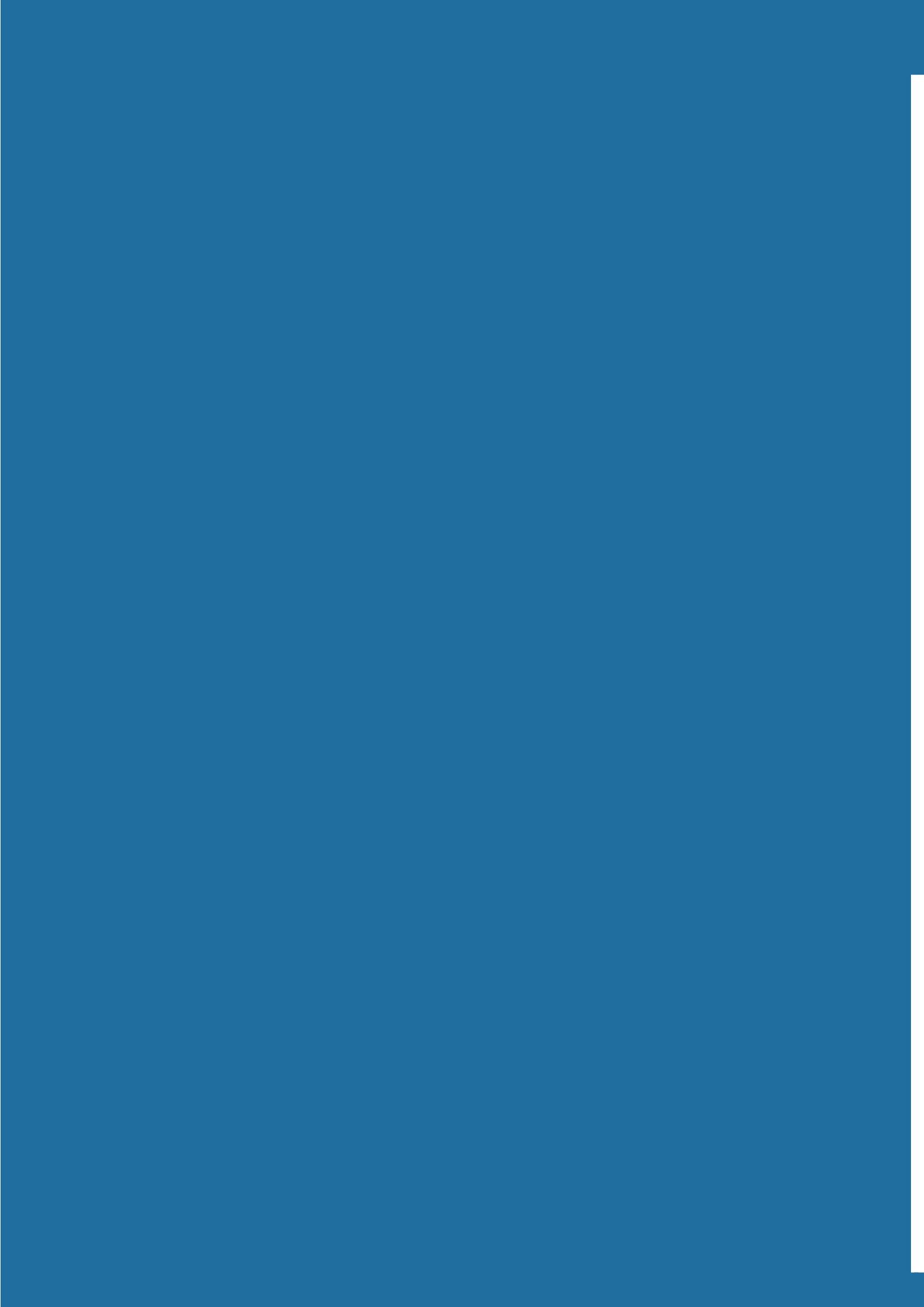


Section 5: Recommendations



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The key findings from the money advice service and client case studies support a range of recommendations that may help money advice services to address tobacco issues with clients more consistently and ensure that stop smoking services continue to provide money advice services with appropriate support, training and resources.

Addressing smoking and tobacco in money advice settings is realistic, achievable, viable and appropriate

All of the participating services were clear that:

- addressing tobacco issues with clients should be something that money advice services do as part of a person centred, holistic package of support for clients
- appropriate training and support has helped advisers and services to see raising the issue of tobacco with clients as realistic, achievable, viable and appropriate across a range of different money advice settings in the NHS GGC area.

If appropriate training, support and resources are provided, there is scope for other money advice service providers, both within and beyond the NHS GGC area, to look to consistently raise the issue of smoking and tobacco with clients as part of the package of support services that services offer and deliver.

Trust money advice services to address tobacco when the time and circumstances are right for each client

Money advice services fundamentally deliver person centred, holistic support for clients that regularly present with a wide range of clear and pressing crisis issues. These issues are often shaped by overlapping debt, benefit, housing, relationship and substance misuse problems.

Whilst the evaluation findings have clearly highlighted that money advice services can, should and want to address tobacco issues with clients, it is equally important for stop smoking services to fully consider, understand and appreciate what money advice services deal with. The need to trust money advice services to approach and address tobacco use when the time and circumstances are right for each client.

Delivery of tobacco specific training for money advice services is valued

The evaluation has established that the delivery of raising the issue training was welcomed, found to be particularly useful and generally applied across all of the participating services. It is equally clear that:

- additional 'top-up' training could act as a further reinforcement to money advisers that they should be looking to raise and address the issue of tobacco with clients, when the circumstances are right
- regular staff changes within money advice settings mean that regular and consistent training could help to ensure that new staff appreciate and understand the importance of raising the issue of tobacco, and are provided with the information and knowledge to do so
- new and emerging issues such as e-cigarettes mean that the delivery of further training could help money advisers to engage with clients on these issues

Build and maintain regular contact between local stop smoking services and community based money advice services.

