

## Information sheet 24 – Smoke free environment

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Please consider the needs of our staff when they visit your home and provide them with a smoke free environment.

Second hand smoke, or passive smoking as it is sometimes called, harms people's health. It can cause heart disease, stroke and lung cancer. Being exposed to second-hand smoke, even for a short time, can cause eye irritation, headache, cough, sore throat, dizziness and nausea. Some people have allergic reactions to smoke, and particularly need to be protected.

As an employer we are required by law to ensure that employees and others are not put at risk. We therefore ask you to do everything you can to provide a smoke free environment when our staff, such as Care Managers, Home Care Workers, Occupational Therapists and District Nurses, visit you at home.

In order to monitor this we may need to record in our documentation if you or anyone in your home smokes.

### ■ How to protect staff from exposure to second-hand smoke

- Do not smoke inside the house for at least 1 hour before they arrive
- If you or someone in your household has been smoking, open windows and doors to fully ventilate the parts of the house where our staff will be working or, if you are not able to, allow your visitor to do so when they arrive
- Try to keep one room smoke free at all times.

### ■ During the visit

- Do not smoke or let anyone else in the house smoke in the rooms where our member of staff is working
- Wherever possible, when the member of staff is in the house, ask other smokers to go outside to smoke.

### ■ Our policy

We ask our staff to assess whether any environment they go into is safe for them to work. If a smoke free environment cannot be provided, a risk assessment will be needed to reduce risk to a level that is reasonably practicable.

If staff decide that your home is unsafe for them, we will support that decision. If that happens, we will discuss with you and people involved with your care how to provide you with the service you need. Be assured that services will only be withdrawn as an absolute last resort.

Our aim in Northumberland is also to support people who wish to stop smoking and expert help is available. For further information on local NHS Stop Smoking services call or call the National Helpline on 0800 169 0169 or speak to your Care Manager, GP or Community Nurse.