

Quitting, Support and Health Promotion

Building awareness of support systems and promoting health



In this slide set we'll explore:

The Benefits of Quitting (At Any Age)

- Immediate and long-term health benefits
- Psychological and social benefits

Support to Stop Smoking in Wales

- Help Me Quit Service
- Help Me Quit Digital Tools

The Role of Health Professionals

- Very brief advice and referral to Help Me Quit

The Role of Education Professionals

- Delivering brief interventions for smoking
- Sources of training and further support

Health Promotion Campaigns

The Benefits of Stopping (at any age)

- Giving up smoking is the best thing anyone can do for their health, no matter how long they've been smoking.
- It's never too late to quit - quitting at any age will bring a raft of benefits.
- The health benefits can be felt almost immediately:
 - 20 minutes: Heart rate and blood pressure begin to return to normal
 - 8 to 12 hours: Carbon monoxide levels in the blood drop by half
 - 48 hours: No nicotine left in body and the ability to smell and taste improves.

Key benefits :

- Physical well-being: better circulation and lung function, lower risk of heart disease and cancer.
- Mental well-being: lowers anxiety, addresses addiction, avoids cravings
- Financial: saves money for the individual plus fewer smoking-related costs at a societal level (sickness absence, low productivity, NHS costs).
- Social/community: reduces exposure of family and communities to second-hand smoke.
- Environmental: reduces deforestation and pollution caused by producing and consuming tobacco products.

Support to Quit Smoking in Wales: Help Me Quit Service

In Wales, free evidence-based NHS support to quit smoking is available via Help Me Quit (HMQ).

Help Me Quit is Wales' national stop smoking service, offering tailored behavioural support and free access to nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) and/or prescription medication for anyone aged 12 and over who smoke.

- **Support is available** in-person and by phone, providing personalised strategies to manage cravings and build healthier habits.
- **Eligibility:** Smokers aged 12+ can access the service.
- **Access routes:**
 - Call: 0800 085 2219
 - Request a call back online: www.helpmequit.wales
 - Text: HMQ to 80818

- Evidence shows that you are **up to 3 times more likely** to quit successfully when using both behavioural & pharmacological support rather than going it alone.
- Help Me Quit offers smokers in Wales the best chance to quit for good.

Support to Quit Smoking in Wales: Digital Tools

Alongside the full Help Me Quit intervention, a number of accessible digital tools to support independent quit attempts are available.

Your Quit Plan

- **Your Quit Plan** is a digital self-help tool hosted on the Help Me Quit website to support people in Wales who want to quit smoking or vaping.
- While primarily designed for adults, it includes tailored content for children and young people who smoke, vape or use nicotine pouches.
- The tool is particularly useful for young people who have received a brief intervention, are motivated to quit or reduce use, but are not ready to engage with formal cessation services such as Help Me Quit.

Help Me Quit App

- The **[Help Me Quit Smoking Cessation App](#)** is a bilingual, evidence-based digital tool designed to complement face-to-face stop smoking services.
- While the app has been developed primarily for adults, it can be used safely by children and young people (12+) as part of a supported quit attempt.
- For this group, it should be used alongside structured expert support and Nicotine Replacement Therapy, which together provide the strongest chance of a successful quit.

The Role of Health Professionals

Health professionals are often the first point of contact for people wanting to quit smoking. They play a vital role in using every opportunity to raise the issue of smoking, support well-being and refer individuals into Help Me Quit (HMQ) services.

Very Brief Advice and Referral to Help Me Quit

- All health professionals in Wales, across primary and secondary care, are encouraged to routinely deliver Very Brief Advice (VBA) and refer people who smoke to Help Me Quit services.
- Very Brief Advice (VBA) is a short intervention, typically 30 seconds to 2 minutes, that:
 - Highlights the benefits of quitting
 - Encourages a quit attempt
 - Offers support and referral to Help Me Quit

The Role of Education Professionals

Brief intervention for smoking

Education professionals play an important role in supporting the well-being of children and young people by creating opportunities to raise concerns about smoking and by signposting to Help Me Quit when appropriate. The **Ask, Advise, Act model** is a simple, effective framework for engaging children and young people in conversations about smoking.

- **Ask** – Routinely and non-judgementally ask children and young people about smoking.
- **Advise** – Give clear, supportive advice on the benefits of quitting, tailored to the individual.
- **Act** – Respond based on readiness:
 - **Ready to quit:** Encourage and signpost to Help Me Quit for behavioural support and NRT.
 - **Not ready:** Explore reasons for use and encourage reflection.
 - **Recently quit:** Reinforce progress and support relapse prevention.

Sources of training and further support:

[Very Brief Advice Training](#): Free e-learning from the National Centre for Smoking Cessation and Training (NCSCT) for professionals on delivering effective, evidence-based advice to people who smoke or vape.

[Making Every Contact Count \(MECC\)](#): provides training and support to help professionals deliver effective brief interventions on a range of health behaviours, including smoking.

Health Promotion Campaigns

The Welsh Government's strategy "A Smoke-free Wales – Our Long-Term Tobacco Control Strategy" has a vision for Wales to reduce adult smoking prevalence to 5 % or less by 2030.

- Key to achieving this ambition is:
 - A focus on preventing uptake of smoking among children, young people and young adults.
 - Denormalising smoking in public places to reduce exposure to second-hand smoke and so it becomes less and less commonplace – in Wales it is legally not permitted on the grounds of schools and early years settings, in playgrounds and on hospital sites or in vehicles carrying under-18s.
 - Supporting smokers to quit smoking.
- Public Health Wales runs regular 'Break Its Hold' social marketing campaigns on TV and online to encourage smokers to quit and seek support from Help Me Quit, alongside campaigns aimed at preventing smoking uptake among young people.
- Public health bodies and campaign groups in Wales use events such as No Smoking Day in March and Stoptober in October to raise awareness of the harms caused by smoking and second-hand smoking and to signpost smokers to Help Me Quit.

Summary

Quitting smoking brings major physical, mental, financial and social benefits at any age, with health improvements beginning almost immediately.

In Wales, evidence-based support is available through the NHS Help Me Quit service, including behavioural support, stop-smoking medication and digital tools to support quit attempts.

Health and education professionals play an important role in delivering brief interventions, encouraging quit attempts and signposting people to support services. Alongside this, national campaigns and smoke-free policies help reduce smoking uptake and promote healthier communities across Wales, supporting the ambition of a smoke-free Wales by 2030





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References

The information provided in this slide set took references from the following:

[About Help Me Quit - Help Me Quit](#)

[Help Me Quit](#)

[Smoking and well-being team - Hywel Dda University Health Board](#)

[Smoking Cessation - The Practice of Health](#)

[A smoke-free Wales: Our long-term tobacco control strategy \[HTML\] | GOV.WALES](#)

[Free support is available to help you quit this No Smoking Day - Hywel Dda University Health Board](#)

[MECC // Public Health Network :: Smoking](#)

[Help me quit - Cardiff and Vale University Health Board](#)

[a-smoke-free-wales-our-long-term-tobacco-control-strategy-for-wales-and-towards-a-smoke-free-wales-delivery-plan-2022-to-2024.pdf](#)