

Smokefree NHS Treating Tobacco Dependency Taskforce Briefing

Q1 2025/26



 Pictured: Some of our current and past Taskforce members

Taskforce

The Taskforce is a multi-partnership group that brings together key strategic partners, including the NHS and local authorities. Its primary focus is to drive and support sustained, system-wide treatment of tobacco dependency across the North East and North Cumbria.

It operates as a sub-group of the ICB Healthier & Fairer Prevention Board and is jointly chaired by Dr. Ruth Sharrock, Tobacco Clinical Lead for the ICS and Respiratory Consultant at Gateshead Health NHS FT, alongside Chris Woodcock, Deputy Director of Public Health for North Tyneside.

The Taskforce works in close partnership with the Fresh and Balance programme team. Fresh is jointly funded by all 12 local authorities in the North East as well as the NENC ICB.

Through effective collaboration between national, regional, and local partners, the Taskforce leads the ICS prevention workstream on tobacco. Its mission supports the regional ambition of reducing smoking prevalence to 5% by 2030, in line with the [North East Declaration for a Smokefree Future](#).

Highlights

[Highlight Summary Report
24/25](#)

[Drop in Smoking at Time
of Delivery](#)

[New UCL study highlights
Impact of Regional
Tobacco Programmes](#)

[NENC SMI EIS Evaluation
Completed](#)

Smokefree NHS Strategic Manager

The Smokefree NHS Strategic Manager, Rachel McIlvenna, continues to lead the tobacco workstream programme for the ICB. She works closely with Dr. Ruth Sharrock, ICB Clinical Lead for Tobacco Dependency, and Becca Scott, Clinical Lead & Head of Public Health: Women's Health & Best Start in Life. Together with wider partners and Taskforce members, they drive forward key objectives within the work plan.

Rachel also provides support to Smokefree Trust Leads as needed, with regular catch-ups in place. In addition, strong links are maintained with Local Authority Tobacco Commissioners.



Rachel McIlvenna,
Smokefree NHS
Strategic Manager



Dr Ruth Sharrock,
Clinical Lead- Tobacco



Becca Scott,
Strategic Lead for
Women's Health & Best
Start in Life



Joojo- Kyei Sarpong,
Smokefree NHS Project
Manager

A Message from Clinical Lead, Dr Ruth Sharrock

The Smokefree NHS Taskforce team and I are delighted to once again publish this briefing, which is aimed at our rapidly growing audience of colleagues, collaborators, and champions across the NHS. This includes those working in physical, mental, and maternal healthcare teams within secondary and primary care, as well as local authority tobacco commissioners and their public health teams.

The breadth of tobacco work continues to expand, evolve, and enrich, and we feel very fortunate to work alongside you all on this critical agenda. I am also pleased to share our 2024/25 highlight summary report, showcasing the many achievements from the past year.

In Q1, we were encouraged by the publication of the Q4 and year-end SATOD (Smoking at Time of Delivery) figures, which show that our rates have now fallen to 7.8%—bringing us even closer to the England average and representing a 40% overall reduction. This is a testament to the collaborative work across the NENC system to support pregnant smokers. I would particularly like to acknowledge the tireless efforts of our maternity TDTS colleagues, who have continued to implement the Long Term Plan despite significant external pressures.

Finally, we were pleased to receive confirmation of the allocated funding for TDTS teams within our NHS Foundation Trusts, both from the NHSE allocation and from the continued additional investment by the ICB for 2025/26. We are extremely grateful to the ICB for this ongoing commitment. Looking ahead, our focus must remain on fully embedding Tobacco Dependency Treatment teams within clinical services and governance frameworks, while also seeking opportunities to strengthen collaboration, improve shared care, and ensure seamless handovers for patients.

NENC Smokefree NHS Programme Highlight Summary

1st April 2024 – 31 March 2025



Inpatient Tobacco Dependency Services

- 31,836 smokers identified on admission
- 18,670 (79%) received support and cessation aids,
- 3,835 set a quit date: 715 quit at 4 weeks post-discharge



Pregnancy Support

- 3,035 pregnant smokers identified
- 1,785 seen, 905 (62%) set a quit date, 425 (47%) quit
- Over 400 smokefree births
- 232 supported via National Pregnancy Incentives scheme since Nov 2024: 116 quit, over 22 smokefree deliveries.



