

1. Competency framework for tobacco dependence treatment: high risk outpatients

Introduction

The NHS Long Term Plan has committed to delivering tobacco dependence treatment to all inpatients, pregnant women long-term users of specialist mental health and learning disability services. Frontline staff will need to be upskilled to be able to provide these interventions, and NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE&I) have commissioned a series of competency frameworks to support the training and development of staff.

High-risk outpatients have been initially identified to represent those outpatients who have among the highest risk of adverse events and include vascular, surgical, cancer and respiratory outpatients, but the competencies can be applied across outpatient settings.

This document describes the competences required to successfully deliver:

1. Very brief advice on smoking (VBA)
2. Stop smoking intervention
3. Leadership

For the most part, delivery of these interventions is not restricted by role or grade, but rather determined by the competences attained through training and experience. The competences described in the framework are applicable to NHS staff at differing grades, but also to non-clinical and non-NHS staff.

The competency framework is organised by intervention and identifies the individual competences (knowledge and skills) required to deliver these interventions. The framework also identifies training and other resources where these competences can be gained, along with suggestions for maintaining the competences.

The decision on competence for prescribing stop smoking medications via a patient group direction (PGD) is made at a local level, but a separate template has also been drawn up. For this, see *Template competency framework for recommending and prescribing stop smoking medications* (Appendix C).

For information on the development of this competency framework, see *Competency framework for tobacco dependence treatment in secondary care: Evidence and methods* (Appendix A).

1.1 Very brief advice on smoking (VBA) for outpatients

Description: Very brief advice on smoking (VBA) is an evidence-based intervention proven to prompt quit attempts. It is designed to be delivered to **all** patients seen in clinical settings. VBA involves establishing smoking status of all patients, advising on the best method of stopping for those patients who report recent smoking and acting upon the patient’s response to this advice. VBA in the outpatient setting has two main goals: 1) motivate/prompt quit attempts; and 2) link patients to evidence-based stop smoking support (either in-house tobacco dependence treatment services or local authority commissioned Stop Smoking Services).

Staff group: All staff who have contact with high-risk outpatients.

Patient group: High-risk outpatients (respiratory, vascular, surgical, cancer). Families and carers of outpatients where appropriate.

Behaviour Change Techniques: Behaviour Change Techniques (BCTs) to support the delivery of VBA have been established, see *Competency framework for tobacco dependence treatment in secondary care: Evidence and methods* (Appendix A). The relevant BCT codes are found in brackets after each competence. The full list of BCTs can be found in *Behaviour change techniques for smoking cessation* (Appendix B).

Stop smoking (tobacco dependence) intervention	Purpose	Patient group	Competences (BCT code)
General	Demonstrate adequate knowledge about smoking and nicotine dependence	All high-risk outpatients	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate an understanding of consequences of smoking and benefits of smoking cessation to patient’s current condition, overall health and smoking related co-morbidities (BM1) • Demonstrate an understanding of how tobacco dependence develops and nicotine withdrawal symptoms (RC6) • Demonstrate ability to boost patient motivation and self-

			<p>efficacy (BM2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate ability to tailor interactions with patients appropriately (RD1) • Be familiar with stop smoking medications and guidance on the use of e-cigarettes (vapes)
Ask	Establish and document smoking status	All high-risk outpatients	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate ability to assess and record current and past smoking behaviour including use of e-cigarettes (vapes) (RI1)
Advise	Motivate quit attempt and inform of support available	All high-risk outpatients who report current smoking or who have recently stopped (within the past four weeks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be able to provide personally relevant information on consequences of smoking and importance of stopping smoking to the treatment of their current condition (BM1) • Demonstrate ability to inform patient of what help is available (A5) including the role of stop smoking medications (A1) and availability of community support services • Where a patient chooses, be able to advise on use of e-cigarettes (vapes) in line with NICE guidance • Be confident in discussing the role of stop smoking medications in supporting quitting (i.e. managing withdrawal and cravings) (A1)
Act	Act on patient's response to Advise	All high-risk outpatients who report current smoking or have recently stopped (within the past four weeks)	<p>Clinical staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be familiar with the contraindications and special considerations for stop smoking medications • Be able to instruct patients on correct use of first line stop smoking medications (nicotine replacement therapy (NRT), varenicline, bupropion) (A1) • Be familiar with significant drug interactions and medications requiring monitoring following smoking cessation <p>All staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be aware of process for referring/arranging a tobacco dependence consultation with the in-house tobacco dependence practitioner or local stop smoking service (A5) • Be aware of process for documenting what action has been

