

Transfer of Care: a solution for everyone

Transfer of care to Local Stop Smoking Services following tobacco dependence treatment in hospitals, prisons and treatment centres

This briefing provides clarification of *Transfer of Care* and spontaneous quitters following publication of *Local Stop Smoking Services and support: commissioning, delivery and monitoring guidance*: www.ncsct.co.uk/publications/commissioning-delivery-monitoring

Summary

A spontaneous quitter is someone who **stops smoking 48 hours or more before attending a Local Stop Smoking Service (LSSS)**. These clients can receive support, but their data cannot be submitted in NHS Digital returns.

Transfer of Care clients are people who are referred to their Local Stop Smoking Service who have:

- received treatment as part of a hospital Tobacco Dependence Service (TDS), or
- quit smoking whilst in prison, or
- quit smoking at other treatment centres.

It is important to distinguish *spontaneous quitters* from *Transfer of Care* clients/patients.

Local Stop Smoking Services should include *Transfer of Care* clients **in their data returns to NHS Digital if they receive their first appointment for behavioural support within 14 days** of their discharge from hospital, release from prison or referral from other treatment centres.

Spontaneous quitters and the 48-hour rule

The NCSCT Local Stop Smoking Services and Support: Commissioning, delivery and monitoring guidance¹ stipulates that **people who have already stopped smoking by the time they have their first appointment** with a LSSS **can only be included in national data returns if they quit smoking within the preceding 48 hours**. They may be counted as having been 'treated' for local purposes e.g. to justify resources used and/or to analyse performance.

The spontaneous quitters rule is in place to ensure **standardised reporting among LSSS**. Services should ensure that this rule does not become a barrier to support for people who smoke.

Transfer of Care

Transfer of Care describes treatment and support that is initiated by one service provider and then transferred to a second service provider. **The 48-hour rule does not apply to Transfer of Care clients.**

One example of Transfer of Care² are **inpatients** who receive support as part of the NHS Tobacco Dependence Service and are then referred to a LSSS. Transfer of Care can also include individuals who receive stop smoking support while **in prison** or a **treatment centre**, and who are then referred upon release/discharge from that setting to a LSSS. Transfer of Care also applies to patients receiving tobacco dependence treatment in private hospitals and other non-NHS treatment settings.

The **Transfer of Care intervention** should consist of **a minimum offer of four weeks of support following discharge**. The appointments may be in person, by telephone or real-time video.

Data returns and reporting

Local Stop Smoking Services should include Transfer of Care clients **in their data returns** to NHS Digital **if they receive their first appointment for behavioural support within 14 days** of their discharge from hospital, release from prison or referral from other treatment centres.

Transfer of Care recognises that **quit dates will generally not be set with LSSS** and as such, **the date of discharge/release is used as quit date** for returns. For Transfer of Care clients, four-week quit rates will be measured from the time of discharge from hospital / release from prison / referral from treatment centre. This ensures that LSSS can include these clients in the national quarterly monitoring returns.

Reporting the self-reported 28-day outcome for Transfer of Care clients to the referring NHS trust will help them meet this **mandatory performance indicator**.

Considerations

Some patients may be referred to LSSS from an **inpatient or outpatient** setting (e.g. outpatients, diagnostic centres or Accident & Emergency departments) **hospital setting where they did not access Tobacco Dependence Treatment or where they were unable to receive support prior to discharge or where they were not admitted overnight**. These referrals are treated as a new referral. **The 48-hour rule for spontaneous quitters applies.**

Conclusion

The distinction between *spontaneous quitters* and *Transfer of Care* clients from the NHS Tobacco Dependency Service, prisons and treatment centres to LSSS, facilitates seamless, ongoing support for people quitting smoking. It also ensures that support and treatment can be recorded and reported.

References

1. Papadakis S, Robson J and McEwen A. Local Stop Smoking Services and support: Commissioning, delivery, and monitoring guidance. National Centre for Smoking Cessation and Training; 2024. ISBN 978-1-915481-02-3 www.ncsct.co.uk/publications/commissioning-delivery-monitoring
2. NHS England Prevention Programme: www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/prevention/tobacco-dependency-programme/#hospital-stays2