

# Exploring the uptake and use of electronic cigarettes provided to smokers accessing homeless centres: a four-centre cluster feasibility trial

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## Plain English summary

Use of electronic cigarettes in homeless centres

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## Plain English summary

Smoking rates are exceptionally high among adults experiencing homelessness. Supplying a free electronic cigarette starter kit at homeless centres may be one way to help smokers quit. This was a small study that explored whether or not smokers visiting homeless centres would be willing to take part and whether or not they would return to complete questionnaires 6 months later. We also wanted to find out what people thought worked or did not work well for them and whether or not we could collect information needed to assess cost-effectiveness and success in a larger trial.

We recruited 80 smokers from four homeless centres: 48 people received an electronic cigarette and 32 people took part in usual care. Usual care is defined as signposting to the local stop smoking service, because this is what is most often available at these centres.

Sixty people (75%) returned to provide follow-up information after 4 weeks, 50 people (63%) came back at 12 weeks and 47 people (59%) came back at 24 weeks. Interviews with participants and staff at the centres showed that the study was useful and worthwhile. Although nobody who came back at 24 weeks managed to stop smoking in the usual care-arm, in the electronic cigarette arm 8.57% (3/35) of those who came back at 24 weeks had quit smoking. We were able to collect the information we needed to assess cost-effectiveness of providing an electronic cigarette. This was estimated at £114.43 per person. We could not estimate costs of usual care. We found that it would be worthwhile running a larger study, as enough people were interested in taking part, but that such a study would need to include more people and more centres and explore ways in which we could make sure that more people come back at 6 months.

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