Building trust and rapport between advisers and clients is an important pre-requisite for effective service delivery and support in money advice settings. It is also clear that for raising the issue tobacco to become fully and effectively embedded into money advice service delivery, it needs to go beyond the provision of tobacco training and be built on a foundation of trust, mutual appreciation and regular contact between local stop smoking services and community based money advice services.

The project evaluation illustrated that immediately after the delivery of tobacco training, money advisers started to raise the issue of tobacco more regularly with their clients. Effective relationship building between partnership services in local communities need not be overly time consuming, resource intensive or complicated.

Regular follow up contact between stop smoking services and local money advice services could simply focus on informal discussions and sharing information on how advisers are getting on with raising the issue of tobacco with clients and formal referral numbers. Building and maintaining regular contact between services could act as a continual reminder to money advice services that they should address tobacco issues with clients and help local stop smoking services to provide regular and appropriate support for community based assets delivering vital services in their local area.

Further resource development could help money advice services to raise the issue of smoking more consistently clients

If money advice services were able to display tobacco specific posters and leaflets in their consultation rooms, these resources could act as a prompt or a support for advisers to talk with clients about tobacco use. In a sense, poster and flyer resources could subconsciously 'raise the issue' with clients before advisers verbally raise the issue. Posters and leaflets could help advisers to feel less judgemental, and, therefore, more confident about raising the issue of tobacco with clients.

Referrals need to be realistic and pragmatic

During the planning phase for the evaluation, supporting and increasing referrals from money advice services to stop smoking support services was identified as a key aim. A key learning point from the evaluation has been for stop smoking services to consider and understand the typical circumstances and practical realities that money advice services face as part of their service delivery, and how these factors impact on the way in which they address smoking and tobacco issues with clients.

The typical circumstances and practical realities faced by money advice services mean that it might be unrealistic to expect a constant and consistent flow of formal referrals from money advice services, for a variety of reasons. The tobacco training project has enjoyed clear success in services raising the issue of smoking more regularly with clients, and with making clients more aware of stop smoking support services that are available in their local area. It is, therefore, likely (although difficult to definitively quantify and measure) that the number of informed self-referrals by clients engaging with money advice services is likely to increase.

Consider ways in which referral pathways can be more responsive to the needs of money advice services and clients

The evaluation findings suggest that it may have been slightly optimistic to expect that the simple delivery of tobacco training would lead to an immediate, significant and consistent rise in the number of direct or formal referrals from money advice services.

However, it is clear that there is a need for stop smoking services to consider ways in which referral pathways can become more responsive to the needs of money advice services and clients.

If there continues to be a strong desire to see a growth in formal referrals from money advice settings, it is likely that the development and launch of NHS GGC's electronic/online referral booking system will encourage growth and recording of formal referrals. In addition, the need to raise awareness of the new online referral booking system could present an excellent opportunity for NHS GGC to support further tobacco training sessions in money advice settings.

Maintain questions on tobacco use as a key trigger in CFTs

The importance and worth of including trigger questions on tobacco use and tobacco spending in CFTs was made clear. The content and structure of CFTs is under regular review, meaning that questions on tobacco use or spending thresholds for expenditure on tobacco might be changed or removed. The evaluation has highlighted that CFT questions on tobacco use and expenditure are an important trigger point for raising the issue of smoking with clients and it would be helpful for these questions to consistently remain on CFTs.

Support money advice services to embed tobacco messages in longer term support services

The evaluation highlighted that several money advice services deliver longer term support programmes for clients. These programmes look to help clients make realistic and achievable lifestyle changes so they can prevent a return to financial crisis situations in the future. For many clients, stopping smoking is a realistic and achievable lifestyle change that will improve their health and their finances. The inclusion of key tobacco messages as part of these support programmes could encourage more money advice clients to access local stop smoking services.

It is completely understandable that when a person is experiencing a financial crisis their first priority when meeting with money advice staff will be to get out of the crisis as quickly as possible. It is also important to appreciate that during such a crisis, a smoker may feel that smoking helps them manage stress.

Addressing the complex issues an individual might present with during limited appointment time will often mean that raising the issue of smoking, and highlighting the health and financial benefits of quitting, quickly slides down the list of priorities. Perhaps if tobacco use was consistently recorded on client notes, money advisers could look to use any follow-up appointments to 'check-in' with individual clients and explore other ways in which they might build up their financial and health resilience, when it was more appropriate to do so.

Money advice services are ready made community based assets that can promote stop smoking services in the communities that they support

As a general rule, money advice services are delivered in Scotland's most deprived areas, where smoking rates are four times higher than in the least deprived areas⁸, where almost half of adults who are permanently sick or disabled, or who are unemployed and seeking work, smoke tobacco⁹ and where most of those who smoke say that they would like to quit¹⁰.

The tobacco training evaluation has highlighted that raising the issue of tobacco and engaging with clients on tobacco use is realistic, achievable and viable across a range of different money advice services and settings.

The evaluation has also illustrated the clear need for money advice services to offer a broad range of holistic support services that are non-judgemental, responsive and specifically tailored to the needs and individual circumstances that clients present with.

Money advice services are successful community based assets, usually run by local people. They respond to the needs of local communities and look to build financial resilience within the communities they are based in and support.

The tobacco training evaluation lends clear evidence to the suggestion that if local stop smoking services offer and deliver appropriate training and support, they can build effective partnership relationships with community based money advice services. They can then deliver more support in the areas, and with the people, where stop smoking services want to, and need to, make a more significant impact.