

CABINET – 20 JUNE 2024

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY SHEET – PART I

Title of Report:

Proposed variation to the Specialist Stop Smoking Service Contract.

Author(s):

Executive Director of Health, Housing and Communities

Purpose of Report

To seek Cabinet’s approval to vary the existing Specialist Stop Smoking Service contract to include funding from the Local Stop Smoking Service and Support Grant allocation to increase stop smoking provision across the City and to include direct supply to service users of Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT).

Description of Decision:

Cabinet is requested to authorise the Executive Director Health, Housing and Communities in consultation with the Director of Finance and the Portfolio Holder for Healthy City, to undertake all necessary steps to:

- a. To undertake a contract variation to the Council’s existing Specialist Stop Smoking Service contract (“the Contract”) with ABL Health Ltd (“ABL”), to apply from 1st July 2024 up to 31st March 2025 plus extension term (subject to this being utilised) to implement the new Local Stop Smoking Service and Support Grant allocation.–The variation will enhance the offer of the commissioned specialist service to increase capacity to deliver against the national target of an additional support to 5,651 smokers to quit over a 5 year period;
- b. To undertake a contract variation to the Contract from 1st July 2024 to 31st March 2027 plus extension term (subject to this being utilised) to implement the direct supply of Nicotine Replacement Therapy (“NRT”) to people who are setting a quit date to stop smoking; and
- c. Subject to the receipt of additional funding from the Local Stop Smoking Service and Support Grant allocation for any of the subsequent years of the Contract, to delegate authority to the Executive Director of Health, Housing and Communities to agree further contract variation(s) to the Contract with ABL as may be required in order to implement any such further additional grant funding.

Is the decision consistent with the Budget/Policy Framework? *Yes

If not, Council approval is required to change the Budget/Policy Framework

Suggested reason(s) for Decision:

The proposal for the variation to the Specialist Stop Smoking Service Contract was founded on ABL being the Council's primary provider of the Specialist Stop Smoking Service across Sunderland and it will enable the commencement of the delivery to benefit residents as soon as possible by:

- a. increasing the number of dedicated specialist staff to provide leadership, smoking cessation interventions and to support non-specialist advisors.
- b. Enhancing the overall service infrastructure and accessibility to stop smoking services, e.g. co-locating services in locations where residents routinely attend such as mental health services and care homes.
- c. Increasing referrals and improving pathways/strengthen partnerships.
- d. Ensuring consistency of a high quality service.
- e. Providing value for money.
- f. Offering the direct supply of NRT to those accessing specialist stop smoking services to increase accessibility.

It seeks to achieve further effective, system wide joint working with existing local and regional partnerships to maximise the reach of the additional funding which will increase the number of smokers engaging with effective interventions to quit smoking. The additional investment will improve public health outcomes, deliver on local Health and Wellbeing Board priorities and achieve the objectives of the Sunderland City Plan.

Alternative options to be considered and recommended to be rejected:

The potential alternative options are as follows:

- (i) Do not enter into a contract variation with ABL in order to give effect to the Local Stop Smoking Service and Support Grant allocation for Sunderland. This is not recommended as a viable option as the grant criteria states that the funding must be used to invest in enhancing commissioned stop smoking services and to build capacity and demand for those services and ABL are the Council's existing appointed provider of the Specialist Stop Smoking Service. Not implementing will result in a significant element of Sunderland's Grant allocation not being utilised.
- (ii) Undertake a new procurement process to provide Specialist Stop Smoking Service. This is not recommended as a viable option due to the conditions of the grant criteria stating what the funding must be used. Awarding a separate contract would not secure value for money due to the duplication of existing contract arrangements.
- (iii) Do not enter into a contract variation with ABL in order to provide direct supply of NRT to service users accessing specialist stop smoking services at week one of their behavioural support programme. This is not recommended as this will not allow consideration of introducing a more flexible and accessible approach of providing stop smoking aids to the most complex and disadvantaged smokers in the City.
- (iv) Undertake procurement processes to provide the direct supply of NRT to service users. This is not recommended as we already have this offer as part of commissioned services in primary care. By enabling the Contract to provide NRT direct to the Service User at their first appointment, this will eliminate any delay in access and reduce transport costs, in particularly for those who are less mobile.

