of smoking throughout pregnancy to 11 per cent or less by the end of 2015 (measured at time of giving birth)”.

Key Facts

In England in 2011/12, Quarter 3:

- The percentage of mothers smoking at delivery was 13.4%, lower than the 2010/11 outturn (13.5%), 2009/10 outturn (14.1%) and 2008/09 outturn (14.4%) (Table 1).

- Amongst all Strategic Health Authorities (SHAs), this varied from 20.2% in the North East SHA to 6.1% in London SHA (Table 4).

- Amongst the 149 Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) that passed validation, smoking prevalence at delivery ranged from 30.3% in Blackpool PCT to 2.8% in Brent PCT (Table 4).