

Announcement of methodological change to Statistics on Local Stop Smoking Services in England

Background

Stop Smoking Services in England were set up in 1999/2000 with the aim of reducing health inequalities and improving health among local populations. Since their set up, these services have provided free, tailored support to all smokers wishing to stop. They offer a combination of recommended stop smoking aids and behavioural support.

NHS England is responsible for the collection, validation, and analysis of Stop Smoking Services data. The Department of Health and Social Care commissions this service from NHS England and funds the Local Stop Smoking Services.

The data published by NHS England is used to guide local government decision making and to inform funding discussions between DHSC and the Local Authorities.

Methodological changes

This announcement covers all reports from Q1 (April 2024 to June 2024) onwards. This change notice describes the amendments made to the publication and that reflects the changes in the monitoring return used to collect data from Local Authorities on their Stop Smoking Services and affect tables in the report covering the following:

- Gender (parts 1A and 1B of the monitoring return)
- Sexual orientation (part 1B1 of the monitoring return)
- Referrals (parts 1B and 1C of the monitoring return)
- Swap to stop scheme engagement (part 1D1 of the monitoring return)
- Quit attempts by stop smoking aid treatment type (part 1F of the monitoring return)
- Quit attempts by intervention type (part 1G of the monitoring return)

Gender

Gender is included in parts 1A and 1B, split by ethnic category and by age respectively.

Gender groups prior to 2024/2025 were:

- Male
- Female

Gender groups added from 2024/2025 are:

- Non-binary

- Other (not listed)
- Not stated (person asked but declined to respond)

Male and female categories have remained unchanged, and data for these two groups is comparable to previous years. However, prior to 2024/25, there was no option to not select male or female, and therefore there may have been a small number of non-binary or other respondents in these groups. A combined category will be used in cases where there are small numbers of respondents identifying as non-binary or other

The breakdowns within each gender group remain the same, for instance, each gender group is split by the same age groupings in part 1B.

Sexual orientation

This is a new measure from 2024/25. Local Authorities are not required to report this and therefore care should be taken when comparing Local Authorities or Regions. The number of people setting a quit date and the number successfully quitting is requested in the submission for the following sexual orientation categories:

- Heterosexual or straight
- Gay or lesbian
- Bisexual
- Other sexual orientation not listed
- Person does not know or is unsure
- Not stated (person asked but declined to provide a response)

The data for quit attempts by sexual orientation will be published annually in the Q4 publication.

Referrals

The number of people referred to the Stop Smoking Service is a new collection item from 2024/25. This captures the number of people who were referred to the service in each quarter. It is not comparable to the number of smokers setting a quit date, as it is possible that a person is referred in one quarter but does not set a quit date until the following quarter. This data is collected for each gender and age group, and for pregnant smokers and as it has not been captured before it will therefore only be comparable with future publications.

Swap to stop

The number of smokers engaging in the swap to stop scheme is a new submission item from 2024/25 and refers to the number of smokers who were provided with a vape as part of their quit attempt. This data has not been captured before 2024/25 and

will therefore only be comparable with future publications. The following information is collected:

- Number of smokers provided with a vape as part of the national swap to stop scheme
- Number who set a quit date as part of the national swap to stop scheme
- Number who set a quit date and successfully quit as part of the national swap to stop scheme
- Number who did not engage with multi-session support and/or did not set a quit date but who successfully quit as part of the national swap to stop scheme

Stop smoking aids

Throughout the collection and publication, all reference to “pharmacology” has been replaced with the term “stop smoking aid”. The definition remains the same. Within the monitoring return, there have been changes to the categories recorded as stop smoking aids. This included some additional categories and some retired categories. Retired categories will no longer be reported. The changes are detailed in the table below. Where a category exists in both columns it is equivalent to previous publications.

Stop smoking aids prior to 2024/25	Stop smoking aids from 2024/25 onwards
Using two or more forms of licensed NRT ¹ at the same time, at any time during their quit attempt	Used two or more forms of NRT at the same time at any time
Using one form of licensed NRT at a time, at any point during their quit attempt	Used one form of NRT only
Did not receive or use any form of stop smoking medication of unlicensed nicotine containing product (such as electronic cigarettes) at any point during their quit attempt	Did not use any form of stop smoking treatment
Used varenicline only	Used varenicline only
Used bupropion only	Used bupropion only
Treatment option was not recorded	Treatment option was not recorded
<i>(New for 2024/2025)</i>	Used nicotine vapes only
<i>(New for 2024/2025)</i>	Used cytisine only
<i>(New for 2024/2025)</i>	Used nicotine vapes and nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) at the same time
<i>(New for 2024/2025)</i>	Used other nicotine containing products e.g., non-tobacco nicotine pouches

¹ NRT = Nicotine Replacement Therapy

(New for 2024/2025)	Used any other combination of stop smoking aids
Switched between any or all of the following during a single quit attempt but did not use them at the same time: NRT, varenicline, bupropion (Zyban)	(Retired)
Used a licensed medication (NRT, varenicline, bupropion (Zyban)) at the same time as an unlicensed nicotine containing product (such as unlicensed electronic cigarettes) at any time during their quit attempt	(Retired)
Using either a licensed medication (NRT, varenicline, bupropion (Zyban)) or an unlicensed nicotine containing product (such as unlicensed electronic cigarettes) and then switched to the other during a single quit attempt and did not use them at the same time	(Retired)
Only used unlicensed nicotine containing products (such as unlicensed electronic cigarettes) and no licensed medication during their quit attempt	(Retired)

Intervention type

There have been changes to the intervention types included, with additional categories and retired categories that will no longer be reported on. The changes are detailed below. There remains the option for submitters to enter “other” categories.

The following were the categories for intervention type prior to 2024/25:

- “Number who attended closed groups (structured, multi-session group courses with pre-arranged start and finish dates and a pre-booked client group)”
- “Number who attended open groups (sometimes called rolling groups) that have fluctuating membership and are ongoing”
- “Number who attended drop-in clinics (multi-session support)”
- “Number who attended one-to-ones (structured, multi-session support)”
- “Number who attended family/couple’s groups (structured, multi-session support for small family groups or couples)”
- “Number dealt with through telephone support sessions”

The following are the categories for intervention type from 2024/25 onwards:

- “One to one multi-session support in person only”
- “One to one multi-session telephone support only”
- “One to one multi-session support via remote video link/online only”

- “Group support in person only (structured, including closed groups, couple/family group, open rolling group)”
- “Group support via remote video link/online (structured, including closed groups, couple/family group, open rolling group)”
- “Combination of in person and telephone or remote/on-line support (multi-session)”
- “Digital support via stop smoking mobile application alone”
- “Combination of any one-to-one support and digital support via a mobile application (multi-session)”