National Smoke-Free Pregnancy Incentives Scheme: a memory jogger

Introduction

The National Smoke-Free Pregnancy Incentives Scheme (NSPIS) is a Department of Health and Social Care initiative to provide pregnant women who smoke with an incentive to make a quit attempt, thereby increasing engagement with support and the chances of success.

The maternity care team should refer all pregnant women who smoke or have recently stopped smoking to the Pregnancy Tobacco Dependency Treatment team

Eligibility to join the NSPIS will be assessed by Stop Smoking Practitioners within the Pregnancy Tobacco Dependency Treatment team. A pregnant woman can join the scheme if they:

- currently report smoking

or

- have stopped smoking in the last 14 days

and

- are between 6 and 31+6 weeks (inclusive) gestation

Women who join the NSPIS will receive Love2shop vouchers when they reach key milestones in their quit attempt:

- When signing up to the scheme and setting a quit date
- Weekly for the first four weeks after the quit date, then monthly until birth
- At four and 12 weeks post-partum

Women can receive up to £400 during a successful quit attempt and vouchers can be accumulated or used as they go along. See the NSPIS voucher schedule (**Appendix 1**) for a detailed breakdown of when the vouchers will be issued and their value.

The figure overleaf outlines how maternity care providers can incorporate providing information about the NSPIS into Very Brief Advice (VBA+) on smoking for pregnant women. It comprises three parts: (**ASK**) identify pregnant women who smoke, (**ADVISE**) on the importance of stopping with support and introduce the NSPIS and (**ACT**) respond appropriately.

Very Brief Advice on Smoking (including the NSPIS)

ASK: conduct carbon monoxide (CO) testing and ask about smoking

Explain that CO testing is routinely conducted with all pregnant woman. Explain what CO is, why monitoring it is important and carry out the test.

Ask the woman about her smoking status (smoker, ex-smoker or non-smoker) and record this in maternity records.

ADVISE: on the importance of stopping with support and the NSPIS

Explain the health benefits of stopping smoking completely (not cutting down) for the woman and her baby.

Explain that the best way of stopping is with support from a trained Pregnancy Stop Smoking Practitioner and introduce the NSPIS:

"We know it's not easy, which is why we routinely refer all pregnant woman who smoke for support to stop. It gives you an opportunity to have a chat with our friendly, expert Stop Smoking Practitioner. They will offer you support, free treatments such as nicotine replacement therapy and we now have a voucher scheme to treat yourself or to spend on your family, so long as you attend your appointments and remain smokefree after stopping smoking during your pregnancy."

ACT: on response

Refer all pregnant woman who smoke, have stopped smoking in the last two weeks, or have a reading of 4ppm or higher to either the in-house stop smoking service or other local stop smoking support. Advise that a specialist midwife or Pregnancy Stop Smoking Practitioner will phone to offer support.

Positive response to the offer of support and the NSPIS

"That's great that you want to speak to the Stop Smoking Practitioner, I will refer you now and they will be in touch with you soon. Also, don't forget about the vouchers you will receive once you reach key points during your smoke-free journey. You could receive up to £400 in vouchers if you attend all of your appointments, remain smoke-free and have carbon monoxide readings of less than four after your quit date."

Very Brief Advice on Smoking (including the NSPIS)

ACT: on response (continued)

Uncertain response to the offer of support and the NSPIS

"Are you feeling worried about stopping smoking?"

Respond to their concerns and explain that they don't have anything to lose by trying.

"I understand it is a difficult decision to stop smoking. The Stop Smoking Practitioners are very friendly and they won't pressure you but speaking to them does give you the opportunity to get to know them. They can explain more about the support they provide, including free stop smoking aids, and they can also explain a bit more about the voucher scheme. You never know, you might feel differently once you meet them."

Negative response to the offer of support and the NSPIS

"I understand, to reassure you our Pregnancy Stop Smoking Practitioners are very experienced in helping people in similar situations to yourself. They are experts in supporting women to stop smoking during pregnancy."

"Other woman have found that having the vouchers really motivates them, something to aim for, a reward to treat themselves or the baby."

If the person explicitly refuses referral after further discussion, it's best not to push too hard. It's important to provide them with more information on the support available and the NSPIS, alongside continuing to do their CO readings and offering support at every maternity appointment.

"If you do change your mind, we will be happy to give you more information about the support available to you at any time."

Follow up

It is important to ask about smoking status and carry out a CO test at every appointment. **Offer encouragement** and **emphasise the benefits to mother and baby** of stopping smoking.

