

Smoke Free Workplaces

A Practical Guide for Employers



This guide has been developed to support you to make your workplace smoke free.

**HEALTHY
WORKPLACES
DERBYSHIRE**

smokefree
Derby & Derbyshire

This guide includes information on the support available to help your employees to stop smoking.

It also contains guidance and links to training on how you can give advice to encourage your staff to think about their smoking, and hopefully go on to quit.

There are easy to follow steps and actions for you to take as an employer to achieve an environment that is not only free from tobacco smoke but also promotes a healthier, happier more productive workforce.

The background to smoking in Derbyshire

In Derby and Derbyshire 15.3% of people smoke - that's around 130,000 people.

People who work in routine and manual occupations (aged 18 to 64) are much more likely to smoke.

In 2023, 20.2% of adults in the UK in routine and manual occupations smoked compared with 7.9% in managerial and professional occupations (1).

The financial cost of smoking in Derby and Derbyshire in 2025 is estimated to be around 759 million.


This figure includes costs on NHS support, social care, fire-related incidents, and the astonishing loss of productivity caused by illness and early death (2).

It is not unusual for employers to have people within their workforce who smoke.

This may come along with challenges for both the business and the employee.

The total productivity loss to the UK economy from smoking is £13.2bn.

This total includes £6.05 billion of lost earnings to working smokers and £5.7bn of lost earnings due to smokers being out of work (3).



Why is smoking a problem for workplaces?

Nicotine in tobacco is a highly addictive substance.

When people are unable to smoke for long periods of time, such as at work, this can result in uncomfortable withdrawal symptoms such as agitation, lack of concentration and restlessness.

This could impact on your staff member's wellbeing and performance at work.

The impact isn't just on their performance at work but will have longer term impacts on their health.

On average someone who continues to smoke loses 10 years of life - or around one year for every four years of smoking - after the age of thirty **(4)**.

Smoking at work: the law

Smoking isn't allowed in any enclosed workplace, public building or on public transport in the UK.

Businesses can be fined up to £2,500 if they don't stop people smoking in the workplace or up to £1,000 if they don't display 'no smoking' signs.

Smoking isn't allowed in any work vehicle that more than one person uses, e.g. taxis, buses, vans, goods vehicles used by more than one driver or company cars used by more than one employee. **(5)**.

Why should I help my employees to stop smoking?

Stopping smoking is one of the most important things a person can do to help improve their health and well-being.

Stopping smoking can prevent a wide range of tobacco-related diseases.

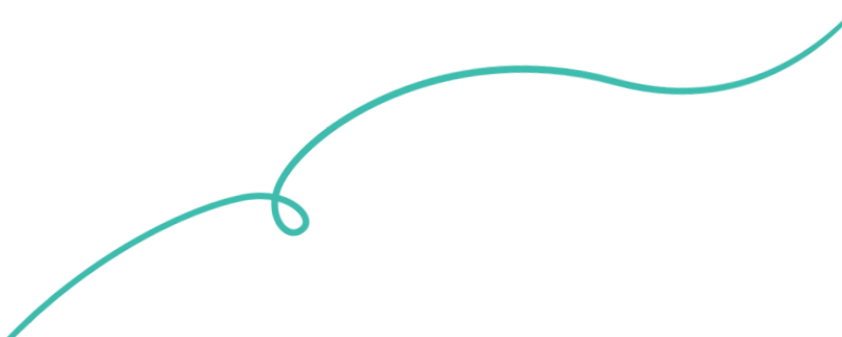
Within only a few years of quitting the risk of lung cancer is halved, lung function improves, reproductive health improves and the risk of various cardiovascular diseases is reduced.

Quitting also has significant financial benefits.

The average smoker spends around £47 a week on tobacco, which is around £2,450 a year **(6)**

Among smokers who are aware of the dangers of tobacco, most want to quit.

Counselling and stop smoking medication can more than double a tobacco user's chance of successful quitting **(7)**.



