

Service	Dispensing Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) on the County Durham Stop Smoking Service NRT e-voucher Service
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Provider Lead	
Period	1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026

Background

NICE guidance *Tobacco: preventing uptake, promoting quitting and treating dependence* is available at <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng209>.

Making smoking history, with a reduction in the percentage of people who smoke to 5% by 2030, is one of the four local priorities in the County Durham Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023-28 at <https://countydurhampartnership.co.uk/health-wellbeing-board/joint-health-and-wellbeing-strategy/>:

- Smoking remains the single largest cause of preventable deaths and one of the largest causes of unfair health differences in England.
- In County Durham, around 900 people die every year from smoking related illnesses.
- Smoking in pregnancy impacts on the health of the mother, the unborn baby and wider family members by inhaling second hand smoke. In County Durham we have higher numbers of women who smoke while they are pregnant than the national average.
- In County Durham, over 41,000 children live in households with adults who smoke, this not only damages their health but increases their chance of becoming smokers themselves.
- In County Durham, there are approximately 69,000 people who continue to smoke, 16% of the adult population – this is higher than the national average.

Further information is available at <https://www.durhaminsight.info/tobacco-control/>.

1.0 Purpose and scope

- 1.1 The NRT e-voucher service in County Durham allows the client the choice of pharmacy for the dispensing of free NRT.
- 1.2 This service uses a NRT e-voucher with a 2-weekly supply created on PharmOutcomes by trained County Durham stop smoking advisers. The adviser supplies the client with a unique NRT e-voucher code, and the pharmacy enters this unique code onto PharmOutcomes to redeem the NRT e-voucher and to fully supply against it. Pharmacies act as a NRT dispensing point only under this service.
- 1.3 Being a dispensing point means being available for advice and dispensing of NRT throughout the pharmacies contracted opening times.

2.0 Timescale

- 2.1 This specification covers 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026.

3.0 Service aims and objectives

- 3.1 The aim of the service is to:
 - Provide the County Durham population with access to free NRT on a 2-weekly basis whilst providing additional support and advice to clients.
- 3.2 The objectives of the service are to:
 - Increase the support and advice to clients who wish to cease smoking.
 - Raise people's awareness of the risks of smoking and the support available to help smokers to quit.
 - Develop and enhance the skills of the people working in these services, so that they can improve the public health work they do with the County Durham population.

- 3.3 Pharmacies will act as a dispensing point for a 2-week supply of free NRT once presented with a unique NRT e-voucher code by the client. Each NRT e-voucher will provide a 2-week supply to be fully dispensed (i.e. each e-voucher should be fully saved and submitted for payment on PharmOutcomes).
- 3.4 NRT e-vouchers are created by accredited stop smoking advisers working within County Durham Stop Smoking Service (<https://www.smokefreecountydurham.co.uk/>). This includes specialist stop smoking advisors, independent contractors such as GP practice staff, dental practice staff, pharmacy staff, maternity care assistants and voluntary sector staff. For combination NRT, advisers will issue two NRT products on one e-voucher except in exceptional circumstances of e.g. problems with stock and where the client wishes to try to obtain that particular choice of NRT; where a client does not need to redeem both supplies of NRT at the same time (e.g. a prn supply of NRT).
- 3.5 The NRT formulary allows for the provision of two free NRT products (i.e. combination therapy) for all clients over a period of 12 weeks (see Appendix I). The offer to pregnant women and their 'significant others' allows for the provision of two free NRT products (i.e. combination therapy) over a period of 40 weeks.

4.0 Service outline criteria

Contractors must fulfill the criteria laid down in the following sections. Providers may be required to demonstrate their current ability to fulfill these criteria, or the steps being taken to meet them.