If a woman has **stopped smoking completely** you could say:

> ***"That's brilliant, I'm really pleased for you and you should be so proud of yourself, well done! This means that your baby will be getting the oxygen they need to grow and develop as they should. And as a bonus you'll be on track for your next voucher, which is great – what are you planning to spend the money on?"***

If a woman has **smoked**, you could say:

> ***"I understand that stopping smoking isn't easy. It's so important that you don't give up trying to stop smoking, it is the most important thing you can do for the health of your baby. Are you still in touch with the Pregnancy Stop Smoking Practitioner?***
>
> ***The support you get from the Stop Smoking Practitioner is so important, they have helped lots of women to stop smoking and they will gladly welcome you to the service again. Let me put you in touch with them"***

If a woman is still smoking or relapsed back to smoking encourage engagement with the Stop Smoking Practitioner. If this is the first relapse, they will be eligable to rejoin the NSPIS if they agree to set a new quit date.

Pregnancy Stop Smoking Practitioners

The examples below show how the conversation about the NSPIS can be integrated into each appointment with a Pregnancy Stop Smoking Practitioner.

Opt-out call

Advise women about the support and access to free stop smoking aids they can expect to receive via the service. In addition introduce the voucher scheme.

> ***"We are now offering an incentive scheme, where you'll receive vouchers at key points during your quit attempt. You can treat yourself or spend them on your family so long as you attend your appointments and remain smokefree. You will get your first voucher of £20 when you attend your first appointment and set a quit date."***

Pre-quit assessment

Remind women about the voucher scheme and how it works, answering any questions they may have (see **Frequently asked questions** (pages 7 – 9) and **Appendix 1**).

> ***"I mentioned when we spoke on the phone that we are now offering a voucher scheme, where you'll receive vouchers at key points during your quit attempt. You'll get up to £400 in vouchers if you come along to all of your appointments, are smoke-free and have a carbon monoxide reading of less than 4."***

Quit date appointment

In addition to ensuring everything is in place for their quit attempt, including an adequate supply of nicotine replacement therapy (NRT), remind them of the criteria of the scheme.

> ***"...don't forget when you come back next week and are smokefree, with a carbon monoxide reading of less than 4 you will receive your next voucher."***

You could also ask in a positive tone and with interest, to boost motivation, what women plan to spend the vouchers on.

Post-quit appointments

Ask women their smoking status at each appointment and carry out a CO test to ensure eligibility to receive their voucher.

- **Response to success**
  Confirm with them that they will receive their voucher and are on track to receive their subsequent vouchers if they remain smoke-free.

- **Response to smoking**
  Highlight that it is important not to give up trying to stop smoking and provide them with reassurance that it's still possible for them to be smoke-free. Discuss what led to smoking and establish a plan to get back on track. **If this is their first lapse/relapse, explain that they will not be eligible for today's voucher** but, if they get back on track, they will become eligible once again and will follow the relapse voucher schedule (see **Appendix 2**).

  If this is their second lapse/relapse, explain that they will no longer be eligible for the NSPIS, provide reassurance that they will continue to receive behavioural support and access to stop smoking aids.

- **Response to high CO reading**
  If a woman informs you she has not smoked but her CO reading is 4ppm or above, remain non-judgemental. **Ensure that you discuss other potential causes for a high CO reading, including faulty boiler or car exhaust, lactose intolerance or exposure to paint stripper.** Direct her to the Gas Safety Advice Line number (0800 300 363) for gas safety advice and explain the importance of doing so.

  Share that you would need a low reading to provide the next voucher. Reassure her that if she gets everything checked out regarding exposure to CO and hasn't smoked, she should have a lower reading and be eligible for her next voucher.

Pregnant women who are taking part in the NSPIS will require appointments beyond four weeks post-quit to validate their progress in order to receive their vouchers. See the voucher schedule (**Appendix 1**) for more information on when each of these appointments should be scheduled.

Frequently asked questions (staff)

What can the vouchers be used for?

The vouchers can be used in store and online, wherever Love2shop vouchers are accepted. **They can be used to buy anything apart from tobacco, alcohol and gambling products, like lottery tickets.**

Won't women just say that they plan to stop to get the vouchers without any intention of quitting?

The important thing to remember is that women who stop smoking in pregnancy will only be eligible to receive the vouchers if they:

- set a quit date
- attend their appointments
- are smoke-free with a CO reading below 4ppm post-quit

Those who continue to smoke will not receive vouchers.

Shouldn't women stop because they want to and not because they are being paid to stop?

Women who smoke when pregnant do want to stop, but it's not that simple or easy to do it. **Smoking is a chronic relapsing condition because it is so addictive**. Women who smoke in pregnancy can also have complex challenges in their lives, in addition to all the emotional and physical changes that being pregnant can bring.

