

REACH INSIGHTS | Stop Smoking Incentive Scheme Evaluation

1 - WHAT WE EVALUATED

We evaluated an incentive scheme aimed at people in routine and manual jobs who smoke, as they are more likely to smoke and experience poorer health. The scheme offered financial rewards at key milestones: £20 for setting a quit date, £40 after four weeks smoke-free, and £60 after twelve weeks.

We assessed whether these vouchers helped participants quit and stay smoke-free, and explored factors such as habits, stress, and social support. It also examined delivery, participant experience, and whether the scheme reached its target group, and whether incentives plus support improved quitting outcomes, particularly for higher smoking populations.

2 - WHY IT MATTERS

Smoking is a major cause of poor health and early death, particularly among people in routine and manual jobs. This scheme is important because it targets those needing extra support; helping them quit can improve health, save money, and reduce pressure on services.

Findings show small financial rewards help maintain motivation, even if they are not the main reason people quit, making them a useful part of wider support. The study highlights the importance of accessible, flexible support and trusted advisors.

With improvements, the scheme could help more people quit and reduce inequalities.

3 – METHODS

We explored existing data and reviewed current research.

15 participants were interviewed twice—at the start and again after 12 weeks.

We held two focus groups - one with stop smoking advisors, and the other with managers and decision-makers.

Carried out a survey and held workplace discussions .

4 - KEY FINDINGS

The scheme helped people stay quit, especially in the first four weeks, with higher quit rates than those not on the scheme, though the difference narrowed by twelve weeks. Most participants said vouchers did not prompt them to quit but helped them stay on track by providing clear goals. Improvements in carbon monoxide levels also motivated them.

Support from stop smoking advisors was crucial, with participants valuing flexible, friendly help and access to vapes and other aids. Awareness of the scheme was low, and some faced issues using vouchers. Stress, habits, and social environments challenged quitting, while support from others improved success overall.

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5 – RECOMMENDATIONS

- The scheme should continue, particularly in the early stages. People need to hear about it sooner, using workplaces, social media, and health services.
- Eligibility rules should be clearer expanded to include more groups, such as those with illness or disability. The voucher system could offer more options, like food or gym vouchers, and be easier to use across locations.
- Ongoing support from advisors remains essential, with flexible options like phone or workplace sessions.
- Tracking outcomes beyond 12 weeks and ensuring continued funding will help the scheme grow and demonstrate long-term success.