**SERVICE SPECIFICATION**

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| **Service Specification No.** | N/A |
| **Service** | Nicotine Replacement Therapy in Community Pharmacy – The Voucher scheme |
| **Commissioner Lead** | Jayne Hardman |
| **Provider Lead** | Various |
| **Period** | 01.04.24 – 31.03.27 |
| **Date of Review** | January 2026 |

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| **1. Population Needs** |
| **1.1 National context**  Smoking remains the single largest cause of preventable illness and premature death in the UK despite efforts to denormalise smoking nationally which has contributed to significant reductions in the proportion of the population who smoke.  Smoking prevalence is higher amongst routine and manual workers than for those in professional and managerial socio economic groups and people on low incomes have a significantly higher smoking rate. There is also evidence to suggest that people in lower socio economic groups are likely to find it more difficult to quit without support.  Community pharmacies have a key role to play in providing brief interventions for smoking cessation. Evidence suggests that, given appropriate training, community pharmacists delivering smoking cessation support can have similar success rates to that of nurses. There is also some evidence that involving community pharmacy support staff in brief interventions around smoking can increase the provision and the recording of smoking status in patient’s medications records.  **1.2 Local context**  According to 2021 Annual Population Survey, the adult smoking rate in Halton was 13.2%, a reduction since 2011 when the percentage was estimated to be 22.9%. This is similar to the England average of 13%, with the worst rate in England being 22% and the best being 6.6%.  There have been reductions in smoking levels locally, and these figures show that Halton percentage is now similar to the England average. |
| **2. Outcomes** |
| The service will make a significant contribution to the following objectives within the Public Health Outcomes Framework.   * People are helped to live healthy lifestyles, make healthy choices and reduce health inequalities;   Reduced numbers of people living with preventable ill health and people dying prematurely, while reducing the gap between communities. |
| **3. Overview** |
| **3.1 Scope**  This contract relates solely to the provision of NRT and related support in exchange for vouchers via PharmOutcomes. Pharmacies who wish to provide more specialist stop smoking support as well as products should also apply for the provision of the Stop Smoking Services in Community Pharmacies (aka Intermediate) service.  **3.2 Aims and objectives of service**  This service aims to improve patient access to Stop Smoking Services using the existing network of community pharmacies.  To improve access to Stop Smoking services and products.  To assist in the delivery of local smoking cessation targets.   * To reduce smoking related illnesses and deaths by helping people to give up smoking. * To improve the health of the population by reducing passive exposure to smoke.   **3.3 Population covered**  Clients fulfilling the criteria set out in the Halton Stop Smoking Service protocol which can be found on PharmOutcomes.  **3.4 Any acceptance and exclusion criteria and thresholds**  This service will provide access to NRT products and supporting information. Vouchers are uploaded to PharmOutcomes and are provided by the Stop Smoking Service or other intermediary service provider.  In accordance with the Stop Smoking Protocol anyone over the age of 12 is eligible for support from the Stop Smoking service.  Overall clinical responsibility for the supply of NRT products lies with the pharmacist on duty at the time of supply. As the legal responsibility for issuing the product rests with the pharmacist the final choice of formulation is at the discretion of the pharmacist. The pharmacist has the discretion to change the product should they deem it necessary.  If a different product is supplied compared to the one suggested on PharmOutcomes, the accredited pharmacy staff will ask the client to inform the Stop Smoking specialist at their next appointment. The service does not include the provision of electronic cigarettes.  **3.5 Interdependencies with other services**  The Halton Stop Smoking Service will provide one to one or group support for clients who wish to stop smoking. This includes setting a target quit date and providing vouchers for stop smoking products which can be exchanged in pharmacies signed up to this contract.  **3.6 Any activity planning assumptions**  This service will work in conjunction with the Halton Stop Smoking Service Protocol.  The contracted pharmacy (herein referred to as the service provider) will have in place robust systems for the identification, mitigation and management of clinical and non-clinical risk. |
| **4. Service Description** |
| * The service provider must be able to provide a sufficient level of privacy and safety for the provision of this service. * The service provider has a duty to ensure that the pharmacists and staff involved in the provision of this service have the relevant knowledge, skills and are appropriately trained in the provision of this service. * The service provider has a duty to ensure that pharmacists and staff involved in the provision of this service are aware of and act in accordance with Halton’s Stop Smoking protocol. * The service provider should confirm the name and address of the person redeeming the voucher on PharmOutcomes. * The service provider should confirm the eligibility of the person to access the service in accordance with Halton’s Stop Smoking protocol. * The service provider should maintain appropriate records to ensure ongoing service delivery and audit. All supplies of NRT must be recorded on the clients medication record (PMR) in the pharmacy. * The product(s) supplied must be labelled in accordance with the requirements of the Medicines, Ethics and Practice published by the Royal Pharmaceutical Society. * The service provider should consider communicating information relating to service delivery to the client’s GP with the client’s consent. The service provider must endorse the voucher on PharmOutcomes for audit and payment purposes. |
| **5. Applicable Service Standards** |
