

Smoking status: 12 weeks post-quit date

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Introduction

A number of stop smoking service providers are commissioned to offer extended behavioural support beyond four weeks post-quit date to smokers during their quit attempt, usually to 12 weeks.

Whilst the medication courses prescribed as part of standard treatment should be at least eight weeks in the case of NRT and 12 weeks in the case of varenicline, NHS Digital only require the submission of data regarding quit attempt outcomes after the standard 4-week programme of behavioural support. The provision of an extended period of behavioural support is a local decision that is taken after assessing the needs of smokers and the resource implications. Therefore, there is limited data on the additional benefit of extended behavioural support, but we know that certain smoking populations (e.g. pregnant women, and those with mental health issues) are likely to benefit most from this.

Unlike 4-week post-quit data, data collected up to and including 12 weeks post-quit is not submitted to NHS Digital and has not thus far been subject to agreed data definitions.

A CO-verified 4-week quitter is a treated smoker who reports not smoking for at least days 15 to 28 of a quit attempt and whose CO reading is assessed 28 days from their quit date (-3 or +14 days) and is less than 10ppm. Any client who reports smoking (even one puff) between days 15 and 28 of their quit attempt, or whose CO reading is 10ppm or above, cannot be classified as a 4-week quitter.

Source: Local Stop Smoking Services: Service and Delivery Guidance (2014)

In order to make sense of 12-week post-quit data collected by service providers, and to evaluate the merits of extended support programmes, it is important to have a clear picture of how the 12-week post-quit data are being assessed in different services.

Smoking status at 12 weeks post-quit

It is worth considering the different options, clinical and administrative, for CO-verified four-week quitters who receive extended behavioural support to 12 weeks.

A natural interpretation of a report of success at 12 weeks is that the smoker has not smoked at all from the third week post-quit date to the 12 week follow up. As with the 4-week figure there needs to be some latitude as to when this is assessed and it is suggested that 3 days prior to, or 7 days following, the target follow up date would be appropriate.

If a client reports that they have smoked at any point between the 4-week post-quit date and the 12-week follow up, they will be classed as a smoker.

Classifying a client as a smoker need not result in termination of treatment. This is a decision for the service and the practitioner based on a clinical judgement as to whether the smoker may be able to recover full abstinence. If treatment is to continue, it is suggested that a new treatment episode be recorded in the documentation and a new quit date set on that record.

To assist with standardising the assessment of outcome, it is suggested that the same question be asked at each follow up:

"Have you smoked at all since the last session?"

Yes / No

To qualify as a 12-week self-reported success, the client must have been classified as a success at 4 weeks **and** to answer 'No' at all later follow-up sessions.

To qualify as a 12-week biochemically verified success they must be a 12-week self-reported success **and also** have expired-air CO concentrations below 10ppm at all sessions.

Associated NCSCT briefings

Four week quit rate briefing

This briefing answers the question we are often asked about whether assessing abstinence at 12 weeks gives us a better idea of the number of clients of Stop Smoking Services who will become permanent ex-smokers compared with measuring abstinence at 4 weeks: tinyurl.com/4-week-quit-rates

Spontaneous quitters: clarification of the 48-hour rule

This new guidance enables continuity of care for those who have been tobacco-abstinent for up to 14 days prior to presenting at their local stop smoking service, enabling a seamless approach to treatment and building on their success at starting to tackle their dependence on tobacco: tinyurl.com/spontaneous-quitters