SATOD (Smoking at Time of Delivery)

- Q3 2024/25 rate: 7.9% down from 10.9% in 23/24

Expansion of Community Programme

- CNTW delivering community mental health tobacco support in North Tyneside & Newcastle: 31 referrals, 7 quits.
- Innovative programmes like COSTED launched in Northumbria FT (includes vape provision).
- New collaborations with North East Ambulance Service and Trust Paediatrics.
- Enhanced Lung Cancer Checks pilot underway; funding secured for 2025/26.
- 50 staff trained at 3 new /refresher tobacco dependency training sessions (maternity, acute, mental health/community mental health)
- 1 Academic paper published



Continuing Professional Development & Academic Progress:

- 50 staff trained at 3 new /refresher tobacco dependency training sessions (maternity, acute, mental health/community mental health)
- 1 Academic paper published



Vape Initiatives

- Vape pilots across 4 Trusts: 300 Vapes distributed, 44 quits
- 874 vapes distributed via ICB Swap to Stop, 510 quit



Events & Engagement

- 2 Best Practice events, 100 attendees.
- Record 40+ delegates at SCAH Conference with 3 abstract posters, 1 oral rapid fire; 1 breakout speaking slot session
- Co-led webinar with Newcastle University & NHR 60+ attendees on NENC NHS Staff Tobacco Dependency Offer



Expansion Professional Development & Academic Progress:

Local Developments

NENC ICB SWAP2STOP OFFER

Launched in 2024, we are pleased to have successfully secured further funding to continue making nicotine vapes available across the system, particularly within NHS settings.

A number of NHS sites are already using vapes to support patients—including pregnant women—and staff across inpatient, emergency department, and community pathways.

Alongside our digital stop smoking behavioural support (via the Smokefree App), we are exploring opportunities to carry out a robust evaluation of this initiative across NENC.

NENC Staff Cessation Offer

We are delighted to share that in Q1 our bid for a proportion of the NENC Growth & Accelerator Site funding pot was successful. On behalf of the ICB and through the Taskforce, CDDFT will be delivering a Health & Social Care workforce cessation offer to support staff who are tobacco-dependent in quitting smoking across NENC.

This offer will be delivered primarily through the digital stop smoking behavioural support (via the Smokefree App), complemented by a targeted marketing and communications approach to increase uptake. Active engagement will also take place with relevant stakeholders to ensure strong delivery.

We are now working to secure the funds into CDDFT in order to begin mobilisation and look forward to providing a further update in the Q2 briefing.

Updated NENC Position Statement on Nicotine Vaping

The North East and North Cumbria (NENC) ICB Smokefree NHS position statement on nicotine vaping has now been published and is available on the [ICB website](#).

The statement has been reviewed by colleagues across hospital trusts within our ICB region, members of the Smokefree NHS/Treating Tobacco Dependency Taskforce, senior ICB colleagues, and by the Chairs of the Healthier & Fairer Prevention Board: Alice Wiseman, Director of Public Health for Newcastle and Gateshead Councils, and Professor Ewan Maule, NENC ICB Clinical Director of Medicines.

The position statement is built around four key points:

1. Tobacco smoking remains our biggest killer.
2. Vaping carries only a small fraction of the risks of smoking, but it is not risk-free and is not recommended for non-smokers or young people.
3. Vaping is an effective tool for helping people quit smoking.
4. We must promote effective quitting options—including vaping—while ensuring children are protected from nicotine use.

National News and Developments

New UCL Study Highlights Impact of Regional Tobacco Control Programmes

The North East's commitment to a unified, locally driven approach to tobacco control—delivered in partnership with Fresh—has received national recognition following the publication of a UCL study.

The study found that regions with dedicated regional tobacco control programmes have achieved greater success in reducing smoking rates, with the North East singled out for particular praise.

Government Announces Increased Funding for SSS for 25/26

The Government has committed to continue investing an additional £70 million in 2025/26 to support local authority-led stop smoking services. We will work with local authority commissioners and partners, where needed, to identify opportunities for synergy and to achieve economies of scale across the cessation landscape in NENC. Find out more [here](#).