Many women say that they are stopping because they want to have a healthy pregnancy – the voucher incentive just gives them that additional boost to keep going.

What if they use the voucher for themselves and not the baby?

That is OK. The point of the incentives is to boost motivation to remain smoke-free. Buying something for themselves, their family, putting the voucher towards food or buying something for the baby are all equally valid. **Women are asked to give up many things in pregnancy; it can be helpful to encourage women to view the voucher as something for themselves.**

Can women who originally decline the incentive scheme change their mind about joining after booking the appointment?

Yes. Women who smoke can engage with the scheme at any time between 6 and 31+6 weeks (inclusive) gestation.

There are so many things to cover in this job, this is now something else and we are already short on time!

It is hard to be stretched. We hope that you can see from the online training module and this memory jogger that the scheme can give women that extra boost to stop smoking and keep going. **Discussing the scheme with them should take no longer than a minute or so – and certainly less time than having to deal with smoking-related complications later on.**

What if a woman is lost to follow-up during their quit attempt and then tries to re-enter the programme at a later date?

They will follow the same scheme rules as women who lapse or relapse. They will receive £10 vouchers weekly for the first four weeks before moving to the monthly £20 voucher until birth, and will receive the four and 12-week post-partum vouchers.

Women who disengage from the Pregnancy Tobacco Dependency Treatment service and the scheme can re-enter the scheme again only once. **Women will of course always be eligible for support and access to stop smoking aids.**

Frequently asked questions (clients)

How and when will I receive my voucher?

You could explain the scheme in the following way:

> ***"You will receive a voucher card which will be electronically loaded with £20 for attending your first appointment, signing up to the support and voucher scheme and setting a quit date. £20 will be electronically added to your voucher card weekly for the first four weeks after your quit date and then monthly until you have your baby. We also provide vouchers at four weeks and 12 weeks after the baby is born so long as you remain smoke-free and your carbon monoxide reading is below four."***

Why was my voucher declined?

Advise women to contact the Love2shop help desk www.love2shop.co.uk/contact-us or customer support telephone number (0344 375 0739).

What if I don't manage to stop smoking?

We know quitting smoking is difficult and that life can sometimes get in the way. **Advise women to continue attending their weekly support sessions and reiterate that the service will always be available to them, even if they don't succeed straight away.**

Resources

Online training

National Smoke-free Pregnancy Incentives Scheme
https://elearning.ncsct.co.uk/financial_incentives-launch

Very Brief Advice on Smoking (VBA+) for pregnant women
https://elearning.ncsct.co.uk/vba_pregnancy-launch

Pregnancy and the Post-Partum Period specialty module
https://elearning.ncsct.co.uk/pregnancy_specialty_module-launch

Briefings and guidance

Stopping smoking in pregnancy: A briefing for maternity care providers
www.ncsct.co.uk/publications/briefing_for_midwifery_staff

Evidence into practice: supporting smoke-free pregnancies through incentive schemes
ash.org.uk/resources/view/evidence-into-practice-supporting-smokefree-pregnancies-through-incentive-schemes

Standard Treatment Programme for Pregnant Women
www.ncsct.co.uk/publications/ncsct_stp_pw

Appendix 1: Voucher schedule

Voucher payment point	Amount	Eligibility criteria
Sign up	£20	■ Attend initial assessment appointment ***and*** ■ Sign up to receive support ***and*** ■ Set a quit date (or have stopped smoking in the last 14 days)
1 week post quit	£20	■ Attend appointment ***and*** ■ Self report smoke-free ***and*** ■ Have a carbon monoxide reading of below 4 ppm
2 weeks post quit	£20	
3 weeks post quit	£20	
4 weeks post quit	£20	
1 month after 4 week voucher	£20	
2 months	£20	
3 months	£20	
4 months	£20	
5 months	£20	
6 months	£20	
7 months	£20	
4 weeks post-partum	£100	
12 weeks post-partum	£60	

Appendix 2: Relapse schedule

This relapse schedule provides the example of a woman who has relapsed to smoking at the Week 4 voucher payment point. As a result, she is ineligible for that week's voucher.

Having not smoked again, she then begins the weekly voucher schedule again at her next appointment at the reduced amount of £10. After four weekly payments, she moves to monthly £20 payments in line with the usual voucher schedule (see **Appendix 1**).

Voucher payment point	Amount
Sign up	£20
Week 1	£20
Week 2	£20
Week 3	£20
Week 4	X
Relapse	
Week 1	**£10**
Week 2	**£10**
Week 3	**£10**
Week 4	**£10**
Month 1	£20
Month 2	£20
Month 3	£20
Month 4	£20
Month 5	£20
Month 6	£20
4 weeks post-partum	£100
12 weeks post-partum	£60