**Smokefree Pledge**

**“NOPE” (Not One Puff Ever) Agreement**

Well done on setting a quit date to stop smoking for good!

It’s important that you commit to “not having a puff at all” when you reach your quit date, below we will explain the reasons.

* Abrupt quitting has the best chance of success, trying to cut down is not effective as you will smoke the fewer cigarettes more intently, resulting in the same harms. Each cigarette becomes that little bit more important.
* The only real way of stopping smoking is to stop abruptly. This allows your body to begin to adjust to not smoking and you to adjust to life without cigarettes.
* The only exception to this is if you use a nicotine product (such as the patch, gum, or lozenge) in the week prior to quitting and are able to make a genuine reduction in how many cigarettes you smoke. However, if you do this you will probably need to increase your use of nicotine products on your Quit Date to replace the cigarettes you won’t be smoking.
* Research indicates that between 75% and 95% of quitters who have a single cigarette go back to regular smoking. One study found that 94% of ‘lapsers’ had a second cigarette and that half of these did so within 24 hours. Even a single puff on a cigarette reminds your mind and body what they are missing by not smoking. Withdrawal symptoms are not going to ease if you smoke, however little, after your Quit Date.
* The only way that the withdrawal symptoms will start to get better, and that you will begin to learn how to live without cigarettes, is for you to not smoke at all after your quit date – **not one puff ever**. In the first few days, you will probably find that each day without a cigarette feels like a week. Often, after only a few days people feel like they have been stopped for ages and deserve a ‘treat’. Just one cigarette is incredibly risky and usually leads back to regular smoking so plan another treat that you can give yourself.
* Set yourself small targets. Set yourself the target of getting through the morning, afternoon, or evening without smoking, and be determined not to smoke, whatever life throws at you. Aim to get through your quit day without smoking. Once you have done that aim to double the length of your quit attempt by going a second day without smoking. Take it step-by-step, day-by-day (even hour-by-hour if necessary) so that you can get through the next week.
* A more in-depth explanation of the “not a puff rule” can be found at the end of the document.

**The pledge**

I (name) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_agree to the below.

* Attending appointments regularly (weekly then fortnightly) and take a carbon monoxide (CO) reading if a face-to-face appointment. If you are unable to attend, you will let us know by phone email or text
* Setting a quit date (within 2 weeks of receiving my products), and after this date, agree to not have a single puff of tobacco
* Using the products instead of smoking
* If I do smoke after my quit date, I will discuss with my advisor what made me pick up a cigarette and what I can do next time I ‘feel like one’ and I will be given another opportunity.
* If I continue to smoke tobacco, I understand that my advisor will not be able to support me, but that I can return when I am ready to commit to another quit attempt
* I Understand that quit smoking medications are only provided for a limited time, (usually 12 weeks) and I may need to purchase further supplies myself, if still needed

Client: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Advisor: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**A more in-depth explanation of the “not a puff rule”**

*At the most basic level, nicotine from tobacco attaches to receptors in the brain, leading to the release of the reward hormones. This in turn quickly leads to changes in the brain which becomes desensitised and results in the smoker experiencing unpleasant withdrawal symptoms during periods of abstinence. However, these changes are reversed following smoking cessation and most withdrawal symptoms disappear within a month.*

*Smoking leads to the experience of pleasant feelings or reward (positive reinforcement) and the relief of aversive withdrawal symptoms (negative reinforcement). Abstinence is punished due to the occurrence of withdrawal symptoms and over time these processes result in dependence. To overcome this dependence, this cycle of reinforcement and punishment needs to be broken, we need to unlearn the behaviour and to allow brain to revert to its initial state.*

*In addition, smoking has all the trademarks of a habit; it is frequently performed, we do it without thinking, and certain places, times and people can be cues to smoke. Habits are particularly hard to break when there are all the extra cues, as is the case with smoking. Consistent with this, research suggests that habitual behaviours can lead to unintentional ‘slips’ in the presence of cues such as other people smoking.*

*Any continued smoking, even a single puff, would risk undermining a quit attempt according to many psychological theories. For instance, when a particular self-imposed rule (e.g., not smoking) is broken once (e.g., having a cigarette), people tend to abandon their behavioural aims (i.e. the quit attempt) rather than carry on trying to stick to the rule. This effect is thought to be the result of the negative emotions, such as guilt and reduced self-efficacy (the belief that somebody has in their ability to carry out a given behaviour), that the person experienced on breaking their rule. These changes have been shown to occur in smokers who lapse and there is some evidence that this may be associated with progression to relapse.*

*According to Psychological theory, self-efficacy is important for successful behaviour change, and variation in self-belief has been shown to predict relapse. One way to increase your self-belief is to experience being successful in your behaviour. It follows that the longer you can go without a cigarette, the more you will believe in your ability to continue to make that behaviour change. The opposite is also true, where self-belief has been found to fall following a lapse.*

*Research shows that stopping smoking completely, with not a single puff on a cigarette, leads to successful quitting. Having a slip or lapse also predicts consequences for self-control. Self-control works like a muscle drawing from limited resources. Since smoking cessation involves hard work, quitting completely is likely uses these resources in the short-term but through repeated exercise (continued quitting), these resources will be restored, and self-control will increase. For this reason, having even a single puff on a cigarette is likely to weaken this ‘muscle’ and erode self-control, eventually increasing the risk of relapse.*

*A sense of self or identity is an important source of motivation. This identity leads to the adoption of rules (e.g., I must not smoke) and the stronger the identity the more likely it is that the individual will overcome competing wants and needs (i.e. going back to smoking). Therefore, a clear ‘not-a-puff’ rule enables the formation of a deep non-smoker identity that should be more effective in preventing relapse than a weaker rule such as ‘I’m trying not to smoke’. This rationale is supported by research showing that a substantial proportion of quit attempts fail because of the smoker’s perception that abstinence can be briefly suspended and resumed again.*

*The best available evidence suggests that the adoption of a strict ‘not-a-puff’ rule following a set quit date is likely to be more successful than cutting down more gradually. Theories agree that breaking this rule by having even a puff on a cigarette increases the risk of going back to old behavioural patterns, maintaining physical dependence and nicotine-dependent changes in the brain as well as undermining new identity beliefs as a non-smoker. So, choose the “Not a puff rule” to give yourself the best chance to succeed.*