

QUITLINE SUPPLEMENT

New Zealand Country Report : Quitline Smoking Cessation Services

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Overview of Tobacco Control in New Zealand

Smoking Trends in New Zealand

1983-2013. New Zealand has made substantive progress in reducing smoking rates as a result of its comprehensive response to tobacco control. Smoking prevalence has declined in New Zealand from 33% in 1983 to 15% in 2013. While smoking rates remain higher for New Zealand's Māori and Pacific communities, these groups are also experiencing the pattern of declining smoking prevalence.

Tobacco Control-related Policy and Legislation in New Zealand

Tobacco control has become established within New Zealand Government policy from the 1960s as the health effects of tobacco became fully recognized. Control measures implemented up to the late 1980s included health warnings, advertising restrictions and tobacco tax increases.

The Smoke-free Environment Act 1990 (and subsequent regulations) provides a set of restriction of the way that tobacco products can be consumed, advertised and sold in New Zealand. The Act and its regulations: establish smoke-free workplaces and public areas; regulate the marketing, advertising, and promotion of tobacco products; cover the monitoring and regulating of the presence of harmful constituents in tobacco products and tobacco smoke; strengthen packaging and labeling requirements; and, establish limits to retail availability of tobacco products.

The Government supports a wide range of activity to support tobacco control, including: *i*) Policy and operational responses through the Ministry of Health; *ii*) Raising taxes on tobacco products on a progressive basis; *iii*) Public health 'Smokefree' promotion through the Health Promotion Agency; *iv*) Sector advocacy through the organisation Action on Smoking and Health (ASH); *v*) Smoking cessation support through the nationally-operated Quitline and a number of other face to face cessation providers; *vi*) Subsidization of smoking cessation aides such as Nicotine Replacement Therapy and selected pharmaceutical products.

Together, these policies restrict access to tobacco products, increase the cost of smoking, shift public

attitudes away from smoking as a normal activity, while supporting New Zealanders to quit smoking. Other initiatives include introducing plain packaging (current legislation in the New Zealand Parliament) and smokefree cars.

With this broad set of policies in place, in 2012 the Government took the next step to establish the goal of 'Smokefree Aotearoa by 2025'

The Quit Group

The Quit Group is a charitable trust established in 1999 and it operates as 'Quitline'. It is funded by the Ministry of Health. The Quit Group's purpose is "...to provide a collaborative national cessation support service that enables all New Zealand smokers to quit and stay quit, to drive towards less than 5% smoking prevalence by 2025."

While the service is available to all New Zealanders, Quitline prioritizes Māori and Pacific smokers and pregnant women due to the higher smoking prevalence for these groups and the importance of giving children the best start in life.

Quitline's functions include delivery of cessation support services, marketing activity to stimulate service demand, research and evaluation to support service developments, and it contributes to the wider tobacco control sector.

Quitline Cessation Services

Quitline provides a range of services to support its clients. In accordance with Ministry of Health Service Specifications, all Quitline clients go on three-month cessation programme that includes a minimum of four support contacts and with quit status measured at four weeks and three months.

Quitline has developed its 'Quitline Support Model' as its approach to supporting clients and this has been applied consistently over the phone, text and online channels. The basis of the model is 'Motivational Interviewing', the fundamental principle of which is to provide behavioral support to negate the emotional and habitual parts of the smoking addiction.

While the phone-based service has been, and remains, the core of its service, other services have been developed,

including text and online service channels. Together, these channels are viewed as an 'integrated' Quitline service where clients can select the channel or combination of channels to support their quit journey.

Quitline service provides access to subsidized nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) where clients receive an eight week supply of nicotine patches, gum or lozenges for a NZ\$5 pharmacy dispensing charge (compared to unsubsidized cost of over NZ\$200).

Quitline phone service

The Quitline telephone service uses trained Quitline Advisors to provide advice; support and access to NRT to support New Zealanders quit smoking. Clients can call into Quitline, and return calls (or texts or emails) can be scheduled. The service is free.