Your role as an employer

Workplace support can help encourage more people to access support to stop smoking.

The benefits of workplace support are not only for your employees but also to your business by helping to reduce absenteeism and increase productivity.

The following actions can help you to make both your workplace, and site , smoke free.

1. Make information on local stop smoking support easily available.

Support to quit

In England, around 60% of smokers want to quit, 10% of whom intend to do so within three months (8).

Currently, around half of all smokers in England try to quit unaided using willpower alone - despite this being the least effective method.

Only three or four people in every 100 remain non-smokers after a year when they choose to make an unassisted quit attempt (9).

Local Stop Smoking Services

The most effective way to quit smoking is with support from your local stop smoking service combined with stop smoking aids.

These may include prescription tablets, nicotine replacement therapies (NRT) and vapes.

People who get this type of support are three times more likely to stop smoking successfully than people who try to quit unaided or with over-the-counter nicotine replacement therapy.

Find information about your local, free, stop smoking service below.

**Live Life
BETTER
DERBYSHIRE**

Live Life Better Derbyshire
www.livelifebetterderbyshire.org.uk
0800 085 22 99

livewell

A Derby City Council Project

Live Well - Derby
www.livewellderby.co.uk
01332 641254

Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT)

You may have heard of Nicotine Replacement Therapy. NRTs are products that give your body lower amounts of nicotine, but without the dangerous chemicals in cigarette

There are a wide-ranging selection of NRT products available such as patches, gum, mouth spray, lozenges and inhalators. All of which can be used discreetly and tailored to suit your employee's needs.

These are crucial aids to help them manage cravings, withdrawal and stay comfortable at work

These products can be purchased over the counter, on prescription or alongside support through your local stop smoking service.

Vapes

Vapes have been growing in popularity and are now the most common stop smoking aid in England.

Leading UK health and public health organisations agree that, although not risk free vapes are far less harmful than smoking.

Vapes and liquids should only be bought through reputable shops or vape suppliers.

Vapes are age restricted and should only be used by those 18 years and over.

It is important to dispel myths around vaping and know what the facts are based on scientific evidence and data.

The [NHS Better Health website](#) lists the most common myths and gives you the full facts.

Free Nicotine Replacement Therapy and vapes - alongside expert behavioural support - are available for anyone aged over 18 from stop smoking services in Derbyshire and Derby.



Free workplace based stop smoking support

Some employees may benefit from a workplace-based stop smoking support - and we can help.

Depending on the number of employees wanting to quit it's possible for Healthy Workplaces Derbyshire to host a workplace-based stop smoking programme onsite.

When people quit together it increases their responsibility and commitment to staying smoke free.

They can also have access to FREE stop smoking aids and support from our specialist stop smoking advisors.

Allowing your employees time out of work to take part in stop smoking support is a good way to show that you are committed to improving their health and wellbeing.

If appointments can't be held on site, your staff may need to get support at another location such as a local pharmacy or GP practice.

Wherever possible, employees should be supported to attend during working hours without loss of pay (**10**)

To find out more about our free workplace support offer email healthy.workplaces@derbyshire.gov.uk

2. Negotiate a smoke free workplace policy with employees.

Ideally this should be developed in collaboration with staff and their representatives.

The policy should include:

Duties and responsibilities

- Where and when can employees smoke on site?
- If smoking breaks are allowed is this during working hours and, if so, how often and for how long?
- Who is responsible for the policy to be implemented, reviewed, and communicated effectively?

Line Managers: should ensure that all team members are aware of the policy and their personal responsibilities

Make sure employees are informed about available support and ways to remain smoke free during working hours.

What happens when the policy is breached and how is this investigated?

Managers should ensure action is taken sensitively and as appropriate.

Individual employees: should always follow the smoke free sites policy.

People who do not smoke should communicate the policy to others sensitively and ideally offer very brief advice (VBA) and signposting on to stop smoking support.