Impacts analysed;			
Equality	Privacy	Sustainability	Crime and Disorder
<input type="text" value="Y"/>	<input type="text" value="N/A"/>	<input type="text" value="N/A"/>	<input type="text" value="NA"/>
Is the Decision consistent with the Council's Co-Operative Values? Yes			
Is this a "Key Decision" as defined in the Constitution?			Yes
Is it included in the 28 day Notice of Decisions?			Yes

CABINET – 20 JUNE 2024

PROPOSED VARIATION TO THE SPECIALIST STOP SMOKING SERVICE CONTRACT

Report of the Executive Director of Health, Housing and Communities

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To seek Cabinet's approval to vary the existing Specialist Stop Smoking Service contract to include funding from the Local Stop Smoking Service and Support Grant allocation to increase stop smoking provision across the City and to include direct supply to service users of Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT).

2. Description of Decision (Recommendations)

Cabinet is requested to authorise the Executive Director Health, Housing and Communities in consultation with the Director of Finance and the Portfolio Holder for Healthy City, to undertake all necessary steps to:

- a. To undertake a contract variation to the Council's existing Specialist Stop Smoking Service contract ("the Contract") with ABL Health Ltd ("ABL"), to apply from 1st July 2024 up to 31st March 2025 plus extension term (subject to this being utilised) to implement the new Local Stop Smoking Service and Support Grant allocation. The variation will enhance the offer of the commissioned specialist service to increase capacity to deliver against the national target of an additional support to 5,651 smokers to quit over a 5 year period;
- b. To undertake a contract variation to the Contract from 1st July 2024 to 31st March 2027 plus extension term (subject to this being utilised) to implement the direct supply of Nicotine Replacement Therapy ("NRT") to people who are setting a quit date to stop smoking; and
- c. Subject to the receipt of additional funding from the Local Stop Smoking Service and Support Grant allocation for any of the subsequent years of the Contract, to delegate authority to the Executive Director of Health, Housing and Communities to agree further contract variation(s) to the Contract with ABL as may be required in order to implement any such further additional grant funding.

3. Introduction/Background

- 3.1 Tobacco is the single most preventable cause of ill health, disability and death and is a key driver of health inequalities within the City.
- 3.2 Tobacco continues to have a significant impact on Sunderland, with over 500 deaths a year caused by smoking. There are approximately 29,000 smokers in Sunderland, this equates to a smoking rate of 13.2% which is higher than the England average of 12.7%.

- 3.3 Within the Healthy City Plan we have committed to reducing our smoking prevalence to 5% by 2030, which is in line with the national ambition. An enhanced Specialist Stop Smoking Service will help to deliver on this ambition.
- 3.4 In October 2023, the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) published a policy paper, 'Stopping the start: our new plan to create a smokefree generation'¹. Included was the announcement of a package of measures including significant investment into local authority led stop smoking services.

4. Local Stop Smoking Services and Support Grant

- 4.1 The grant allocation for 2024-25 for Sunderland is £407,965. The grant allocation is as follows:

COSTINGS OVER 5 YEAR GRANT PERIOD FOR SUNDERLAND				
2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
£407,965	£407,965 (indicative)	£407,965 (indicative)	£407,965 (indicative)	£407,965 (indicative)

- 4.2 The grant criteria outlines that the Local Authority must use the grant to:

- Invest in enhancing local authority commissioned stop smoking services and support, in addition to and while maintaining existing spend on these services and support from the annual public health revenue budget which is funded from the public health grant;
- Build capacity to deliver expanded local stop smoking services and support;
- Build demand for local stop smoking services and support; and
- Deliver increases in the number of people setting a quit date and 4 week quit outcomes, reporting outcomes in the Stop Smoking Services Collection.

The grant should not be used to replace other/existing programmes which support smokers to quit.

- 4.3 As part of the grant, Sunderland has been set a target of supporting an additional 5,651 smokers to quit over a 5 year period. These quits are over and above the number of clients the service is currently commissioned to support. In order to reach the nationally set 5 year target, additional investment will be needed into the local Specialist Stop Smoking Service to enhance the number of stop smoking practitioners.

5. Current Position

- 5.1 The Sunderland Specialist Stop Smoking Service supports smokers to quit through an evidenced based programme of behaviour support. The Service acts as a single point of contact for all smokers wishing to quit and provides targeted stop smoking support in areas of high prevalence through community provision.

¹ [Creating a smokefree generation and tackling youth vaping - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/creating-a-smokefree-generation-and-tackling-youth-vaping)

- 5.2 There is currently a service specification in place as part of the Contract with ABL to deliver the Specialist Stop Smoking Service. The current Contract commenced on 1st April 2023 for a period of 4 years and has a 2 x 12 month optional extension. The value of the original contract over its full term, including the potential extensions, equates to £2,606,630.
- 5.3 The Contract contains a variation clause to accommodate variations resulting from alterations to Public Health funding and for emergent priorities in Public Health for the provision of stop smoking services.