| **5.1 Applicable national standards (e.g. NICE)**  The service model is evidence based and refers to current guidance available from:   * NICE Guidance – NG209 “Tobacco: preventing uptake, promoting quitting and treating dependence.” * NICE Quality Standards – QS207 “Tobacco: treating dependence.” * NICE Guidance – NG209 “Tobacco: preventing uptake, promoting quitting and treating dependence.” * Care Quality Commission’s Essential standards of quality and safety   The service provider must also comply with Standards for registered pharmacies as set out by the General Pharmaceutical Council as well as qualities set out by NHS England.  **5.2 Applicable local standards and terms of service**   * + 1. The service provider will operate and provide a service in accordance with this specification unless altered/changed by agreement with the service commissioner.     2. A contract agreement will be signed by the service provider (Head Office in the case of multiples) and will be subject to operational and performance review by Halton Borough Council. The service provider will be given advance written notice of quality assurance visits. |
| **6. Obligations** |
| **6.1 Responsibilities of the service provider**  The service provider must dispense the NRT products in accordance with timescales described in the protocol.    The service provider will record all information relating to the dispensing of NRT on the client’s PMR.  The service provider will have appropriate smoking cessation material available for the client group to promote its uptake. This will be provided by the Stop Smoking service.  The service provider will review its standard operating procedures (SOPs) and referral pathways for the service every two years.  The service provider will co-operate with any locally agreed audits and assessments of service user experience. Advance notice will be provided by the commissioner.  **6.1.1 Professional responsibility**  Service specifications do not remove inherent professional obligations or accountability. All pharmacists and registered technicians involved in providing this service must adhere to their professional code of conduct and at no point does this service abrogate their professional responsibility, professional judgement must be used at all times.  It is the professional’s responsibility to practice only within the bounds of their own competence.  The responsible pharmacist on each given day has overall responsibility for ensuring the service is delivered in accordance with this service specification.  **6.1.2 Standard Operating Procedures**  The service provider will develop a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) which specifically details the operational delivery of this service.  The SOP will be reviewed at least every two years or before if circumstances dictate. Staff delivering the service must be trained in the SOP and a training record held by the provider.  The service provider must ensure that all staff including those other than pharmacists, involved in the provision of the service, have relevant knowledge, are appropriately trained and operate within the SOP, this includes sensitive client centred communication skills.  Changes to procedure must be highlighted within the SOP for special attention.  **6.2 Responsibilities of Halton Borough Council (HBC) and the Stop Smoking Service**  All materials required including documentation and smoking cessation leaflets will be supplied free of charge to the pharmacy by the Stop Smoking service.  HBC will reimburse the pharmacy for the total cost of NRT including VAT (5%) plus a dispensing fee for each voucher processed.  HBC will provide a framework for recording relevant service information for the purposes of audit and claiming payment.  The Stop Smoking service will be responsible for the promotion of the service locally including the development of publicity materials.  The Stop Smoking service will provide details of allied services which pharmacy staff can use to signpost clients who require further assistance.    HBC will periodically review the service. Changes to the level or quality of the service will not be introduced without prior agreement between the commissioner and the service provider. Changes will be authorised in writing.  **6.3 Service provision and continuity**  It is the responsibility of the service provider to have a process in place which ensures that all new staff and locums are aware of all services provided by the pharmacy and commissioned by Halton BC and must maintain continuity of service during and after staff changes. |
| **7. Training and Competency** |
| In order to deliver the service on behalf of Halton Borough Council community pharmacists must:   * Be registered with the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC); * Be working in a pharmacy contracted to NHS England; * Accredited pharmacies must at all times supply NRT in accordance with the Halton Stop Smoking Service protocol; * Whilst trained and competent staff may be authorised by the pharmacist to undertake tasks and record data the overall clinical responsibility for smoking cessation advice, supply of smoking cessation products or onward referral lies with the pharmacist; * A staff training log must be available for inspection, by arrangement; * The service provider must ensure that there are systems in place to make locum pharmacists aware of the service; * Locum pharmacists operate under the same procedures and protocols as permanent staff and must have completed the appropriate training to deliver this service; * The service provider will maintain training records in accordance with this specification and will show evidence of this to Halton BC as and when requested. |
| **8. Welfare** |
| Where there are concerns about the welfare of any person aged 0 to 18 within the pharmacy setting and/or accessing the service appropriate immediate action must be taken to address those concerns by following the Safeguarding pathway.  Additional information on Child Safeguarding procedures can be found at:  <https://hcypsp.haltonsafeguarding.co.uk/>  <https://hcypsp.haltonsafeguarding.co.uk/procedures-guidance/>  If there are concerns about the welfare of someone over the age of 18 pharmacists are required to contact Halton Borough Council on 0303 333 4300 (this will be picked up by the Emergency Duty Team if outside of normal office hours) or if there is an immediate threat to safety or wellbeing the pharmacist should contact the Police. |
