



The role of pharmacy in supporting people who want to stop smoking

- Pharmacists are amongst the most accessible of all healthcare professionals
- 300,000 people in Wales visit a community pharmacy every day for health related advice, making pharmacists ideally placed to provide care and support to those who want to stop smoking
- Over the counter provision of Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) approximately doubles the rate at which people stop smokingⁱ

Smoking is the single greatest cause of preventable illness and premature death in the UK.ⁱⁱ This information sheet outlines how pharmacy can be used to help reduce this figure through its involvement in stop smoking services.

Why Pharmacy?

There is a network of over 700 community pharmacies in Wales located where people live and work, which are easily accessible, available without appointment and are often open when other health services are closed.

Pharmacists are recognised as experts in medicines and community pharmacy offers a range of treatments, services and advice.

Pharmacists are highly trained health care professionals who undertake a four-year Masters degree followed by a year of training before qualification.

In recent years, the pharmacist's role has evolved to provide a much more clinical service that utilises their expertise in medicines. Recent developments have given pharmacists with additional training the ability to prescribe, offering huge potential to develop new services, such as running their own clinics.

Existing stop smoking services through community pharmacy show good quit rates and increase access.

Pharmacists and Smoking Support Services

The pharmacist's role in smoking cessation is not new. They have been active in this area for many years in all health settings, providing a range of smoking cessation services and improving public health at a national level. In some cases this has been through NHS supply but in most cases this is through 'over the counter' sales.

- Community pharmacists see people who are 'well' in addition to those who are 'unwell' providing access to people who are not engaging with other health care professionals.
- Provision of NRT and other medication, as well as support, can be delivered through a locally negotiated service. This can be linked to existing stop smoking services provided through other programmes that often do not have the capacity to supply therapy.
- As well as support and supply, pharmacists can offer one-to-one counselling to patients wishing to quit.
- Community pharmacists provide motivational support and advice, usually without the need for an appointment.
- Pharmacists can provide health promotion and public health services together with signposting to other stop smoking services.
- All pharmacies can provide 'over the counter' Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT).
- Hospital pharmacists visit patients on wards on a daily basis so are ideally placed to provide advice and guidance as well as signposting to other services.



The Evidence for Pharmacy

The RPSGB Technical Information Centre has collated a selection of key references providing evidence and examples of the positive contribution that pharmacy can make. This is available at:

www.rpsgb.org/pdfs/smokecess.pdf

Pharmacy Based Smoking Cessation Services

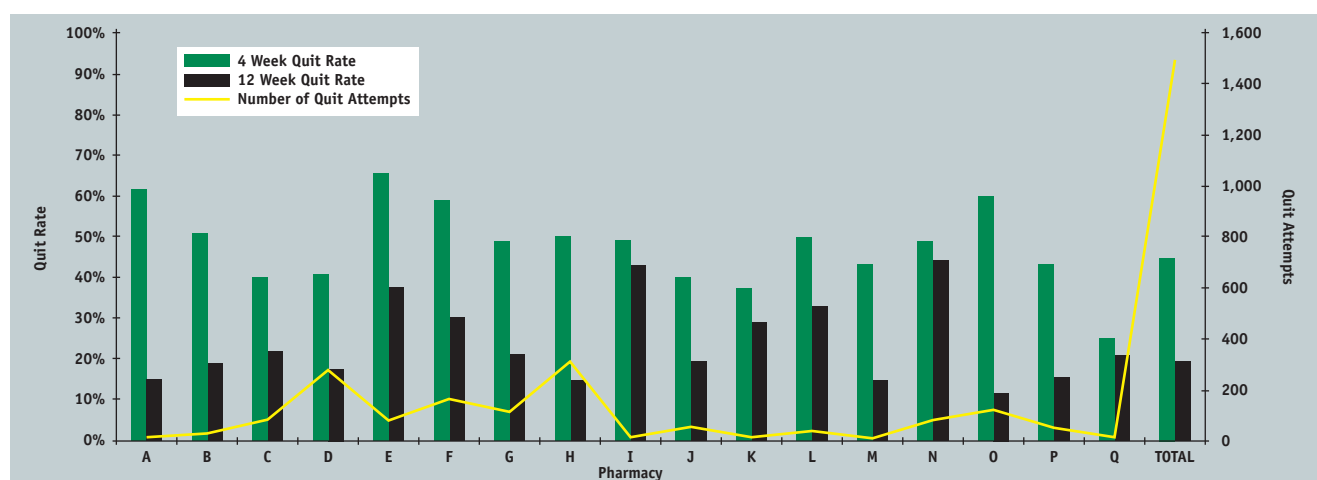
The following is an example of how pharmacy is making a difference to people's lives who want to stop smoking.

The Denbighshire Community Pharmacy Smoking Cessation Service

Launched in March 2006 the service has three levels based on the new community pharmacy contractual framework:

- LEVEL 1:** Pharmacists provide advice on quitting, provide over the counter NRT and signpost to local services.
- LEVEL 2:** Pharmacists will supply therapy for patients receiving counselling from the local smoking cessation service, offering additional support and reinforcement of their advice.
- LEVEL 3:** Pharmacist's provide one-to-one assessment of a patient, initiate supply and monitor the use of appropriate smoking cessation therapy, and provide advice and support each time NRT is supplied.

Smoking Cessation for Denbighshire Service 2007-8



What should be done now?

The pharmacy contractual framework provides a mechanism for new and innovative services to be provided. At a national and local level, urgent consideration should be given by those with an influence over health planning on how the benefits that pharmacy can provide in supporting patients to stop smoking are fully realised.

i Raw, M. Mcneill, A et al; Smoking Cessation Guidelines for Health Professionals – A guide to effective smoking cessation interventions for the health care system; Thorax 1998; 53 (Suppl 5): S1-S18 (December)

ii A White Paper on Tobacco published by The Stationery Office Prepared 30 November 1998
www.archive.official-documents.co.uk/document/cm41/4177/4177.htm [Accessed 26.10.06]