			agreed in patient notes (P1) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be aware of process to follow if patient does not want any support at this time (A5)
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Recommended training and skills assessment: The recommended training for this competency is the e-LFH e-learning ‘Introduction to treating and preventing ill health by risky behaviours – tobacco and alcohol’ and “Very Brief Advice on Smoking”. This training can be accessed at <https://portal.e-lfh.org.uk/register>

In order to demonstrate competency in the delivery of VBA, staff should:

- successfully complete online training and any associated assessment
- observe the delivery of VBA from a trained colleague, and
- be observed delivering VBA to at least two patients by a trained colleague.

Maintaining competency: Annual refresher training in the delivery of VBA is recommended.

Additional training and resources: Below is a list of supplementary online training and print resources currently available to support staff in the delivery of VBA. Please note that these resources are developed by third parties and whilst all are experts in the field, they need to be read and implemented in the context of NICE guidelines.

Nicotine and addiction fact sheet - Action on Smoking and Health (ASH)	https://ash.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/NicotineAndAddiction.pdf
What are the clinically significant drug interactions with cigarette smoking?	https://elearning.ncsct.co.uk/usr/docs/UKMI_QA_Drug-interactions-with-smoking-cigarettes_update_Nov-2017.pdf
Secondary care factsheets (full list) – National Centre Smoking Cessation and Training (NCSCT)	https://www.ncsct.co.uk/pub_secondary-care-resources.php
The clinical case for providing stop smoking support to Stroke Patients – NCSCT	https://www.ncsct.co.uk/publication_stroke-patients.php
Surgical patients factsheet – NCSCT	https://www.ncsct.co.uk/publication_interventions-in-secondary-care-june-10-surgical-patients.php
Oncology patients factsheet – NCSCT	https://www.ncsct.co.uk/publication_interventions-in-secondary-care-june-10-oncology-patients-factsheet.php

Cardiovascular patients factsheet – NCSCCT	https://www.ncsct.co.uk/publication_intervention-in-secondary-care-june-10-cardiovascular-patients-factsheet.php
Respiratory patients factsheet – NCSCCT	https://www.ncsct.co.uk/publication_interventions-in-secondary-care-june-10-respiratory-patients-factsheet..php
NCSCCT Mental Health Specialty Module: This is aimed at staff that support clients with mental health condition to stop smoking, regardless of whether this is in inpatient or outpatient settings	https://www.ncsct.co.uk/publication_MH_specialty_module.php
Smoking and respiratory disease fact sheet - Action for Smoking and Health (ASH)	https://ash.org.uk/information-and-resources/fact-sheets/smoking-and-respiratory-disease/
Smoking and cancer fact sheet - Action for Smoking and Health (ASH)	https://ash.org.uk/information-and-resources/fact-sheets/smoking-and-cancer/
Smoking, the heart and circulation fact sheet - Action for Smoking and Health (ASH)	https://ash.org.uk/information-and-resources/fact-sheets/smoking-the-heart-and-circulation/
Smoking and surgery: Joint briefing ASH, RCSE, RCA, FPH	https://ash.org.uk/information-and-resources/briefings/briefing-smoking-and-surgery/
Tobacco and post-surgical outcomes – World Health Organisation	https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/330485/9789240000360-eng.pdf
Nicotine replacement therapy - Electronic Medicine Compendium	https://www.medicines.org.uk/emc/search?q=nicotine
Varenicline (Champix) - Electronic Medicine Compendium	https://www.medicines.org.uk/emc/product/266/smpc
Bupropion (Zyban)- Electronic Medicine Compendium	https://www.medicines.org.uk/emc/product/3827/smpc
Briefing: electronic cigarettes - Action on Smoking and Health (ASH)	https://ash.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/E-Cigarettes-Briefing_PDF_v1.pdf

1.2 Stop smoking intervention

Description: The tobacco dependence (stop smoking) intervention involves the appropriate assessment of outpatients who smoke and the delivery of evidence-based stop smoking support, including behavioural support and stop smoking pharmacotherapy. The intervention will take the form of an initial consultation to establish the patient’s stop smoking treatment plan with follow-up consultations conducted to monitor and adjust the plan as needed.

