

Minimum number of clients

Delivering behavioural support for smoking cessation is a clinical activity that needs to be carried out regularly so that the quality of support is maintained and to ensure that it 'adds value' to a quit attempt. The NCSCT has therefore established the term 'active stop smoking practitioner', referring to someone who supports a minimum of 20 smokers to set a quit date each year. Any less than this and it will be difficult for a practitioner to maintain the knowledge and skills necessary to deliver evidence-based smoking cessation interventions.

Twenty smokers (setting a quit date) was chosen on the basis that after subtracting holiday entitlements there are approximately 46 working weeks per year. Even assuming that all clients who set a quit date are seen for the standard six week treatment programme, a new client setting a quit date every fortnight will mean that the active caseload does not exceed three clients at any one time (important for community stop smoking practitioners for whom this is not their full time job) and this equates to 23 clients per year. Following consultation with a number of London services (we carried out this piece of work for the London Health Improvement Board in 2013) and analysing existing data sets this number initially seemed appropriate, if challenging for a lot of community advisors to achieve, therefore it was rounded down to 20 to allow for additional practitioners to be counted in this category and for ease of data gathering.