

Smoke Free PHT FAQs

When will Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust (PHT) go smoke free?

We will be completely smoke free by 14th January 2019

Why are we going smoke free?

Smoking rates have declined in Portsmouth over the last few years but 15.2% of adults living in the city still smoke - above the average for England. Deaths rates due to smoking in Portsmouth are also significantly higher than the national average - approximately 1,000 deaths over a three-year period (from 2014-16). That equates to over 300 deaths a year - almost 1 in 5 of all deaths in Portsmouth.

Smoking costs the NHS an estimated £2billion a year but the cost to society could be as much as £13.8billion each year. It also causes almost 80,000 premature deaths every year, and contributes to 1.7million hospital admissions.

Lung cancer rates at Queen Alexandra Hospital are disproportionately high and more than two thirds of our patients are from other parts of the county. Going smoke-free will mean a much more pleasant and safe environment for everyone who uses or works in our hospital - not to mention the improvements in health it will bring.

What does going smoke free mean?

Going smoke free will mean that smoking will not be permitted anywhere on our premises includes buildings, grounds and vehicles.

Why are smoking shelters no longer available?

Having designated smoking areas including smoking shelters on our sites implies that we actively support smoking. Once all of the systems have been put in place to support staff and patients to be smoke free while on our site, we will be removing the shelters and replacing them with bicycle storage. This is likely to be near our smoke free date of 14th January 2019. We will be providing information in and around the shelters about our plans to be smoke free and how and where to access support and the proposed date for the removal of shelters. People who smoke within the smoke free boundaries will be reminded that we are now smoke free and offered support to stop smoking.

How will PHT support patients who smoke?

We know that lots of smokers want support to stop and that refraining from smoking can be very difficult. In fact, around a third of people who smoke want to quit for good. Smokers are four times more likely to stop smoking with the use of Nicotine Replacement products and NHS support.

Our staff are being trained to help smokers refrain from smoking while in our care. Patients who are admitted either as an emergency or planned admission, will be



offered nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) in the form of patches, gum or a mouth spray and will be offered a referral for ongoing support.

We also have a number of Smoke Free Ambassadors who have been trained to offer people who are smoking on our site details of our new smoke free policy and offer them advice on how to quit for good.

Don't people have a right to smoke?

Of course it is a person's right to smoke if they wish. Going smoke free does not mean that we are forcing people to stop smoking. We simply ask that they do not smoke on our site, where they could affect people in our care, their visitors and our staff. As the one of the largest employers in Portsmouth and one of the busiest acute hospitals in the UK, we have responsibility to help reduce smoking and, in turn, the serious illnesses related to it.

However, as patients will need to be smoke-free while on trust premises, some may choose to just stop smoking (either with or without support) during the period they are in hospital, while others may take the opportunity to quit smoking for good. We want staff to be ambassadors for good health and promote our smoke free policy, therefore all patients who attend our sites will be asked if they smoke. Patients who are admitted either as an emergency or planned admission, will be offered nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) in the form of patches, gum or a mouth spray and will be offered a referral for ongoing support.

Patients who insist on leaving the ward areas to smoke will need to leave the hospital site completely before smoking.

Cigarettes are how I cope with stress, what will I do now?

Nicotine withdrawal often feels the same as stress. Making sure that those who smoke are aware of how and where to access advice and support to manage symptoms of nicotine withdrawal is an important part of our work to support smokers. Using combination NRT alongside advice to support those who wish to stop smoking short term or those who would like to quit for good has been shown to be very effective.

What is the most effective way to stop smoking?

The Department of Health recommends that you are four times more likely to quit smoking if you use a combination of Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) and support from a trained stop smoking adviser. Details of where to get support to stop smoking can be found at: www.porthosp.nhs.uk/smokefree.

How can nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) help?

Nicotine is what people get addicted to when smoking. It is relatively harmless – but the chemicals added to cigarettes are the ones that cause the harm. There are around 4000 of these and they are what lead to the health issues associated with smoking including cancer, heart disease and stroke.



NRT products are designed to help smokers tackle their dependence on nicotine. Nicotine in the products (like gum, patches or mouth sprays) provides a lower dose than that in cigarettes, and they don't contain the harmful chemicals found in cigarettes.

There are a variety of NRT products and medication available to help manage cravings and nicotine withdrawal. NRT has been tested extensively and all products approximately double the chance of long term abstinence from smoking when compared to having no support. You are four times more likely to be successful in stopping smoking if you use combination NRT alongside support from a trained stop smoking adviser.

What are e-cigarettes?

E-cigarettes are battery powered devices that deliver nicotine via inhaled vapour. They do not contain tobacco, so the user is not exposed to poisonous gases that are in tobacco smoke and are reported to be up to 95% less harmful than cigarettes. E-cigarettes do not expose others to the harmful effects associated with second hand smoke. The act of using an e-cigarette is called 'vaping'.

The Trust has a positive approach to people who use e-cigarettes instead of cigarettes. As a result, vaping is allowed in the outdoor spaces of our site. It is not allowed inside any of the buildings. We also ask visitors and patients to be respectful of others and not use e-cigarettes outside our entrances or by windows.

These devices work well on their own or can be used alongside NRT and having support from a trained stop smoking adviser alongside the use of NRT and/or e-cigarettes greatly increases your chances of success in quitting.

How will this policy be enforced?

This is a public health issue and our priority is providing support to help smokers quit for good. Going smoke free does not mean that we are forcing people to stop smoking; we simply ask that they do not smoke on our site. We are approaching this policy from a place of support and encouragement to allow people to quit for good, rather than a stance of enforcement or policing.

Our staff are being trained to help smokers refrain from smoking while in our care. Patients who are admitted either as an emergency or planned admission, will be offered NRT in the form of patches, gum or a mouth spray and will be offered a referral for ongoing support.

We also have a number of Smoke Free Ambassadors who have been trained to offer people who are smoking on our site details of our new smoke free policy and offer them advice on how to quit for good.

Smoking key facts:

There are many benefits in not smoking both to the smoker, their family and loved ones and the wider community. Some of the benefits of not smoking can affect the body very quickly:

- After 20 minutes blood pressure and heart rate can return to normal



- After 8 hours nicotine and carbon monoxide levels in the blood half and oxygen levels return to normal
- After 1 day lungs start to clear and carbon monoxide levels return to normal
- After 2 days ability to smell and taste are improved
- After 3 days breathing becomes easier and energy levels improve
- After 3 – 9 months lung function improves by 10% and there is improvement with coughing, breathing and wheezing
- After 5 years risk of stroke returns to that of a non-smoker
- After 10 years risk of lung cancer returns to that of a non-smoker