Staff group: Staff responsible for delivering individual stop smoking interventions.

Patient group: All high-risk outpatient patients who report current smoking or have stopped in the past four weeks.

Behaviour Change Techniques: Behaviour Change Techniques (BCTs) to support the delivery of VBA have been established, see *Competency framework for tobacco dependence treatment in secondary care: Evidence and methods* (Appendix A). The relevant BCT codes are found in brackets after each competence. The full list of BCTs can be found in *Behaviour change techniques for smoking cessation* (Appendix B).

Stop smoking (tobacco dependence) intervention	Purpose	Competences
General communication and engagement	Engage patient in the development of their treatment plan	Demonstrate ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe to patients and family members what to expect from the stop smoking intervention (BM1) • Enhance patient’s motivation and self-efficacy (BM2) • Build rapport (RC1) • Communicate in an empathic and non-judgmental manner, using reflective listening and providing reassurance throughout (RC7 and RC10) • Elicit the patient’s views and questions on smoking and smoking cessation, answering questions in a clear and accurate manner (RC2 and RC8) • Summarise information for patients and family members (RC9) • Be familiar with latest evidence-based practices for supporting smoking cessation among outpatients

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform partners and/or family members of risks of smoking and what local support is available to help them to stop smoking
Assessment	Conduct assessment of patient's needs in order to develop tailored treatment plan	<p>Demonstrate ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess current and past smoking behaviour including level of tobacco dependence (RI1) • Assess commitment, readiness and ability to stop smoking (RI2) • Assess past history of quit attempts (RI3) • Assess physical and mental functioning (RI10)
Behavioural support	Deliver evidence-based stop smoking support to patients	<p>Demonstrate ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide personally relevant information on consequences of smoking and importance of stopping tailored to patient's medical condition (BM1) • Provide information on nicotine addiction, withdrawal symptoms and the quitting process (RC6) • Develop a personal treatment plan (BS3) • Emphasise the importance of the 'not a puff' rule (BM10) • Help patients develop strategies to cope with barriers, cues to smoke and relapse triggers (BS1) • Facilitate and advise on use of social support (from friends, relatives, colleagues and 'buddies') (A2) • Prompt commitment from the patient to treatment plan and 'not a puff' rule (BM6) • Deal appropriately with 'lapses' to minimise the likelihood that they will lead to full 'relapse' (BS2) • Offer/direct towards written support materials (RC5) • Be aware of significant drug interactions associated with stopping smoking and their relevance to patient
Prescribe and/or dispense stop smoking medication	To promote effective medication use	<p>Demonstrate ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain role of stop smoking medications in supporting quit attempt (A1) • Assess contraindications to stop smoking medications and patient's past experience (A1)

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable local procedures to provide medications (A3) • Provide instructions on correct use and dosage of stop smoking medications (A1) • Assess patient’s experience with using stop smoking medications, including usage, side effects and perceived benefits (A4) • Advise patients appropriately on adjusting medication usage in light of their experiences (A1) • Where a patient chooses, be confident in discussing the use of e-cigarettes (vapes) with patients including the selection and use of these devices, plus e-liquid strength
Documentation	Document clinical interaction and treatment plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate appropriate documentation of patient treatment plan (P1)

Recommended training and skills assessment:

There is currently no dedicated training specific to outpatient services, but as new resources are identified, they will be shared on the NHS [Community of Practice](#) page. Additionally, the NCSCT offer a variety of training resources where many of the competences are transferable.

In order to demonstrate competency in the delivery of the stop smoking intervention, NHS staff should:

- successfully complete online training and any assessment
- complete face-to-face skills training course
- observe the delivery of a tobacco dependence intervention from an experienced practitioner, and
- be observed conducting at least two tobacco dependence interventions and be provided with feedback on intervention delivery.