Events

Webinar: Delivering on the Shift to Prevention in the NHS

On Tuesday, 17th June 2025, Sir Jim Mackey, Chief Executive of NHS England, outlined the key objectives of the forthcoming NHS 10-Year Plan during an ASH webinar titled “*Delivering on the Shift to Prevention in the NHS.*”

Sir Jim emphasised that tackling tobacco use remains central to the Plan's prevention goals. Key points included:

- Stopping smoking reduces demand on the NHS and increases capacity.
- Smoking costs England over £17 billion a year.
- Significant progress has already been made under the Long-Term Plan.
- The importance of maintaining momentum.
- A continued focus on key outcomes through the NPAF.

In NENC since April 2022 across acute & mental health inpatients and maternity pathways:



The webinar also featured a presentation from the North East and North Cumbria region. Ailsa Rutter, OBE, Director of Fresh & Balance, highlighted the excellent progress made by all Foundation Trusts in implementing Tobacco Dependency Treatment Services (TDTS) as part of a wider tobacco control strategy.


You can watch the recorded webinar [here](#).

Events

SCAH Conference March 2025

The latest Smoking Cessation & Health (ScaH) Conference took place in York in March 2025, attracting over 300 delegates, including more than 35 representatives from the NENC NHS and local authorities.



 NENC colleagues at the 2025 SCAH conference

The agenda featured presentations from North East colleagues, including:

- Ailsa Rutter OBE, Director of Fresh & Balance
- Andy Lloyd, Head of Media and Communications
- Rachel McIlvenna, Smokefree NHS Strategic Manager
- A rapid-fire oral presentation from the Northumbria Maternity team, led by midwife Carla Anderson

In addition, over five abstract submissions from NENC Trusts were accepted.

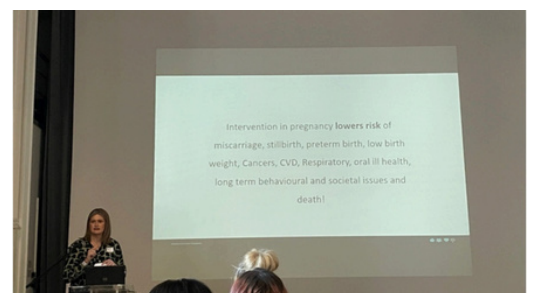
Most presentations from the day will be available to watch shortly.


Smoking in Pregnancy Event

Taskforce members Rachel McIlvenna and Becca Scott attended the excellently organised *Durham Stop Smoking in Pregnancy* event, held in Bishop Auckland on 23 May.

At the event, Becca Scott presented a regional overview, highlighting the ongoing work to further reduce high maternal smoking rates.

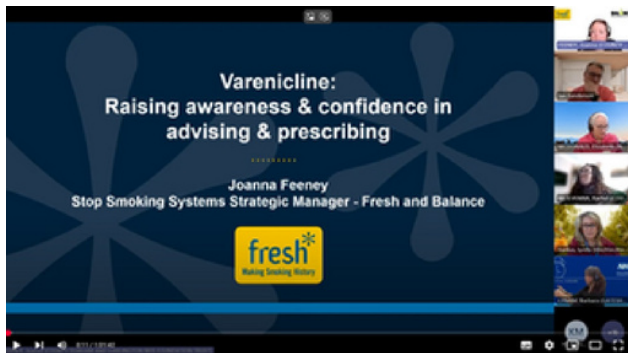
In addition, Strategic Manager Rachel McIlvenna attended the Saving Babies' Lives planning meeting on 8 May, organised by the NENC LMNS (Local Maternity and Neonatal Service), contributing to the development of planning and strategic documents.




 Becca Scott, Strategic Pregnancy Lead, presenting at the Bishop Auckland event

Workforce Development & Training

Training Opportunities



 Training session on varenicline delivered to TDTs

The Taskforce and BSIL Programme funded region-wide training for tobacco dependency advisors in Q1. Three training sessions (new advisor and refresher) were delivered on 14–15 April, 16–17 April, and 14–15 May.

In addition, a Varenicline awareness session for NHS Inpatient TDTs took place on 10 April, facilitated by Joanna Feeney, Stop Smoking Systems Strategic Manager at Fresh. Recordings of all sessions are available on [YouTube](#) or via [BOOST](#).

An article exploring new stop smoking medications, co-authored by the Systems Manager, was also published in [Nursing in Practice](#) and is available to read.