| **9. Significant Event Reporting** |
| The service provider must have an adverse incident and near miss reporting system in place which includes maintaining a log of patient safety incidents.  In the case of an adverse incident involving a client who has been supplied with NRT the client's GP must be informed as appropriate.  The service provider should be able to demonstrate that it has learnt from an event.  Halton Borough Council reserves the right to undertake its own root cause analysis if it feels that the root cause is derived from the implementation of the service specification, protocol or PGD.    (Patient or staff) safety incidents or near miss incidents related to this service must be reported to public.health@halton.gov.uk. |
| **10. Complaints** |
| The service provider must have a complaints procedure that complies with Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service complaints (England) Regulations 2009.  The pharmacy should inform clients connected to this service of their right to complain to Halton Borough Council. Information shall be provided to the client in order for them to access the Council’s complaints procedure.  Complaints directly linked to this service must be reported to Halton Borough Council. Any complaints must be sent to public.health@halton.gov.uk. The Council reserves the right to directly investigate complaints about the service. In such cases the pharmacy will co-operate with the investigating officer giving full access to all relevant documents, files and information and will allow them to interview any personnel in the pharmacy’s employment or agent in order to carry out their investigation effectively. This will be agreed prior to investigation by the pharmacy lead. |
| **11. Equality and Diversity** |
| The pharmacy must comply with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, and will not treat one group of people less favourably than others because of their Age, disability, Gender reassignment, Marriage and civil partnership, Pregnancy and maternity, Religion and belief, Sex, Sexual orientation.  It is the responsibility of the service provider to make reasonable adjustments to meet the individual needs of their patients. |
| **12. Health and Safety** |
| The service provider shall comply with the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, the management of health and safety at work regulations 1999 and any other acts, regulation, orders or rules of law pertaining to health and safety. |
| **13. Freedom of Information** |
| The commissioner and the commissioned service provider recognize that this service specification and/or associated recorded information may be subject to Freedom of Information Requests (FOI) Each party shall comply with any such Freedom of Information requests received, in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 legal obligations. |
| **14. Required Insurances** |
| * Employers Liability - £10m minimum * Public Liability - £5m minimum * Professional Indemnity - £5m minimum |
| **15. Data Requirements and Record Keeping** |
| The service provider will be responsible for maintaining records for the period of time required by data protection legislation.  Personal data must be protected in accordance with the provisions and principles of the Data Protection Act 2018.  The service provider must keep all records for a minimum period of 8 years. If the person is aged up to 16 records are required to be kept until their 25th birthday or eight years after death in line with NHS health records retention policies.  Records for clients who are pregnant or breastfeeding must be kept for 25 years.  Electronic records must also be kept and available for this period.  Records will be kept by the service provider in a secure and confidential manner. Records must be destroyed in a confidential manner.  The consultation should be recorded in the client’s pharmacy PMR record.  Records maintained in association with this service must be made available to Halton BC on request for audit and verification purposes. |
| **16. Performance Monitoring** |
| The service provider will have an NHS dispensing contract with NHS England and must fully comply with the National Pharmacy Contract regulations.  Halton Borough Council retains the right to audit any part of the service provided by the service provider or the accredited pharmacist at any time to ensure continued quality within the confines of prevailing data protection legislation. Halton Borough Council will provide written notice in advance of an audit taking place.  Halton Borough Council reserves the right to ask for evidence from the service provider that it is following the procedures outlined in this specification.  The service provider will co-operate with any Halton Borough Council led assessment of service user experience or audit of the service in order to evaluate service provision and identify areas for service improvement.  Halton Borough Council reserves the right to seek feedback from other health professionals’ on their perceptions of the overall quality of the service.  Changes to the level or quality of the service will not be introduced without prior agreement with Halton Borough Council and the service provider. Changes will be authorised in writing. |
| **17. Fees for Providing the Service** |
| **17.1 Fees**  Reimbursement will be made for each voucher in accordance with the detail set out in the protocol.   * Cost price including VAT (5%) * A dispensing fee of £4.00 for each voucher.   Completed vouchers must remain on PharmOutcomes for verification and payment. Claims received after the 10th of the month for the previous month’s activity will not be reimbursed until the following month.  It is the responsibility of the service provider to ensure that the appropriate VAT returns are made.  **17.1.2 Payment arrangements**  In all cases payment will be made monthly in arrears from the data you will have entered on PharmOutcomes. PharmOutcomes is an online reporting mechanism. All claims are subject to the validation of data input and authorization from a certifying officer.  **17.1.3 Terms of payment**  The only sums payable to the Provider for the provision of the Services shall be the Contract Price. All other costs, charges, fees and expenses of whatever kind arising out of or in connection with the Agreement shall be the responsibility of the Provider. |