Maintaining competency: The online or equivalent face-to-face course should be repeated at least once a year.

Additional training and resources: Below is a list of supplementary online training and print resources currently available to support staff in the delivery individual stop smoking interventions. Please note that these resources are developed by third parties and whilst all are experts in the field, they need to be read and implemented in the context of NICE guidelines.

NCSCT Standard Treatment Program – National Centre Smoking Cessation and Training (NCSCT)	https://www.ncsct.co.uk/publication_ncsct-standard-treatment-programme.php
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Nicotine and addiction fact sheet - Action on Smoking and Health (ASH)	https://ash.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/NicotineAndAddiction.pdf
What are the clinically significant drug interactions with cigarette smoking?	https://elearning.ncsct.co.uk/usr/docs/UKMI_QA_Drug-interactions-with-smoking-cigarettes_update_Nov-2017.pdf
Secondary care fact sheets (full list) – NCSCT	https://www.ncsct.co.uk/pub_secondary-care-resources.php
The clinical case for providing stop smoking support to stroke patients - NCSCT	https://www.ncsct.co.uk/publication_stroke-patients.php
Surgical patients factsheet – NCSCT	https://www.ncsct.co.uk/publication_interventions-in-secondary-care-june-10-surgical-patients.php
Oncology patients factsheet – NCSCT	https://www.ncsct.co.uk/publication_interventions-in-secondary-care-june-10-oncology-patients-factsheet.php
Cardiovascular patients factsheet – NCSCT	https://www.ncsct.co.uk/publication_intervention-in-secondary-care-june-10-cardiovascular-patients-factsheet.php
Respiratory patients factsheet – NCSCT	https://www.ncsct.co.uk/publication_interventions-in-secondary-care-june-10-respiratory-patients-factsheet..php
NCSCT Mental Health Specialty Module: This is aimed at staff that support clients with mental health condition to stop smoking, regardless of whether this is in inpatient or outpatient settings	https://www.ncsct.co.uk/publication_MH_specialty_module.php
Smoking and respiratory disease fact sheet - Action for Smoking and Health (ASH)	https://ash.org.uk/information-and-resources/fact-sheets/smoking-and-respiratory-disease/
Smoking and cancer fact sheet - Action for Smoking and Health (ASH)	https://ash.org.uk/information-and-resources/fact-sheets/smoking-and-cancer/
Smoking, the heart and circulation fact sheet - Action for Smoking and Health (ASH)	https://ash.org.uk/information-and-resources/fact-sheets/smoking-the-heart-and-circulation/
Briefing: smoking and surgery – Action for Smoking and Health (ASH)	https://ash.org.uk/information-and-resources/briefings/briefing-smoking-and-surgery/
Tobacco and post-surgical outcomes – World Health Organisation	https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/330485/9789240000360-eng.pdf

Nicotine replacement therapy - Electronic Medicine Compendium	https://www.medicines.org.uk/emc/search?q=nicotine
Varenicline (Champix) - Electronic Medicine Compendium	https://www.medicines.org.uk/emc/product/266/smpc
Bupropion (Zyban)- Electronic Medicine Compendium	https://www.medicines.org.uk/emc/product/3827/smpc
Briefing: electronic cigarettes - Action on Smoking and Health (ASH)	https://ash.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/E-Cigarettes-Briefing_PDF_v1.pdf
Mental Health Smoking Partnership resources	https://smokefreeaction.org.uk/smokefree-nhs/smoking-and-mental-health/mhsresources/
Smokefree Skills: Training needs of mental health nurses and psychiatrists (ASH)	https://ash.org.uk/information-and-resources/reports-submissions/reports/smokefreeskills/

1.3 Leadership

Description: Administrative and clinical leadership have a fundamental role to play in supporting the success of the NHS plan to deliver evidence-based tobacco dependence support to high-risk outpatients. This includes responsibilities for: supporting the introduction of the necessary policies and processes to support the delivery of tobacco dependence interventions in outpatient settings; ensuring that NHS staff are motivated, have the competences (knowledge and skills) and opportunity to deliver the clinical service (VBA and tobacco dependence intervention); and monitoring delivery of the intervention against established benchmarks. Moreover, leadership has an important role to play in establishing the supportive culture required for the delivery of evidence-based tobacco dependence support as a new standard of care.