Stop Smoking COI

The Fresh and Smokefree NHS Stop Smoking Community of Interest (COI) forum brings together professionals delivering or commissioning stop smoking support, all united by the shared goal of a smokefree future. The COI provides a space to share knowledge, highlight good practice, and strengthen collaboration across organisations and localities—helping to boost system-wide efforts to support more people in the North East to quit smoking for good.

Our Q1 COI meeting took place online on 20 May, with strong engagement from NHS, local authority, and private sector stop smoking services.

BOOST Platform- Programme for Tobacco Dependency

The Programme for Tobacco Dependency now offers a series of e-learning modules, available on the BOOST platform.

The modules are grouped into three categories:

1. Identifying Tobacco Dependence and Delivering Brief Advice
2. Tobacco Awareness
3. Treating Tobacco Dependence

Please note: You'll need to register for access. [Click here](#) to explore the modules.

Partnership Working

After a short break, we're pleased to share that Smokefree NHS developments are once again a standing agenda item at the ADPHNE Tobacco Commissioners Forum, coordinated by OHID.

The Smokefree NHS Strategic Manager will now regularly attend the quarterly meetings, providing updates on progress with the Long-Term Plan (LTP), supporting seamless discharge pathways from Acute and Mental Health Trusts to community services, and highlighting new strands of Smokefree NHS work.

We're also working more closely with other Healthier & Fairer workstreams—including Alcohol and Long-Term Conditions—to strengthen collaboration and maximise impact.

Comms & Media

Fresh Smoking Survivors Campaign

Fresh launched another phase of its successful “Smoking Survivors” quitting campaign across the North East and North Cumbria.


The campaign ran on ITV, ITVX, and Facebook from 6 March, just ahead of No Smoking Day, with the aim of encouraging people to make a quit attempt—and to keep going.

All NHS Trusts were invited to help amplify the campaign.

Resources are available to download on [KHUB](#).

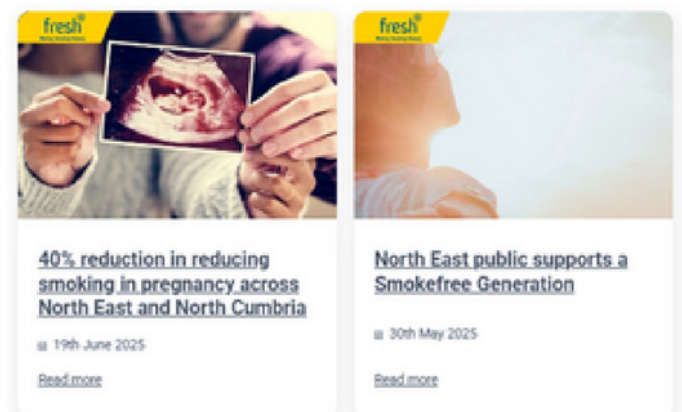
The next phase of the Smoking Survivors campaign will run from mid-September, with toolkits and resources available from the Taskforce to support NHS use.



 Campaign video: John (Smoking Survivor)


In The Media

- The North East and North Cumbria has seen a 40% reduction in smoking at time of delivery rates. Read more [here](#).
- The North East public continue to show strong support for a Smokefree Generation. [Read here](#).
- [Alfie's inspiring story](#) of quitting with support from the Gateshead Health NHS FT TDTs team proves it's never too late to stop.
- Adele and Coby received support from teams at Northumbria FT and North Tees & Hartlepool FT to stop smoking during pregnancy—giving their babies the best start in life. [Read their story here](#).
- This story was also featured in the [Sunderland Echo](#) and the [Shields Gazette](#).



 Pictured: Coverage in Shields Gazette



 Pictured: Smoking Survivor, Alfie

NENC Implementation of NHS Long Term Plan

Strategic Lead: Rachel McIlvenna & **Project Manager:** Joojo Kyei-Sarpong

Funding

In June 2025, all 10 NHS Trusts in NENC received confirmation of funding for 2025/26, with baseline funding in place and the ICB's additional contribution to tobacco dependency treatment services now entering its fifth year.

Work is already underway to ensure contract variations and service specifications are in place, enabling the smooth flow of funds and robust monitoring of services by the Strategic Manager.

