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# Soft Market Testing

**For**

**Online Stop Smoking Medication Service**

**Ref:** WNC- PH-2025-SSS Medication

# Section 1: Introduction

## General Requirements

The purpose of this document is to briefly explain to suppliers the business and technical requirements along with the expected scope of the West Northamptonshire Council’s Stop Smoking Service in order that suppliers can explain the relevance of products, services and their experience to the requirements.

**Please note:** this market testing exercise is **not** an invitation to tender or a request for formal expressions of interest. This document does not form any part of an invitation to tender. West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) is issuing this request for **information only**. Any supplier responding to WNC is doing so to support market research only and to help make any potential procurement process more focused and efficient.

## Confidentiality and Freedom of Information (FOI)

Please note: all information included in this Soft Market Test is confidential and only for the recipients’ knowledge. No information is for disclosure from either this document or discussions by any responders to any other party without prior written authorisation.

Responses are treated with confidentially by WNC. However, please be aware that we are subject to the disclosure requirements of the FOI Act and that potentially any information we hold is liable to disclosure under that Act. For this reason, we strongly advise that any information you consider to be confidential is to be labelled as such. If a request is subsequently made for disclosure under FOI, the request will be dealt with in accordance with the legislation.

## Background/Current Situation

The Council is seeking to appoint an appropriately trained online pharmacy or an online GP service, for the consultation, initial follow up assessments and supply of prescribed medications for smoking cessation, Cytisine and Varenicline.

The proposed contract length is two years with possible 1 year extension.

The proposed service specification is attached. A summary of the service required is:

Referrals would be made from the Council's stop smoking service direct to the supplier for them to assess the suitability of the patient for the stop smoking medication, the issue of the medication, and the necessary follow up with the patient about their use of the medication. Overall clinical responsibility for the supply of Varenicline and Cytisine would lie with the clinician at the time of supply including the final choice of formulation.

The management of the supply of varenicline requiring a series of consultations/ follow ups, providing a supply every 2 weeks for 12 weeks (with an option to go beyond this if needed). There would be on-going support by the Council’s Stop Smoking Advisors during this period.

If this is through a pharmacy option, supply will be via a PGD.

The service provider shall use the Council stop smoking system to record the engagement and prescribing activity they have with a patient.

The medication charges will be in line with the British National Formulary (BNF) as agreed with the Council.

The service supplier will be expected to provide quarterly reports on progress along with a set of key performance indicators to the Council.

The Council is seeking a cost for the provision of patient engagement, the supply of the medication, posting and packaging and appropriate follow up with the patients prescribed the stop smoking medication.

The Council’s stop smoking service dealt with 2,932 referrals in the financial year 2023/24, the Council is envisaging 400 referrals for the medication and has a waiting list of 84people.

The Council would issue a request for quotation with the following dates from the advert date,

Two weeks for clarification questions

Four weeks to complete and return the quote

With one month to mobilise the service from the contract award.

The Council is seeking the markets views on the following questions,

Is the service requested clear from the service specification? Should any other information be added?

Is the length of the proposed contract suitable?

Are the proposed quotation timescales appropriate?

Is your organisation interested in supplying the service?

If your organisation is not interested in providing the service, why is that and what could be done to make the contract more attractive?

In addition, the Council is seeking the markets view on the viability of online services being contracted to supply Nicotine Replacement Therapy direct to patients via post, identified and ordered by the Council’s Stop Smoking Team who would remain responsible for the behavioural support to patients.

* Is such a service viable?
* Is such a service of interest?

## Soft Market Test Timetable

Please read this document and if you feel that your organisation can contribute to this exercise, please complete the questionnaire at the end of this document and return, via email to linda.oconnell@westnorthants.gov.uk **by 26 March 2025.**

Potential responders will not be prejudiced either way by WNC, in any future procurement processes by either responding or not responding to this soft market test exercise.

WNC may contact organisations who have responded to this document to ask for further information at their own discretion.

# Section 2: Identification of Requirement

Questions:

The Council is seeking the markets views on the following questions:

Is the service requested clear from the service specification? Should any other information be added?

Is the length of the proposed contract suitable?

Are the proposed quotation timescales appropriate?

Is your organisation interested in supplying the service?

If your organisation is not interested in providing the service, why is that and what could be done to make the contract more attractive?

In addition, the Council is seeking the markets view on the viability of online services being contracted to supply Nicotine Replacement Therapy direct to patients via post, identified and ordered by the Council’s Stop Smoking Team who would remain responsible for the behavioural support to patients.

* Is such a service viable?
* Is such a service of interest?

# Section 3: Supporting information

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See the online stop smoking service medication service specification attached to the notice.