

Dear Pharmacists and Pharmacy Teams,

Somerset Council are in the final stages of planning to reinstate the Varenicline Pathway alongside the other Stop Smoking Services they currently commission.

The council team will be contacting all Pharmacies and Pharmacy owners directly to establish which Pharmacies are interested in providing Stop Smoking Services.

The two main services on offer are the Varenicline via PGD, to be provided by Pharmacists only, and the LOR Voucher scheme, to be provided by non-pharmacist team members.

The LOR Voucher scheme is easy to use, The council will see the client at the 'Smoke Free Life' quit clubs. The prescriber will send to your Pharmoutcomes account a voucher containing information of what NRT they want the patient to have. The pharmacy accesses the voucher and gives the patient the required products. Then you claim for the products and your transaction fee via Pharmoutcomes.

Please look out for emails from the council team with an Expression of Interest form to be completed, once received -Please return completed EOI'S promptly by the due date of the 21st February 2025.

Pharmacy First Myth Buster

Referrals

- Patients who are electronically referred should be rejected if they can't be contacted.

Wrong!

If a patient is not contactable, then you are not able to claim for a consultation.

However, the referral should be closed on the Pharmacy First IT system, noting the reason for this, rather than the referral being rejected.

- Patients who are electronically referred who have symptoms of a more serious illness/red flags should be rejected.

Wrong!

If having spoken to the patient, you suspect the patient does not have a minor illness, but instead has a more serious condition/red flags are identified, this is still classed as a minor illness consultation and should be treated as such, instead of being rejected. Appropriate action should be agreed with the patient such as the pharmacist arranging an urgent appointment with the patient's GP, GP out of hours provider or a referral to the emergency department/999.

- If a patient has been verbally signposted instead of digitally referred, I can treat this as a referral.

Wrong!

A referral within the NHS means one healthcare provider asks another healthcare provider to provide a service to a patient. As such, a referral requires a referral message to be sent from one provider to the other.