TDTs Implementation

Out of 18 clinical pathways (10 acute, 8 maternity, and 2 mental health), 17 are now fully embedded, with only South Tyneside & Sunderland FT (Maternity) still outstanding.

A number of productive meetings have taken place to help achieve full implementation this year.

We continue to work with all 10 Trusts to support the adoption of Quality Improvement approaches, ensuring services are embedded for long-term sustainability.

Peer Networks

The Taskforce continues to support regular peer networks for colleagues working in tobacco dependency across NENC. These networks provide valuable opportunities for colleagues from different Trusts to share best practice and problem-solve together.

Our established peer networks—Smokefree NHS Leads & Service Managers, Data Leads, and Tobacco Dependency Advisors—continue to meet quarterly, with in-person sessions whenever possible.

Two face-to-face meetings were held at the end of the last financial year, and plans are already in place to repeat this in Q4 (2025/26).



Smokefree NHS Data Collection & Reporting

Data Lead: Rachel Mitchell

Tobacco Dashboard

Access to the national NHS Tobacco Dependence Treatment Service (TDTs) dashboard has now been expanded to include colleagues such as Smokefree FT Leads, Tobacco Data Leads, and TDTs Service Managers.

A recording and demonstration of the dashboard are available on NHS Futures.

In addition, two webinars on Patient Level Data (PLD) Collection have recently taken place. Recordings can be accessed here: [Acute PLD](#) | [Maternity PLD](#).

Smokefree NHS Data Collection & Reporting

Data Lead: Rachel Mitchell

NENC Progress

Since January 2025, all Tobacco Dependency Treatment Services (TDTS) in NENC have been consistently submitting both aggregate and patient-level data to the national tobacco data collection across all pathways.

Highlights from recent data (Feb 2025 submission, covering Jan 2025 data):

- 61.1% of pathways across NENC ICB Trusts received an A grading for submissions, compared to just 15.7% nationally.
- Only 2 Trusts submitted four or fewer data items of sufficient quality to calculate indicators robustly.
- 90% of NENC ICB Trusts recorded a higher percentage than England for people with smoking status recorded.
- 3 Trusts reported lower percentages than England and NENC for referrals to TDTS.
- 50% of Trusts performed better than England for providing smokers with supported care plans.
- Just 2 Trusts exceeded England for the percentage of smokers seen by TDTS who were given care plans to support a quit attempt.
- 6 out of 10 Trusts reported higher results than England for smokers with supported care plans who were recorded as having quit.
- For outcome measures, 4 Trusts outperformed England on both maternity indicators and quit rates among smokers with supported care plans.

The Smokefree Strategic Manager and team continue to support Trusts in addressing gaps in submissions and improving data quality (DQ). Two quality improvement projects are scheduled to begin in Q2 to further strengthen data reporting.

NATIONAL NHS E DQ SLIDE PROVIDED TO REGION:

DQ summary for each care setting in NHS NORTH EAST AND NORTH CUMBRIA INTEGRATED CARE BOARD, for latest reporting period - April 2025