Criteria:

- 4.1 Direct service delivery
- 4.2 Data collection
- 4.3 Staffing
- 4.4 Review/audit

4.1 Criteria one: Direct service delivery

See Appendix II for *Top tips for pharmacies on the PharmOutcomes template*

- 4.1.1 Free NRT should only be dispensed via this service specification to clients presenting at the pharmacy with a unique e-voucher code created by accredited stop smoking advisers working within County Durham Stop Smoking Service.
- 4.1.2 On week 1-2 of the 12-week¹ course, the pharmacy staff member should ensure that the NRT product is suitable for the client based on their smoking status and lifestyle. They should discuss side effects and how the product should be used/applied and any other stop smoking support.
- 4.1.3 On subsequent weeks of dispensing the pharmacy staff member should ensure that the product is still suitable. If the client has e.g. suffered adverse side effects, then the client should be counselled and advised on a suitable alternative NRT product by the pharmacy. The pharmacy can alter the choice of NRT product before fully dispensing the 2-weekly e-voucher (when entering the NRT supplied, the PharmOutcomes template will ask the pharmacy to confirm if either the pharmacy has supplied what the adviser requested or if there is a product change and the reason why). Stop smoking advisors can view the supplies made against each 2-weekly e-voucher once a e-voucher has been fully saved (i.e. submitted by the pharmacy for payment on PharmOutcomes) and hence will be able to note any changes of product at the point of dispensing.

¹ Or 40-week course for pregnant women and their 'significant others' (select this option on the PharmOutcomes template to allow for e-vouchers to be processed up to week 40)

- 4.1.4 If stop smoking advisors change the NRT product once the pharmacy has dispensed the 2-weekly supply and before this supply has been used by the client, the adviser will issue the client with a further e-voucher code for a new NRT product(s) and advise the client to return the unused NRT back to the pharmacy for correct disposal.
- 4.1.5 Each 2-weekly e-voucher should be fully supplied each time. If the client requires a longer supply (e.g. if the client is going on holiday) then the adviser will issue the client with the necessary number of 2-weekly e-voucher codes.
- 4.1.6 All NRT products supplied via NRT e-voucher must be labelled in the normal dispensing manner and a patient medication record stored electronically.
- 4.1.7 The pharmacist in charge at the point of dispensing is the health professional responsible for the dispensing and selection of the product for the client.
- 4.1.8 NRT will be provided by the pharmacy and claimed for via PharmOutcomes (i.e. each 2-weekly e-voucher should be fully dispensed and then fully saved on the PharmOutcomes template to submit it for payment).
- 4.1.9 The pharmacy must ensure that confidentiality for all clients is assured.

4.2 Criteria two: Data collection

See Appendix II for *Top tips for pharmacies on the PharmOutcomes template*

- 4.2.1 NRT e-voucher claims are processed via PharmOutcomes. All fields must be complete and accurate. NRT quantities must be entered as the total number of individual units (e.g. mls or patches or cartridges) and NOT the number of packs (e.g. 1 bottle or 1 pack). Note: However, the quantity entered by the stop smoking adviser on the NRT e-voucher will also be as the total number of individual units.
- 4.2.2 There is a maximum time period of 2 months to submit a 2-weekly e-voucher onto PharmOutcomes (which includes the month in which in e-voucher code was generated by the adviser).

4.3 Criteria three: Staffing

- 4.3.1 All staff involved in the provision of the service should have up to date knowledge on stop smoking support, NRT products and e-cigarettes.
- 4.3.2 The contractor is required to ensure that suitably trained members of staff have attained the NVQ level 2 medicines counter assistant's qualification and are available for the contracted opening hours of the pharmacy.

4.4 Criteria four: Review/audit

- 4.4.1 The Local Authority reserves the right to audit e-vouchers produced by Stop Smoking Service and then issued by the pharmacy.

5.0 Financial details

- 5.1 The contractor will be paid at the following rates:

Duty	Fee
1. Voucher acceptance fee for <u>each</u> 2-weekly voucher	£3.00 ex VAT
2. Dispensing fee for <u>each</u> NRT product	£1.20 ex VAT
3. NRT product cost (against the NRT formulary only – see Appendix I)	Drug tariff product cost

In the event of over claims being made, the Local Authority has the right to reclaim all monies.

- 5.2 PharmOutcomes will generate monthly reports on the 15th working day of every month. Pharmacies will be paid monthly for the costs of the NRT product and dispensing fees which will be made by the Local Authority to pharmacies after sign up to the service via the Public Health contract. There will be no requirement for pharmacies to send invoices. Any queries relating to payment can be made to publichealth@durham.gov.uk.