6. Proposed Approach

6.1 Specialist Stop Smoking Service

- 6.1.1 In order to implement the Local Stop Smoking Services and Support Grant, it is necessary to enter into a proposed contract variation with ABL as the Council's existing appointed provider of the Specialist Stop Smoking Service with affect from 1st July 2024. This will be for £205,599 for year one.
- 6.1.2 Years' 2 to year 5 allocations for the Local Stop Smoking Services and Support Grant has not yet been published and confirmed by central government. Subject to the award of further funding from year 2. As a consequence, it is therefore proposed that the Executive Director of Health, Housing and Communities is authorised to enter into further variations to the ABL Contract as required in order to give effect to any further grant funding allocations.
- 6.1.5 A full integrated impact assessment has been carried out. In conjunction with these findings it is proposed that the grant funding will be used to build upon the work undertaken across Sunderland to develop a whole system approach to prevent and minimise the harm caused by smoking to the Sunderland population. The additional funding within ABL will build on more of the same within the current service specification and will involve increasing capacity and demand for local stop smoking services, and to increase the number of smokers engaging with effective interventions to quit smoking. The key areas of the service specification which will be enhanced to meet local needs include:
- a. Increased capacity to embed stop smoking advisors into key service areas such as mental health, housing and social care;
 - b. Increased capacity for enabling enhanced community outreach to increase engagement, increase demand and referrals into the service; and
 - c. Increased capacity to deliver high quality specialist training within our wider workforce across the City.
- 6.1.6 These areas will link with additional work with existing local and regional partnerships to maximise the reach of the additional funding to increase the number of smokers engaging with effective interventions to quit smoking, to ensure our goal of making smoking obsolete is reached and to help improve

public health outcomes, deliver on local Health and Wellbeing Board priorities and meet City Plan objectives.

6.1.7 The remaining funds of £202,366 from the Local Stop Smoking Service and Support Grant allocation will be used within the council to:

- stimulate more quit attempts through marketing and comms;
- boost existing behavioural support within Family Hubs;
- build capacity in local areas to respond to increased demand; and
- strengthen partnerships in local healthcare systems.

6.2 Direct supply of Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT)

6.2.1 It is proposed to also vary the Contract with ABL with effect from 1st July 2024 to provide NRT directly to Service Users for week one of their behavioural support programme. This will enable ABL to provide NRT as a stop smoking aid directly to the Service Users at their first appointment, eliminating any delay and the need for Service Users to go to a pharmacy. The service will also be able to show the Service User how to use the product or products before they leave the appointment. This reduces some barriers and additional costs to getting the NRT product, in particularly for those who are less mobile and those who may have additional transport costs to the pharmacy.

6.2.2 Funding for NRT products will come from the annual public health revenue budget which is funded from the public health grant. ABL will purchase the NRT products and invoice the Council for these additional costs. In order to implement the NRT scheme it is necessary to enter into a proposed contract variation with ABL as the Council's existing appointed provider of the Specialist Stop Smoking Service with affect from 1st July 2024. The maximum increase to the contract value over 5 years is £195,000, this is subject to change in line with any associated contractual price increases.

COSTINGS OVER 5 YEAR FOR NRT					TOTAL
2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	Contract variation
£20,800	£28,600	£41,600	£52,000	£52,000	195,000

6.2.3 Subject to a review of the effectiveness of the delivery of direct supply of NRT in March 2025, it is proposed to delegate authority to the Executive Director of Health, Housing and Communities to agree further contract variation(s) to procure further variations to the Contract with ABL subject to change in line with any associated contractual price increases in order to continue the provision of direct supply of NRT.

7. Reasons for the Decision

7.1 The proposal for the variation to the Specialist Stop Smoking Service Contract was founded on ABL being the Council's primary provider of the Specialist Stop Smoking Service across Sunderland and it will enable the commencement of the delivery to benefit residents as soon as possible by:

- a. Increasing the number of dedicated specialist staff to provide leadership, smoking cessation interventions and to support non-specialist advisors.
- b. Enhancing the overall service infrastructure and accessibility to stop smoking services, e.g. co-locating services in locations where residents routinely attend such as mental health services and care homes.
- c. Increasing referrals and improving pathways/strengthen partnerships.
- d. Ensuring consistency of a high quality service.
- e. Providing value for money.
- f. Offering the direct supply of NRT to those accessing specialist stop smoking services to increase accessibility.