When a client calls Quitline, the Advisor: *i*) Registers the client. If it is their first time calling Quitline, the client is asked about their smoking history and other health-related information. *ii*) Works with the client to help them understand their addiction to nicotine and identify the reasons they smoke and ways to cope with cravings. *iii*) Works with the client to design an individualized quitting plan and sets a quit date with the client which marks the first day of their Quit Attempt. *iv*) Arranges to send the client a Quit Pack in the mail containing the 'Quit Book' and other information to assist the clients to quit. *v*) Assesses the client's eligibility to use NRT products and decides what type and strength of NRT is best for the client. Eligible clients are sent 'Quit Cards' which can be redeemed at the pharmacy to obtain the NRT products. *vi*) Arrange follow-up calls for further support and advice, and clients are free to call Quitline back at any time to receive further support. *vii*) Advise clients to use the full suite of Quitline services so they have the best chance of beating their smoking addiction.

Online services

The online service has been developed to provide an alternative, and complementary, channel to the phone service. This approach enables 24/7 support, allows access to a number of clients who may not wish to use the telephone service. From the service provider perspective, the on-line service is scalable at very little additional cost.

The website itself (www.quit.org.nz) is designed primarily to support clients to quit smoking, with desktop and mobile versions. Features of the site include:

Quit Blogs: a blog space that clients use to write about the challenges, successes and slip-ups they experience on their quitting journey, and they can comment on the blog posts of others. The series of blogs form a powerful body of support for other quitters, even if they are not bloggers themselves. There are over 100,000 blogs and comments each year and a client survey found that 88% of all Quitline clients used the blogs.

Quit Stats: this calculator shows clients how many smoke-free days they have had since quitting, how many cigarettes they have not smoked and how much money they have saved by not smoking. This becomes a 'track-record' of the quit journey.

Quit Tips: these are short pieces of advice posted on

clients' home page on the Quitline website and via emails directly to clients. The Quit Tips are tailored to match different periods in clients' quitting journeys and are aligned the advice clients receive from the phone service.

When clients register on the Quitline website they are provided with a personalized home page that brings up their details such as their Quit Plan and Quit Stats. The Quitline online environment is increasing linked to social media and Facebook is used to allow clients to share their experiences and success across their social networks.

Text service

'Txt2Quit' is a free text-based service that sends supportive text messages to a client's mobile phone to assist them in their Quit Attempt. Clients receive specific advice and support to help them during their three-month programme. Clients register for this service through the Quitline's phone or online registration processes, and they can select to receive texts in Te Reo (the language of New Zealand Māori people).

Quitline IT Infrastructure

To facilitate its integrated cessation service, Quitline utilises a number of key IT platforms: *i*) The Client Record Management (CRM) system is used to register telephone and online clients and to guide service provision to them. The client record is comprehensive and generates statistics relating to the service provided as well as scheduling follow-up contacts. *ii*) The telephony system is used to receive calls, establish call queues, record call characteristics, support workforce management and schedule outbound calls. *iii*) The Txt2Quit service uses a tool that sends the automated SMS texts to clients as driven by the CRM. *iv*) The web platform is supported by a service provider that operates the website and generates the automated content such as Quit Tip emails and facilitates the client information flow into the CRM.

With each of these components provided by external vendors, Quitline's internal IT team manages the contracts and the overall IT architecture, as well as the day-to-day operational aspects.

Staff and Training

Quitline has a range of corporate services and business support functions to enable the provision of the operational functions. All of Quitline's 65 staff members work in the Wellington office. There is a Chief Executive, two Directors and six managers.

Quitline's contact centre is managed by the Manager Contact Centre. The 30 Quitline Advisors are organised into teams of around seven, each supported by a Team Leader who is responsible for managing, mentoring, and coaching the Quit Advisors in their teams.

New Advisors undergo structured training before receiving calls on the Quitline and all Advisors receive ongoing training, including one-on-one coaching sessions once a month. Specialized training is provided as needed by internal staff and contracted trainers.