6.0 Accreditation

- 6.1 It is the duty of the contractor to ensure that the service is delivered by staff who have the necessary competence and training in NRT products/selection, and that the pharmacy routinely holds a reasonable stock of the NRT formulary choices (see Appendix I).
- 6.2 The Local Authority does not require staff to undergo named training to meet this specification. The specialist stop smoking service advisers can provide brief intervention training on NRT products. In addition, useful sources of information include:

NHS stop smoking support at <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/quit-smoking/> and <https://www.nhs.uk/better-health/quit-smoking/>

Information available National Centre for Smoking Cessation and Training Website:

- *Stop smoking aids quick reference sheet* at <https://www.ncsct.co.uk/publications/stop-smoking-medications-quick-reference>
- *Very brief advice on smoking* at https://www.ncsct.co.uk/publication_VBA_2021.php

Online training from the County Durham Stop Smoking Service at <https://www.smokefreecountydurham.co.uk/professionals-training/>.

- 6.3 Staff should also be aware that where clients wish to use an e-cigarette to support their quit attempt, the specialist stop smoking advisers will directly supply e-cigarettes. This supply of e-cigarettes does not involve Level 2 stop smoking advisers or pharmacies. For information on e-cigarettes see:
- FAQs at www.nhs.uk/live-well/quit-smoking/using-e-cigarettes-to-stop-smoking/; <https://www.nhs.uk/better-health/quit-smoking/vaping-to-quit-smoking/>; <https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/causes-of-cancer/smoking-and-cancer/is-vaping-harmful>.
 - NCSCCT briefing. *Vaping: a guide for health and social care professionals* at https://www.ncsct.co.uk/publication_Vaping_Briefing.php.

7.0 Ongoing measurement and evaluation

- 7.1 Any monitoring and evaluation obligations laid down in the service criteria outline must be fulfilled. The contractor may be requested to participate in an end of year service review as defined by Public Health.

8.0 Notice period

- 8.1 A minimum of 3 months' notice is to be provided by either the contractor or the Local Authority in the event of any decision to withdraw from this service before the stated expiry date.

DCC Supporting Officer

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Appendix I: NRT formulary from April 2025

16 Hour Patch
Nicorette 25mg Invisi Patch (x14 or x7)
Nicorette 15mg Invisi Patch (x7)
Nicorette 10mg Invisi Patch (x7)
24 Hour Patch
NiQuitin CQ 21mg Patch (x14 or x7)
NiQuitin CQ 14mg Patch (x 14 or x7)
NiQuitin CQ 7mg Patch (x7)
Nicotinell TTS 30 (21mg) Patch (x7)
Nicotinell TTS 20 (14mg) Patch (x7)
Nicotinell TTS 10 (7mg) Patch (x7)
Inhalator
Nicorette 15mg Inhalator (x20)
Nicorette 15mg Inhalator (x36)
Gum
Nicorette 2mg Gum (x 210 or x105)
Nicorette 4mg Gum (x 210 or x105)
Lozenges
Niquitin Mint 2mg Lozenges (x72)
Niquitin Mint 4mg Lozenges (x72)
Niquitin Minis 2mg Lozenges (x60)
Niquitin Minis 2mg Lozenges (x100)
Niquitin Minis 4mg Lozenges (x60)
Niquitin Minis 4mg Lozenges (x100)
Nicorette Fruit 2mg Lozenges (x80)
Nicorette Cools 2mg Lozenge (x80)
Nicorette Cools 4mg Lozenge (x80)
Nasal Spray
Nicorette 500mcg Nasal Spray (10ml – 1 bottle)
Mouth Spray
Nicorette QuickMist 1mg/spray (13.2ml – 1 bottle)
Nicorette QuickMist 1mg/spray (26.4ml – 2 bottles)

**Appendix II: Top tips for pharmacies on the PharmOutcomes template
NRT Voucher (Electronic Voucher)**

Version 6. April 2025

All clients should be provided with NRT free of charge.

E-vouchers order 2 weeks at a time and should be fully supplied by the pharmacy each time.

The training video produced in 2023 at <https://media.pharmoutcomes.org/video.php?name=DurhamNRTVoucherPharmacy2023> still provides a useful overview.