7.2 It seeks to achieve further effective, system wide joint working with existing local and regional partnerships to maximise the reach of the additional funding which will increase the number of smokers engaging with effective interventions to quit smoking. The additional investment will improve public health outcomes, deliver on local Health and Wellbeing Board priorities and achieve the objectives of the Sunderland City Plan.

8. Alternative Options

8.1 Potential alternative options to implementing the commissioning intentions are:

- (i) Do not enter into a contract variation with ABL in order to give effect to the Local Stop Smoking Service and Support Grant allocation for Sunderland. This is not recommended as a viable option as the grant criteria states that the funding must be used to invest in enhancing commissioned stop smoking services and to build capacity and demand for those services and ABL are the Council's existing appointed provider of the Specialist Stop Smoking Service. Not implementing will result in a significant element of Sunderland's Grant allocation not being utilised.
- (ii) Undertake a new procurement process to provide Specialist Stop Smoking Service. This is not recommended as a viable option due to the conditions of the grant criteria stating what the funding must be used. Awarding a separate contract would not secure value for money due to the duplication of existing contract arrangements.
- (iii) Do not enter into a contract variation with ABL in order to provide direct supply of NRT to service users accessing specialist stop smoking services at week one of their behavioural support programme. This is not recommended as this will not allow consideration of introducing a more flexible and accessible approach of providing stop smoking aids to the most complex and disadvantaged smokers in the City.
- (iv) Undertake procurement processes to provide the direct supply of NRT to service users. This is not recommended as we already have this offer as part of commissioned services in primary care. By enabling the Contract to provide NRT direct to the Service User at their first appointment, this will eliminate any delay in access and reduce transport costs, in particularly for those who are less mobile.

9. Impact Analysis

- 9.1 A full Integrated Impact Assessment has been carried out. A summary impact analysis for the proposed variations is provided below.
- 9.2 By their nature, the services outlined here aim to reduce inequalities by providing accessible interventions to those that are most likely to experience disadvantage.
- (a) **Equalities** - An integrated impact assessment has been carried out in respect of the proposals. A copy of the assessment is included in Appendix 1. The key findings are as follows:
- a. It is anticipated that the proposal will have a positive impact on people of all ages by providing additional capacity across the life course, for example by encouraging smoke free homes and environments, improving workplace health, and preventing illnesses related to smoking.
 - b. It is anticipated that the proposal will enhance support to smokers who find it more difficult to stop smoking, such as those with mental health conditions, by providing additional specialist support and more opportunities to co-locate services in locations where those smokers routinely attend.
 - c. Evidence shows that the most deprived wards in Sunderland have the highest smoking rates. It is anticipated that this proposal will increase the availability of community place-based stop smoking services and therefore will increase the range of preventative interventions available within these areas. This will have a positive impact on changing behaviour and preventing smoking related ill-health.
- (b) **Co-operative Values** – Implementation of the contract variations will support the aim of reducing health inequalities in Sunderland by continuing to offer support to those communities that have highest levels of need in an accessible way.
- (c) **Financial Implications** – The cost of the contract variation will be met from the Council’s allocation of the national Local Stop Smoking Service and Support Grant and the NRT costs will be met from within the annual public health revenue budget which is funded from the public health grant.
- (d) **Legal Implications** –. The existing specialist stop smoking service contract with ABL commenced on 1st April 2023 for an initial period of 4 years with the option to extend by the Council thereafter. The proposed variation(s) to the existing contract were provided for in the contract and as a consequence, it is considered that the proposed variation(s) to the existing contract are lawful pursuant to Regulation 13 of the Health Care Services (Provider Selection Regime) Regulations 2023.

- (e) **Policy Implications** – The scheme aims to support the shared values within the Sunderland Healthy City Plan, in particular, focusing on prevention, tackling health inequalities and equity.
- (f) **Health & Safety Considerations** – There are no current identified Health & Safety Considerations associated with the proposal, however, should these emerge as part of work streams undertaken these shall be fully considered.
- (g) **Procurement** – Corporate Procurement have been consulted regarding the alternative approach to implementing the contract. The proposal is in accordance with the requirements of the Health Care Services (Provider Selection Regime) Regulations 2023. All work will be undertaken in consultation with the Corporate Procurement team.