ICB Name	Care Setting	Organisation	Org Code	Submitted number of people who smoke	Estimated number of people who smoke	Number of referrals	Number of referrals seen	% of estimated people who smoke that are seen	DQM Score	DQ Category
NHS NORTH EAST AND NORTH CUMBRIA INTEGRATED CARE BOARD	Adult Mental Health	CUMBRIA, NORTHUMBERLAND, TYNE AND WEAR NHS FOUNDATION TRUST	R24	40	110	40	40	36.36%	77.6	A
		TEES, ESK AND WEAR VALLEYS NHS FOUNDATION TRUST	RK3	45	200	20	20	10%	77.0	B9
	Maternity	COUNTY DURHAM AND DARLINGTON NHS FOUNDATION TRUST	RXP	40	60	30	25	41.67%	95.2	A
		GATESHEAD HEALTH NHS FOUNDATION TRUST	R87	15	30	15	15	50%	94.9	A
		NORTH CUMBRIA INTEGRATED CARE NHS FOUNDATION TRUST	RNN	25	20	20	15	75%	95.1	B7
		NORTH TEES AND HARTLEPOOL NHS FOUNDATION TRUST	RVW	40	55	35	25	45.45%	94.9	B9
		NORTHUMBRIA HEALTHCARE NHS FOUNDATION TRUST	RTF	15	50	15	15	30%	91.6	B8
		SOUTH TEES HOSPITALS NHS FOUNDATION TRUST	RTR	30	80	20	15	18.75%	95.1	A
		SOUTH TYNESIDE AND SUNDERLAND NHS FOUNDATION TRUST	ROB	95	75	85	80	106.67%	92.4	A
		THE NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE HOSPITALS NHS FOUNDATION TRUST	RTD	35	75	30	15	20%	94.7	B9
	Physical Acute	COUNTY DURHAM AND DARLINGTON NHS FOUNDATION TRUST	RXP	100	880	100	100	11.36%	95.2	A
		GATESHEAD HEALTH NHS FOUNDATION TRUST	R87	195	425	190	130	30.59%	94.9	A
		NORTH CUMBRIA INTEGRATED CARE NHS FOUNDATION TRUST	RNN	60	260	60	55	21.15%	95.1	B8
		NORTH TEES AND HARTLEPOOL NHS FOUNDATION TRUST	RVW	350	815	220	220	26.99%	94.9	A
		NORTHUMBRIA HEALTHCARE NHS FOUNDATION TRUST	RTF	350	1,025	350	255	24.88%	91.6	B8
		Physical Acute	SOUTH TEES HOSPITALS NHS FOUNDATION TRUST	RTR	335	850	335	205	24.12%	95.1
SOUTH TYNESIDE AND SUNDERLAND NHS FOUNDATION TRUST	ROB		530	1,200	515	315	26.25%	92.4	A	
THE NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE HOSPITALS NHS FOUNDATION TRUST	RTD		835	1,140	835	305	26.75%	94.7	B9	

A	Data submitted and passes all 10 data quality checks
B9	Data submitted and passes 9 data quality checks
B8	Data submitted and passes 8 data quality checks
B7	Data submitted and passes 7 data quality checks
B6	Data submitted and passes 6 data quality checks
B5	Data submitted and passes 5 data quality checks
B4	Data submitted and passes 4 data quality checks
B3	Data submitted and passes 3 data quality checks
B2	Data submitted and passes 2 data quality checks
B1	Data submitted and passes 1 data quality check
CX	Submitting template, but no patient records submitted
DP	Not submitting template, but has previously submitted
D0	Not submitting template and has not previously submitted

Tobacco Dependency in Pregnancy

Strategic Lead: Becca Scott & Rachel McIlvenna & **Project Manager:** Joojo Kyei-Sarpong

TDiP Incentive Scheme

The NENC ICS Smokefree Tobacco in Pregnancy Incentive Scheme has been successfully rolled out across all eight maternity units, with Sunderland Family Nurse Partnership providing targeted support for young parents with no immediate intention to quit.

An evaluation of the scheme found that:

- The incentives approach is acceptable to both pregnant people and maternity staff.
- It serves as a strong motivational tool for encouraging quit attempts during pregnancy.
- Implementation across NENC demonstrated the scheme's effectiveness in increasing engagement and achieving positive quit outcomes.

The evaluation also made several recommendations, including:

- Improving voucher administration, using automation where possible.
- Streamlining data collection to reduce administrative burden for maternity staff.
- Actively engaging pregnant people and partners to boost uptake.
- Conducting further research into the experiences of the wider workforce, such as commissioners.

Following the launch of the National Pregnancy Incentives Scheme (NPIS), the Taskforce is working closely with Trusts to support the transition. To date, five out of eight NHS Trusts in NENC have moved over to NPIS, with the remaining three due to follow shortly.

We are grateful to the ICB for its leadership and commitment in funding the NENC scheme and helping to pave the way for this national rollout.

NRT E-Voucher Scheme & NRT Availability

PSNE continues to support all NENC pharmacies signed up to deliver the NRT e-voucher system for pregnant women, which has been in place since 1 September 2022.

Currently, 7 out of 8 NHS Trusts have PGDs and protocols in place to make NRT readily available to pregnant people while in an acute setting. Northumbria FT has opted out of the scheme, operating under its own local arrangements.

Looking ahead, and with the regional maternity NRT Voucher Scheme contract with PSNE due to end in June 2026, the ICB Smokefree Strategic Manager is facilitating discussions with PSNE and NHS Trusts to agree future arrangements.

A dedicated meeting is scheduled for 8 October (Q3) to take this forward.