The Stop Smoking Service will provide clients with their unique e-voucher code in the following ways:

- Text message to the client (default method).
- Printing off a paper copy of the e-voucher for the client.
- Emailing the pharmacy with the e-voucher code. These emails are titled '*NRT e-voucher code from Smokefree County Durham – Client initials*'.

The information provided by the Service will include the e-voucher code and the name of the NRT products that have been requested. This will enable the pharmacy to check that they have the product(s) in stock before redeeming the voucher code.

If the pharmacy doesn't have a NRT product in stock, there continues to be the discretion in the service specification for the pharmacy to alter the NRT that has been ordered by the adviser. This does not require a new e-voucher issuing by the adviser – the pharmacy would simply supply a suitable alternative and when entering this on PharmOutcomes against that e-voucher code, in the Notes section at the end of the template, select *No* against the question 'Please tick to confirm you have supplied the NRT product(s) in line with the voucher request from the smoking advisor' and then provide a brief description of the reason why (e.g. requested product out of stock, side effects, etc). This can then be viewed by the adviser once the pharmacy submits the e-voucher for payment.

For a new e-voucher, type in the e-voucher code which will be a string of 7 letters which can be typed as upper or lowercase.

The wording 'You cannot register new voucher code' will appear under the e-voucher code box and simply means that the codes are generated by the Stop Smoking Service (which is also set up as a provider on PharmOutcomes alongside all pharmacies).

For each 2-week voucher, supply the full 2 weeks each time and fully save (i.e. submit for payment) each time.

The NRT quantity MUST continue to be entered as the number of individual units and NOT as the pack size (Appendix 1). Please be aware of the maximum licensed daily doses of these products and query any 2-week quantity requests that would exceed this (the exception to this is 'double patching' of clients who are heavy smokers – Appendix 2).

For example:

Product	Maximum daily use	Maximum use over a 2- week period	Quantity to claim on PharmOutcomes for a 2-week supply
Nicorette QuickMist	64 sprays	896 sprays	<p>Select the:</p> <p>Double 26.4ml pack size and then enter a quantity of 79.2 (i.e. 3 x 26.4ml - each 13.2ml bottle has 150 sprays).</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Single 13.2ml bottle and then enter a quantity of 79.2 (i.e. 6 x 13.2ml bottles - each 13.2ml bottle has 150 sprays).</p>

Examples of quantities that could be requested:

CORRECT

Nicorette Quickmist 1mg/spray (26.4ml - 2 bottles)

Quantity: 79.2ml

3 x 2 bottles would be supplied which would cover a maximum licensed daily dose of 64 sprays over a 2- week period.

INCORRECT (ADVISOR ENQUIRY NEEDED)

Nicorette Quickmist 1mg/spray (26.4ml - 2 bottles)

Quantity: 105.6ml

This would be an order for 4 x 2 bottles which is over the maximum licensed daily dose and so should be queried with adviser and amended by the pharmacy (i.e. the pharmacy continues to have the discretion to alter the type and quantity of NRT ordered on a e-voucher - this doesn't require a new e-voucher code from the adviser).

INCORRECT (PHARMACY TO AMEND QUANTITY ORDERED)

Nicorette QuickMist 1mg/spray (26.4ml - 2 bottles)

Quantity: 3ml

The adviser has incorrectly entered the quantity as the number of packs rather than the number of mls and so the pharmacy should alter the quantity claimed to 79.2ml (i.e. 3 x 2 bottles) otherwise the pharmacy will only be paid a fraction of the cost i.e. for the cost of 3ml.

Appendix 1: How to enter a NRT quantity on PharmOutcomes

1. Ensure that the correct pack size is selected (e.g. 20 pack OR a 36 pack of Nicorette Inhalator).
2. The quantity MUST then be entered as the total number of individual units (e.g. mls or patches or cartridges) and NOT the number of packs (e.g. 1 bottle or 1 pack).