All calls to Quitline are recorded with a subset

monitored to assess the quality of the service provided for training purposes. This information is fed back to Team Leaders to support the coaching of staff to raise standards.

The web services are provided by the Group's Communications Team with support from across the organisation, such as the contact centre, IT and business support.

Outcomes for the Quitline Services

Quitline maintains a number of ongoing data series for tracking client volumes and service use, and periodically conducts evaluations to measure key variable such as cessation rates for Quitline clients.

Telephone Service Call Volumes: In the year to February 2015, Quitline handled 192,867 calls, of which 47,259 were inbound calls, 28,369 were outbound calls to support referrals to Quitline from the health sector and 117,236 were outbound support calls.

Online Service Volumes: In the year to February 2015, Quitline's online service handled 142,456 unique visitors, including 83,067 logins from registered Quitline clients.

Quit Attempts: In the year to February 2015, Quitline supported clients to make 46,435 Quit Attempts, of which 49% registered via the phone service and 51% online. Note that for Quitline, a 'Quit Attempt' is defined as a client that has registered for a three-month quit programme with Quitline.

Quit Success Rates: Quitline assesses Quit Success by two approaches: *i)* Ongoing Tracking. As reported in February 2015, the four week quit rate measured for the December 2014 cohort of clients was 32.9% (self-reported and based on receiving quit status from 71.9% of the cohort); *ii)* Evaluation. Quitline's 2012 Quit Services Evaluation established a six month quit rate of 24.2% (7-day Point Prevalence, Intention to Treat); *iii)* **Client Satisfaction:** Clients' satisfaction with the Quitline service has been assessed annually by asking clients a number of questions about their experience in using the Quitline service. The 2014 survey established an overall client satisfaction level of 94%.

Marketing Quitline Services

Quitline uses a number of marketing channels to stimulate demand for its services, including:

Television Advertising: Television advertising is placed at consistent levels for eleven months of the year to both stimulate call to action and raise brand awareness. New campaigns are established regularly to ensure freshness and to allow for specific targeting.

Online Advertising: Online advertisements are placed on high traffic websites to stimulate click-through activity to the Quitline website and to raise brand awareness.

Engagement Strategy: Quitline actively works with stakeholders and communities particularly in priority groups to foster both community support and quitting activity.

Referrals: Quitline works with health professionals, maternity service providers, workplaces, and others, to drive direct client referrals to the Quitline for cessation

support.

Print Resources: Quitline produces a range of publication material (booklets, brochures and web content) to provide health information and to stimulate smokers to make the decision to quit and to use the services available to them.

Events: Quitline uses its presence at community events and national cultural festivals to promote the Quitline services to hard-to-reach groups.

Media and Public Relations: Quitline uses a number of mechanisms to gain media coverage in order to keep awareness of Quitline and quitting at high levels across the general population.

Tobacco packaging: The Quitline number is printed on tobacco packaging along with health warning messages, and research shows that this is what prompts a large number of clients to contact Quitline.

Future Developments

Quitline has a progressive programme that aims to deliver a more effective service to more clients within its constrained funding parameters. The development pathways are to ensure that clients can utilise all services in a seamless way and that all aspects of the client experience is consistent with 'best-practice' delivery of the core Motivational Interviewing methodology. The challenge is to ensure the IT platforms are configured to support this integrated service approach.

With smoking prevalence coming down, there is the ongoing challenge to ensure that those people still smoking are attracted to use the Quitline service. The inherent difficulty in this is that these people are often in low social-economic communities with high smoking prevalence meaning that specific strategies are needed to target these groups and to ensure the service provided meets their needs. Quitline is purposefully orienting its marketing to these populations and is working to ensure its services are right for them

Research

Quitline conducts occasional evaluations and internal research and analysis to inform service development. For further information on Quitline, visit www.quit.org.nz

References

New Zealand Census 2013, Statistics New Zealand, 2013