



Smoke-free workplaces

This pack provides information on why smoking should be addressed within the workplace and gives details on the Public Health Agency-funded stop smoking services available to employers.

Benefits for you and your staff

Smoking is the single biggest cause of preventable illness, premature death and health inequality. Smoking-related illnesses kill up to 2,300 people prematurely every year in Northern Ireland. In fact, 50% of smokers will die from a smoking-related illness. Currently, 22% of the Northern Ireland population smoke (*Source: Health Survey Northern Ireland 2014/15*), but among routine and manual workers this increases to 30%.

For the smoker

Quitting smoking is a life-changing event and the best possible thing smokers can do for their health. It reduces their chances of developing cancers or having a heart attack or stroke. It also dramatically reduces their risk of lung problems, improves their quality of life and gives their bank balance a boost. Those who manage to quit smoking often inspire others to give up too.



The cost of smoking is very high. Here are a few examples of the health and financial benefits if you quit.

| Time since quitting | Health benefits | Money saved* |
|---------------------|---|--------------|
| 20 minutes | Your heart rate drops | 42p |
| 8 hours | Nicotine and carbon monoxide levels in your blood are reduced by half | £2.82 |
| 24 hours | Nicotine and carbon monoxide are cleared from your body | £8.47 |
| 48 hours | Your ability to taste and smell is improved | £16.94 |
| 2-12 weeks | Circulation improves and your lung function increases | £119-£711 |
| 1 year | Your risk of having a heart attack falls to half that of a smoker | £3,091.55 |
| 5 years | Stroke risk is reduced to that of a non-smoker, in most cases | £15,466.22 |
| 10 years | Your risk of dying from lung cancer is about half that of a smoker | £30,932.44 |
| 15 years | Your risk of having a heart attack falls to that of a non-smoker | £46,398.66 |

* Based on a 20-per-day smoker at an average price of £8.47 for 20 cigarettes.

As this table shows, the health benefits of stopping smoking can be felt almost immediately and the cash savings add up very quickly too.

A 20-a-day smoker will save over £3,000 in the first year (based on a price of £8.47 for 20 cigarettes).

For the employer

Whatever size the business is, there are real benefits from investing in the health of employees:

- increased productivity at work
- reduced sickness absence
- improved staff morale
- pleasant working environment
- good corporate image

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) has estimated that, on average, each smoker who smokes 20 cigarettes per day will take an additional 33 hours off sick per year compared to a non-smoker (*Source: NICE Workplace Health – July 2012*). This equates to a potential extra sickness cost to your organisation of £422 (based on an average salary of £12.79 per hour). In addition, each smoker who takes five smoke breaks per day, each lasting 10 minutes, may cost the organisation an additional £1,067 in lost productivity each year.

To find out more about the typical annual costs to businesses from lost productivity and sickness absence due to smoking, visit: www.ash.org.uk/files/documents/ASH_121.pdf

What can the workplace stop smoking service offer you?

The workplace stop smoking service is flexible and adaptable to the needs of employees and employers. It can offer you the following range of services, tailored to suit your individual business. Please visit the Want2stop website to find contact details for the workplace stop smoking service provider in your local area who can advise on the options available: www.want2stop.info/smoking-workplace/contact



All services offered are **confidential**, fully funded by the Public Health Agency (PHA) and **free** to both the employee and employer.

Information sessions

These are open to all staff interested in addressing smoking or quitting smoking within the workplace. Examples of what is on offer include manned information stands and short talks. The sessions can be tailored to your needs or the time available.

This type of information session:

- helps smokers understand their habit;
- explains the nature of their addiction;
- outlines the health and financial costs of smoking;
- explains the support offered through the programme and how the programme is delivered;
- helps smokers consider changes to their habit in preparation for quitting, eg making their car or home smoke-free;
- aims to motivate smokers to take advantage of the opportunity available to quit.



Setting up a workplace stop smoking service

A specialist stop smoking service can be set up in your workplace. This typically lasts between 6 and 12 weeks.

Individuals ready and motivated to make a quit attempt would participate in group or one-to-one weekly sessions as follows:

- Individual initial assessment (15–30 minutes): First week to assess motivation and readiness to quit, and tailor support to individual needs.
- Weekly review sessions (15 minutes each): 6 to 12 sessions. Ongoing behavioural support offered at each weekly clinic. Carbon monoxide (CO) monitoring is carried out on all smokers to validate non-smoking status.