Using these principles, the following are examples below:

Product	Maximum daily use	Maximum use over a 2- week period	Quantity to claim on PharmOutcomes for a 2- week supply
A nicotine patch	1 patch	14 patches	Select the: Cost-effective pack size: 14 pack size if available, and then enter a quantity of 14 (i.e. 1 x 14 patches) OR 7 pack size and then enter a quantity of 14 (i.e. 2 x 7 patches)

Product	Maximum daily use	Maximum use over a 2- week period	Quantity to claim on PharmOutcomes for a 2- week supply
Nicorette QuickMist	64 sprays	896 sprays	Select the: Cost-effective pack size: Double 26.4ml pack size and then enter a quantity of 79.2 (i.e. 3 x 26.4ml pack size - each 13.2ml bottle has 150 sprays). OR Single 13.2ml pack size and then enter a quantity of 79.2 (i.e. 6 x 13.2ml pack size - each 13.2ml bottle has 150 sprays).

Product	Maximum daily use	Maximum use over a 2- week period	Quantity to claim on PharmOutcomes for a 2- week supply
Nicorette Nasal Spray	64 sprays	896 sprays	Select the 10ml pack size and then enter a quantity of 40 or 50 (i.e. each 10ml bottle has 200 sprays) 4 x 10ml bottles – 800 sprays 5 x 10ml bottles – 1000 sprays

Product	Maximum daily use	Maximum use over a 2- week period	Quantity to claim on PharmOutcomes for a 2- week supply
Nicorette Inhalator 15mg	6 cartridges	84 cartridges	Select the: Cost-effective pack size: 36 pack size and then enter a quantity of 72 (i.e. 2 x 36 cartridges) OR 20 pack size and then enter a quantity of 80 (i.e. 4 x 20 cartridges)

Product	Maximum daily use	Maximum use over a 2- week period	Quantity to claim on PharmOutcomes for a 2- week supply
Nicorette gum (2mg and 4mg)	15 pieces	210 pieces	Select the: Cost-effective pack size: 210 pack size if available, and then enter a quantity of 210 (i.e. 1 x 210 pieces) OR 105 pack size and then enter a quantity of 210 (i.e. 2 x 105 pieces)

Product	Maximum daily use	Maximum use over a 2- week period	Quantity to claim on PharmOutcomes for a 2- week supply
Cost-effective first-line choice: NEW - Niquitin Lozenge (2mg and 4mg)	15 lozenges	210 lozenges	Select the 72 pack size and then enter a quantity of 216 (i.e. 3 x 72 lozenges)
Nicorette Cools Lozenge (2mg and 4mg)	15 lozenges	210 lozenges	Select the 80 pack size and then enter a quantity of either 160 (i.e. 2 x 80 lozenges) or 240 (i.e. 3 x 80 lozenges)
NEW - Nicorette Fruit Lozenge (2mg)	15 lozenges	210 lozenges	
Most expensive option. Not a first-line choice: Niquitin Mini Lozenge (2mg and 4mg)	15 lozenges	210 lozenges	Select the: Not a first line choice. Cost-effective pack size: Select the 100 pack size and then enter a quantity of 200 (i.e. 2 x 100 lozenges) OR Select the 60 pack size and then enter a quantity of 180 (i.e. 3 x 60 lozenges), or 240 (i.e. 4 x 60 lozenges)

Appendix 2: 'Double patching' with clients who are heavy smokers

NCSCST guidance *Combination NRT* at

https://www.ncsct.co.uk/publication_combination_nrt_briefing.php states (in points 9-11):

- Research has shown that higher dose patch (42/44mg) is more effective in managing withdrawal symptoms in highly dependent smokers compared to a single NRT patch (21/25mg).
- High dose NRT has been found to be well tolerated and safe among more-dependent smokers.
- Two patches (21mg or 25mg) will deliver similar nicotine concentrations to what a smoker would otherwise get from smoking 40–60 cigarettes per day.
- The use of two patches plus fast acting NRT can be considered among smokers of 40 or more cigarettes per day. The use of a second patch can be assessed on a case-by-case basis and with the reassurance that there is almost no likelihood of overdose or adverse effects in more-dependent smokers. The general guidance is that a higher nicotine dose (i.e. two patches) and fast-acting NRT product can be considered for smokers:
 - whose cravings and/or withdrawal symptoms are not being well managed with combination NRT (1 patch and fast acting), or
 - who did not get adequate relief of withdrawal symptoms from a single nicotine patch dose during a prior attempt.