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Dear Colleagues,

I wanted to write to you personally to let you know the outcome of our recent procurement exercise in relation to our Stop Smoking Service for Bristol.

I am aware that a number of you have raised concerns with us about our new approach to Stop Smoking Services in Bristol and I also wanted to take this opportunity to explain why we are changing the offer and what we hope to achieve.

You will be aware that smoking habits have changed over recent years. The impact of legislation, the introduction of vaping, availability of over the counter products and the increasing use of digital and on-line advice has radically changed behaviours. The majority of people now quit without reference to smoking cessation support.

Smoking remains one of the biggest modifiable risks to health and contributor to health inequality. We therefore want to target our resources effectively to address the greatest need.

The service design reflects national recommendations from the National Tobacco Control Plan, Smoking in Pregnancy Challenge Group, PHE guidance on tobacco commissioning support and models of delivery, NICE Guidance PH 26, and PHE Menu of Interventions.

The new targeted service will support women in pregnancy, plus additional partners/family members, and people with Long Term Conditions while the online, digital self-help offer will be entirely open.

Pregnancy and the first 1000 days

Included within the 16% of adults who smoke in Bristol are around 600 new mothers. The new service will link with the new maternity quit service and will provide intensive, wrap around, family/ household focused support up to the first 1000 days of life, recognising the need for support to prevent relapse post-partum and ensure quitting is sustained. This will include a free direct supply of NRT for pregnant women and their families for two weeks during pregnancy and four weeks in the event of post-partum relapse. The impacts of this approach will be on the wider household and on the lifelong health outcomes of the children within that household.

People with Long Term Conditions

A quit service consisting of telephone, and where needed, face to face support will be provided to people living with Long Term Conditions made worse by smoking, particularly after contact with hospital services, to provide seamless follow up support. This will include free direct supply NRT for 4 weeks.

People identified following an NHS Health Check

Telephone, and where needed, face to face support will also be available to those referred following an NHS Health Check. This will include free direct supply NRT for 4 weeks.

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On line and digital support

We are promoting self-care where all others seeking help will be signposted to digital resources providing behavioural support to quit. This reflects changes in the way smokers wish to access support with universal digital and targeted telephone support available and an 'e-cigarette friendly' approach. Self-help approaches will be promoted through material on Bristol City Council website. We will continue to fund Champix and NRT prescriptions through FP10s in primary care but as part of the self-care, we will be encouraging smokers to go to their local pharmacy to buy NRT.

The new service provider is SLM - Everyone Health

SLM already have a presence in Bristol through their division Everyone Active which provides leisure service across the city. Referral pathways into the service are already in place for pregnancy through midwifery services. In addition, any health provider will be able to refer pregnant smokers to the service. A referral pathway from secondary care for long term conditions and from primary care providers for smokers identified through NHS Health Checks will be set up by Everyone Health as they mobilise the new service which will start on April 1st, 2020. An information sheet will be produced for practices to print off and give to people enquiring about support to stop. This will detail the services and self-help available as well details about vaping and the ways to access NRT.

Our efforts to reduce harm from tobacco will continue to go beyond support for quitting. We are developing a new Tobacco Control Strategy for Bristol and will continue to work with health providers, schools, children's centres, regulatory services and the voluntary sector to support a smoke free environment, tackle illegal tobacco and niche smoking products such as shisha and promote non-smoking as the norm across the city.

Your support in raising awareness and encouraging smokers to stop will continue to be vitally important in our efforts to become a smoke free city.

We are asking for your support in signposting people to our digital behavioural support resources or, where appropriate to the Support to Stop Service.

Smoking is still the biggest driver of ill health and health inequalities and, as you know, behaviour change can take many attempts before succeeding.

I do appreciate that this represents a considerable change in approach and that a number of you have reservations about it. However, I hope that you will find the attached evidence summary of interest and that you will feel able to work with us in establishing this new approach to addressing health inequality.

Yours Faithfully



Christina Gray
Director of Public Health