Specialist services can be arranged by contacting the workplace stop smoking service provider in your area who will discuss the various options available. Visit the contacts page at: www.want2stop.info/smoking-workplace/contact

Anyone trying to quit smoking can order a free Quit Kit on the PHA website at: <http://want2stop.info/quitkit>



The 'Workplace 28 day stop smoking challenge', which is run occasionally across the region, offers extra motivation for smokers looking to quit. Employees can also access any of the stop smoking services based in many pharmacies, GP practices and community facilities where stop smoking specialists can offer programmes free of charge. In addition, an SMS text support service is available by texting 'QUIT' to 70004 and employees can follow Want2stop on Facebook.



How does the workplace stop smoking service work?

If a workplace decides to run a stop smoking programme, a stop smoking service provider will make arrangements to visit the premises and explain the process.

The programme may be delivered as either group or individual sessions. Whichever method is chosen, individual support will be given to your employees, with access to resources and licensed nicotine replacement therapy (NRT).

After four weeks, the employee's progress and CO levels are assessed to determine if they have stopped smoking. Contact with participating employees who have successfully quit smoking at four weeks will also be made at the one year anniversary to determine smoking status.

Employee data on enrolment and smoking status are uploaded to the regional stop smoking monitoring system and used to evaluate the effectiveness of the stop smoking service.

It is important to note that, in order to be successful, full commitment to the programme by both employer and employee is essential. The PHA understands this may be challenging, but the time spent attending the programme will pay significant dividends in terms of health improvement and productivity.

The programme must run without interruptions, so in the case of group work, membership will be closed following the start of the programme and no new employees can be accepted after that time. However, details of community stop smoking services will be made available to all interested employees.

Training and capacity building

Brief intervention training is a short certified course provided free of charge on site to staff who are in contact with smokers on a regular basis. The training will give staff the skills and knowledge to provide opportunistic advice and information on stop smoking services.

In addition, you can discuss the opportunities for workplace champions to become trained as in-house stop smoking specialists. There is a requirement that, after completing training, specialists must deliver the stop smoking service to a minimum of 10 clients annually. However, it's important to note that employers are **not** required to deliver stop smoking support themselves unless they wish to do so, as the PHA has already commissioned services for this.

Stop smoking resources

You can order a range of stop smoking resources to distribute to employees in your workplace. These are available from your local workplace stop smoking service provider. A selection of these resources is included in the appendix.



Smoke-free policy support

As part of the ongoing commitment to smoke-free environments, workplaces should be supported to develop smoke-free workplace policies. The workplace stop smoking service providers can help employers review, implement and revise smoke-free policies and staff induction programmes to embed a smoke-free culture within the workplace setting.

Further information/support available

Support is available for businesses to develop stop smoking activities that link with employee health and wellbeing programmes and recognition awards, eg Investors in People.

Additional services may be available in your area. To find out more, contact your local workplace stop smoking service provider: www.want2stop.info/smoking-workplace/contact



What about e-cigarettes?

The use of e-cigarettes has increased significantly over the past couple of years and many questions have been raised regarding their safety. The PHA has issued advice on e-cigarettes to help people make informed decisions, which is available on the Want2stop homepage: www.want2stop.info



The PHA will regularly review its advice in light of emerging evidence about effectiveness and best practice. Any updates will also be featured on the Want2stop website.

Next steps

We hope the information in this pack highlights the value of offering stop smoking support to your employees. The service is **free** and the potential benefits for your workplace are substantial.

Should you decide to support a stop smoking programme in your workplace, please contact the workplace stop smoking service provider in your area: www.want2stop.info/smoking-workplace/contact

There are more than 650 free stop smoking services across Northern Ireland. Most of these services provide licensed NRT and are run by specially trained staff who can offer advice and support on the best way to stop smoking.

Smoking: know the facts poster and leaflet



This leaflet outlines the health and financial benefits of stopping smoking. It provides key facts on the health dangers associated with smoking, information on second-hand smoke, information on the dangers of smoking to babies, and contact details for help and support available. It also lists the various forms of NRT and non-nicotine medications available.

The poster highlights some of the main health and financial benefits of stopping smoking.

www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications/smoking-know-facts

Give your baby a breather



This booklet explains why smoking while pregnant is harmful for both mother and baby, highlights the health effects of passive smoking after birth and provides advice to help women stop smoking, including information about NRT.

www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications/give-your-baby-breather

Pregnancy and nicotine replacement therapy (NRT): What you need to know



This leaflet provides information for pregnant women on the benefits of quitting smoking, the risks to the unborn baby of continuing to smoke, and the assistance available to stay smoke-free. It focuses on the range of NRT available during pregnancy and includes details for stop smoking service providers in each of the five Health and Social Care Trusts in Northern Ireland.

If you are interested in other health topics and would like to find out more about workplace health, you can download a resource guide produced by the PHA at: www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications/health-and-wellbeing-work-resource-guide