Illicit Substance use – Cannabis

Following concerns raised by practitioners, the Taskforce and Best Start in Life workstream will be placing a stronger focus on substance use in pregnancy. The aim is to develop a consistent regional approach to identifying and supporting pregnant people affected by substance use.

As part of this work, a webinar on 'Tobacco Dependency & Cannabis' use in pregnancy is planned for Q2 and will be open to the wider system.

Tobacco Dependency in Pregnancy

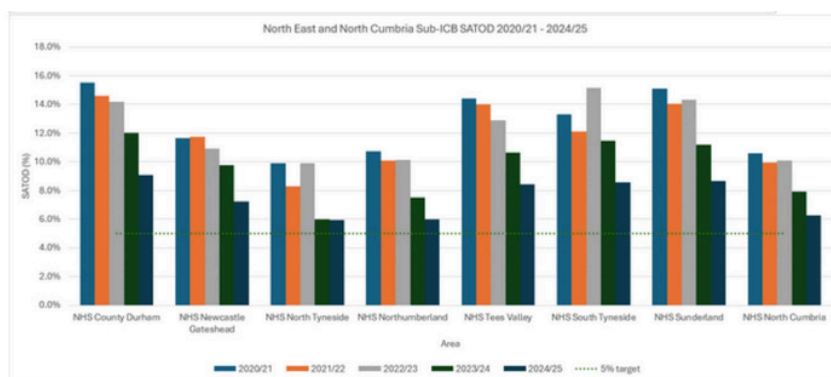
Strategic Lead: Becca Scott & Rachel McIlvenna & **Project Manager:** Joojo Kyei-Sarpong

Drop in Smoking at Time of Delivery

On the 19th of June 2025, the Quarter 4 2024/25 and end-of-year SATOD data was released—and we are delighted to share some fantastic progress.


Across the North East and North Cumbria ICB, there has been a 2.2 percentage point reduction in smoking during pregnancy, bringing our annual rate down to 7.8%—the lowest on record for the region.


This achievement means there were 588 fewer pregnant smokers than last year, saving lives while also delivering an estimated £1.7 million cost saving for NENC NHS maternity and neonatal services over the past year.

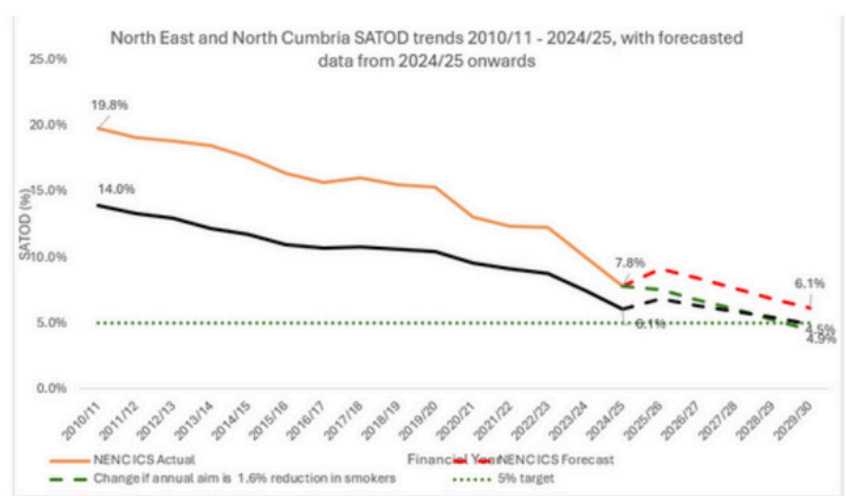



This collaborative approach to reducing SATOD rates was showcased at the World Conference on Tobacco Control in June 2025.



 Pictured: Rachel McIlvenna, Strategic Manager, shares insights in her oral presentation at WCOTC.

 Pictured: NENC SATOD, 2024/25, 7.8% (2.2 percentage point reduction from 23/24).



 Pictured: NENC SATOD, 2024/25, 7.8% (2.2 percentage point reduction from 23/24).

Strategic Lead: Rachel McIlvenna & **Project Manager:** Joojo Kyei-Sarpong

Following the conclusion of the Early Implementor Site (EIS) project, we hosted a best practice and learning workshop on 10 February 2025. The event gave the wider system an opportunity to learn from the EIS pilots delivered across our four NENC SMI Smoking Cessation pilot areas: Northumberland, South Tyneside, Middlesbrough, and Durham.

