

# Using 'mystery shopping' to inform service redesign in the NHS

## Background

- Sutton and Merton PCT need to deliver 1,220 '4 week quitters' in 2008
- The stop smoking service - GPs, pharmacists, advisors - offers a free 6 week programme
- 1,300 smokers used the service annually
  - 48% stop smoking
  - 25-30% still not smoking one year later
- Smokers are 4 times more likely to quit when using NHS stop smoking services
- DFI appointed to provide social marketing support and build capacity within the PCT

## The 'mystery shopping' approach

- Secondary research identified a need to reach more smokers from routine and manual groups
- 'Mystery shopping' approach recommended to inform strategy
- Smokers from the target group recruited to:
  - Try to quit using the service
  - Keep a diary
  - Participate in a focus group before the quit attempt
  - Participate in a focus group after the quit attempt

## Findings (1)

- Lack of awareness of the service and the range of support provided

*“I think people need to be made more aware - there is a lot more around than I think any of us know about”*

- Once inside the service, participants were positive and impressed by the range of support available

*“..... there is so much help out there that you’re not really aware of and it wasn’t until I came to this...”*

## Findings (2)

- Many who rang the telephone line expected to speak to someone immediately and were disappointed when they got through to an answerphone

*“They said you could leave your number but  
I’m not very prone to leaving numbers”*

*“ If this is a hotline, I want someone to be there.  
[I want it] to be manned when it says it will!”*

- Many people thought the promotional materials lacked impact and should make it clearer that the services are free

## Findings (3)

- Participants wanted a flexible service that meets their needs and “comes to them”. They want a choice of appointments – dates, times, locations - and they want some services outside of working hours.

*“If you’re working nine till five, five days a week,  
I mean, you haven’t got a lot of choice”*

- Some participants were disappointed with the service received from community pharmacists

## Recommendations (1)

- Do more to promote the service
  - Make sure people know what services are available and how effective they are
  - Highlight that services are free
  - Promote in non-health settings
  - Increase impact of promotional materials
- Make it easy for people to access services and welcome them in
  - If immediate appointments can't be made, direct them to the website or send materials in the post
  - Provide some services outside of working hours
  - Take the service to the people

## Recommendations (2)

- Improve access via the telephone line
  - Whenever possible, answer calls in person
  - Ensure the answerphone message is as helpful and welcoming as possible
- Ensure that services live up to what is being advertised
  - Make sure that advertised services are manned at least from 9-5
  - Ensure that participating pharmacists set aside time and space for quitters. Agree a code of conduct so that they know what is expected of them.

## Action taken by the PCT (1)

- Set-up a social marketing project board to develop strategy and review progress
- Activity to build awareness and reputation of the service
- Review of communication strategy and materials
- Consistent use of Smokefree branding
- New answerphone message

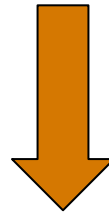
## Action taken by the PCT (2)

- Introduction of SMS texting
- Strengthening of promotional roadshows
- Sourcing new venues and workplaces for outreach services
- Working with individual pharmacies to ensure they meet contract specifications

## Conclusions

'Mystery shopping" approach:

- Greater understanding of target audience
- In-depth feedback on the service
- Changes required to meet their needs



Satisfied customers!