Having a Smokefree Policy in place doesn't prevent people from smoking on-site.

The intention is to not to stigmatise people who smoke, it is designed to reflect the workplace's ambition to be smokefree.

Designated smoking areas

You may want to allow smoking in specific designated areas outdoors.

These should be clearly marked with signage so it is easy for those wanting to smoke to find. This may include visitors and contractors.

The location should be away from doors and windows.

Provide a suitable place for people to extinguish and dispose of their cigarettes to avoid littering.

Be clear on vaping. Are you allowing employees to vape on site? If so, where?

Very Brief Advice (VBA) on smoking

Very Brief Advice is a way of having a non-judgemental, brief conversation any time you interact with someone who smokes.

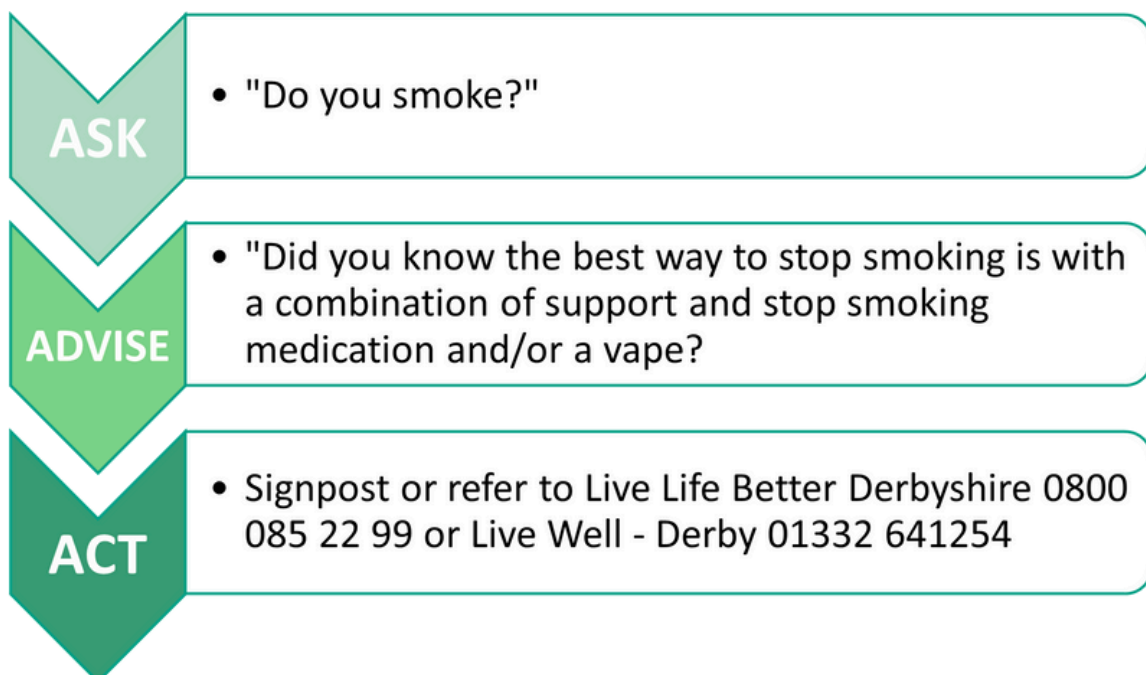
The aim is to signpost them to the stop smoking support on offer if they are thinking about quitting.

Very Brief Advice (VBA+) eLearning has been developed by the National Centre for Smoking Cessation (NCSCT).

It is FREE and available online at www.ncsct.co.uk/publications/VBA_2021

Training employees at all levels in VBA, including managers, HR and wellbeing staff, will help to create a positive, supportive workplace culture.

Ask - Advise - Act



This document will be regularly reviewed and updated.

If you would like to contact us about this document, or find out more about how we can support the health and wellbeing needs of your workplace, email healthy.workplaces@derbyshire.gov.uk

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