This important work was also highlighted at the SCAH Conference in York on 5 March 2025, including a [YouTube clip](#) showcasing the vital role these pilots play in addressing health inequalities.



After the pause and eventual closure of the Carlisle pilot, we're pleased to share positive progress in developing new community mental health cessation pathways. With additional funding, Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS FT (CNTW) has launched an enhanced pilot pathway for community patients with serious mental illness in the Newcastle and North Tyneside area.

The pilot began at the end of Q4 2024/25, and by the close of Q1 2025/26, more than 31 referrals had already been received into this enhanced support service.

I've smoked since being a child, the link is huge. I think one goes hand in hand. It's the first thing I reach for when my mental health really starts to struggle.... We know it has real physical consequences and it does kill people.... For a lot of people like me so if we can support people with mental health with their addictions and smoking hopefully people like me won't die 20 years sooner.

[Click here](#) to watch Claire's full story

Evaluation

Strategic Lead: Rachel McIlvenna

Evaluation of SMI EIS Implementation

We are delighted to share that, following close partnership working with Northumbria University, the independent evaluation of the SMI Early Implementor Site (EIS) was completed in April 2025.

The evaluation, commissioned to understand both stakeholder and service user experiences of implementing and delivering the SMI pathway, will help extend learning more widely across the system. Findings showed the service was well received and generally acceptable to both providers and service users.

The full report is available [here](#) and a lay summary [here](#), both via KHUB. To request a copy, please email rachel.mcilvenna@nhs.net.

A dissemination webinar was also held on 3 June, and the recording can be accessed [here](#).

Looking ahead, we are now working with Northumbria University to formally evaluate the community mental health cessation pilot being delivered by CNTW.

Evaluation of NHS Staff Tobacco Dependency Offer


As reported previously, the independent evaluation of the NHS Staff Tobacco Dependency Offer—carried out by Applied Research Collaboration (ARC) North East and North Cumbria in partnership with Newcastle University—was completed last year.

Following a dissemination webinar, we have been working to further cascade and share this learning across the system.



Several [policy briefs](#) have been published, and the lead researcher also had the opportunity to present the findings at the International Society for Social Medicine (SSM) Conference in Glasgow.



 Pictured: Dr Caitlin Thompson, Research Assistant for study presenting at SSM

The research has also been accepted as an abstract for the Annual Society for Research on Nicotine and Tobacco (SRNT) Conference, taking place in Q2 in Romania.

We're also delighted to share the successful publication of the research in the **International Journal of Environmental Research & Public Health** in February 2025.

You can access the published study [here](#).

Resource Area, Useful Links & Contacts

Supporting Quitting



www.FreshQuit.co.uk is the region's key "one-stop" website for everything related to quitting smoking. It includes quit tips, local Stop Smoking Service information, a cost calculator, advice on vaping, and much more. We encourage all partners to link to the site and help amplify campaign activities by sharing it widely.



The free Smokefree App is still available to everyone living in NENC.

Key features include:

- Automated self-help tools
- A digital stop smoking programme with daily missions and a chatbot
- One-to-one support from stop smoking experts, available 24/7

Resources in Practice



Key documents and resources are made available through the Taskforce's online Knowledge Hub (KHub) group so it is strongly recommended that all colleagues and partners involved in the treating tobacco dependency/Smokefree NHS agenda are registered to access this. This is in addition to the national resources within NHS futures.



The Future NHS platform has a host of information on all of the national prevention programme (obesity, tobacco and alcohol) that you may find useful. This platform is updated regularly with relevant resources. Please ensure your colleagues have access to this resource. There is also a North East and Yorkshire Prevention workspace which colleagues may find useful.

Data

Smoking in England toolkit study

The Smoking in England toolkit study provides findings of smoking prevalence and patterns in England. More details can be found [here](#)

National Tobacco Dashboard

The National Tobacco Dependency Service Data Dashboard can be [accessed here](#) and is available to all colleagues working on the agenda.

Contact

If you have any queries or would like more information about the content of this briefing, please contact Smokefree NHS Strategic Manager, Rachel McIlvenna, at rachel.mcilvenna@nhs.net