Staff group: Administrative and clinical leadership at all levels of outpatient service.

Patient group: High-risk outpatients.

Activity	Purpose	Competences
Culture, communication, staff engagement	Demonstrate knowledge of the importance of addressing tobacco use in outpatient settings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate an understanding of how the NHS goals related to delivering tobacco dependence interventions to all outpatients contribute to organisational performance targets and the success of the NHS Long Term Plan • Demonstrate an understanding of the importance of addressing tobacco use among outpatients and managing nicotine withdrawal

	Engage clinical teams in the delivery of evidence-based smoking cessation interventions to patients	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand what is involved in the delivery of VBA and the stop smoking intervention • Oversee that staff are informed about administrative and clinical leadership's commitment to this new standard of care • Identify clinical and administrative leads/champions who will have the lead role in supporting tobacco dependence treatment
Managing services	<p>Support planning for service delivery</p> <p>Ensure timely, high quality delivery of VBA and stop smoking interventions</p> <p>Ensuring patient safety</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of responsible unit staff who will deliver VBA and tobacco dependence interventions • Ensure timely access to stop smoking medications • Ensure timely delivery of VBA and tobacco dependence interventions • Identification of the documentation processes to be used to record delivery of VBA and stop smoking interventions • Oversee that mentorship and that on-the-job training is provided to staff to improve service quality • Oversee that feedback on performance is provided to staff
Training	Ensure staff have the knowledge and skills to deliver service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all frontline staff complete the appropriate training and have met basic competences for the delivery of VBA • Ensure staff who will be delivering specialist tobacco dependence interventions have completed the appropriate training and have the competences required to conduct the intervention • Be able to coordinate access for staff to annual refresher training and assessment
Monitoring	Monitor performance against established benchmarks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand who is/is not engaging with services and proactively look to improve both access and outcomes – especially in groups with high level of health inequalities • Conduct service audit to improve service delivery • Seek feedback from staff on service delivery • Seek feedback from patients and family on service delivery
Quality improvement	Conduct service review to ensure high quality service delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify areas of poor/reduced performance • Identify factors responsible for poor/reduced performance

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage staff in problem solving • Introduce quality improvement cycles to address areas of poor/reduced performance
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Recommended training and skills assessment: it is key that leaders understand the roles being undertaken and it is recommended to undertake the associated e-LFH e-learning 'Introduction to treating and preventing ill health by risky behaviours – tobacco and alcohol' and "Very Brief Advice on Smoking". This training can be accessed at <https://portal.e-lfh.org.uk/register>

In order to demonstrate competency, leadership should:

- successfully complete the online training including assessment, and
- observe the delivery of VBA and tobacco dependence intervention from a trained colleague.

Maintaining competency: Annual refresher training of the required e-LFH e-learning.

Additional Resources: Below is a list of supplementary online training and print resources currently available to support competencies.

The Clinical case of providing stop smoking support to patients – National Centre Smoking Cessation and Training (NCSCCT)	https://www.ncsct.co.uk/usr/pub/hospitalised-patients.pdf
Secondary Care Fact Sheets – National Centre Smoking Cessation and Training (NCSCCT)	https://www.ncsct.co.uk/pub_secondary-care-resources.php
Nicotine and addiction fact sheet - Action on Smoking and Health (ASH)	https://ash.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/NicotineAndAddiction.pdf
NCSCCT Mental Health Specialty Module: This is aimed at staff that support clients with mental health condition to stop smoking, regardless of whether this is in inpatient or outpatient settings	https://www.ncsct.co.uk/publication_MH_specialty_module.php
Mental Health Smoking Partnership resources	https://smokefreeaction.org.uk/smokefree-nhs/smoking-and-mental-health/mhsresources/
Smokefree Skills: Training needs of mental health nurses and psychiatrists (ASH)	https://ash.org.uk/information-and-resources/reports-submissions/reports/smokefreeskills/