

A new model for prescribing varenicline

Dear Stop Smoking Advisor

You will be aware of the stop smoking drug varenicline that goes under the brand name Champix[®] and that it is another support option for your Stop Smoking clients, available as an alternative to nicotine replacement therapy.

Why is this needed?

Because varenicline (Champix[®]) is a Prescription Only Medicine you are not been able to issue it either directly or by voucher to the client but have had to refer them to their GP. Some advisors have experienced problems with such referral, including

- Delay of up to two weeks for the client to access the drug
- Reluctance by some GPs to prescribe this drug
- Loss of the client to your Stop Smoking Programme, and so loss of service fee

What has changed?

To overcome these problems, we have introduced a new model for prescribing varenicline. You can now refer the client to a team of pharmacist independent prescribers (PIPs) who will carry out a telephone consultation, and then issue prescriptions for varenicline as appropriate. This system has been successfully trialled since December 2011 and the advantages have been

- Client consultation and receipt of prescription within a couple of days
- Prescribing by clinicians with specific training and experience of the drug
- Feedback between prescriber and yourself as advisor
- Client continues to receive your support
- You continue to receive all usual fees
- Increased use of varenicline and increased quit rates
- Audit of the efficacy and safety of varenicline

When can I start?

This service is now live and available to all Stop Smoking Advisors contracted by Livewell Bristol.

What do I do?

Included with this letter are the referral forms, an explanatory flowchart, and client information sheet. Remember that clients should still be offered the whole range of support options, and varenicline is not intended to replace NRT. However, if you and the client decide this is the preferred option then complete the on-line referral at www.pipscrip.co.uk using the password "livewell" (all lower case, without the quotation marks)

What happens next?

- The client will be contacted within two working days.
- If varenicline is not appropriate the prescriber will refer the client back to you.
- Otherwise a prescription will be posted to the client or pharmacy of their choice.
- The prescriber will contact the client a week after starting the drug to review treatment.
- Three more prescriptions for the full 12 week course posted to client's pharmacy.
- Client must continue to keep appointments with you, their Stop Smoking Advisor.

What about our Stop Smoking Advisor fees?

Remember to still complete claims via Pharmoutcomes normal way. The only thing you will not be doing is issuing NRT.

Where can I go for more information?

To contact the prescribing team at any time – either with queries about procedure, or concerns about an individual client – you can email pip.script@nhs.net or send a message via www.pipscrip.co.uk

If you have clinical questions you can contact the prescribing lead Chris Howland-Harris either by email chris.howland-harris@nhs.net or on 07761 664824.

For any other queries you can contact the Livewell Bristol team on 0117 922 2921