



Making Every Contact Count: Briefing for the Voluntary and Community Sector

The Purpose of this briefing is to:

- Inform voluntary and community organisations about Making Every Contact Count
- Identify issues for voluntary and community organisations in relation to making every contact count

Making Every Contact Count (MECC) is about empowering everyone that works in health and social care to inform and enable others to make positive changes to their lifestyles. By delivering consistent and simple healthy lifestyle advice combined with appropriate signposting to lifestyle services all staff can deliver MECC and embed the delivery of healthy lifestyle advice into the day-to-day activity of the health and social care sector. MECC builds on the separate strands of health promotion and advice work already in place to tackle unhealthy lifestyles by bringing them together under a single programme in which everyone can play their part.

To see MECC in action please watch the short video located at <http://www.midlandsandeast.nhs.uk/OurAmbitions/Everycontactcounts.aspx>

The lifestyle behaviours we are seeking to promote are:

- Stopping smoking
- Drinking alcohol within the recommended daily limits
- Eating a healthy diet (5 a day)
- Maintaining a healthy weight
- Taking regular physical activity

MECC is built on a broad evidence base that brief advice and signposting to services, when delivered on a large enough scale, can deliver behaviour change at a population level leading to improvements in the health of individuals and reductions in the numbers preventable diseases in communities. MECC can also contribute to improving employee health and wellbeing.

We know that around two thirds of smokers say that they would like to quit smoking and that if they use a NHS stop smoking service they are four times more likely to quit than if they try on their own. For every one hundred people referred to a local stop smoking service around 25 will successfully quit smoking. The impact of stopping smoking is seen quickly at an individual level and a population level. This was demonstrated by the reduction in hospital admissions for heart attacks seen 12- 18 months after smoking in public spaces bans were introduced.

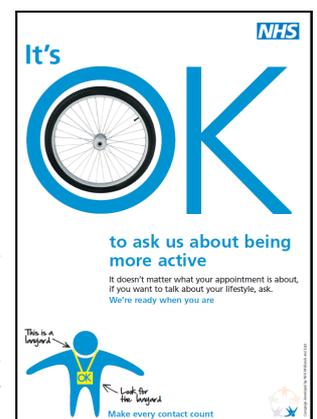
Research studies have shown that brief advice on reducing alcohol consumption is effective in a range of settings. For every eight people given brief advice one will go on to reduce their alcohol consumption by one risk level, e.g. from high risk to increasing risk. The overall impact is to reduce alcohol related deaths and hospital admissions.

What are we trying to achieve through Making Every Contact Count?

The objectives of 'Making Every Contact Count' are:

- To systematically utilise the millions of contacts that people have with providers of health and social care to deliver brief advice on healthy lifestyle behaviours and to signpost people to appropriate behaviour change services
- To increase the prevalence of healthy lifestyle behaviours amongst staff and the populations they serve
- To reduce the inequalities in health outcomes associated with lifestyle behaviours

To help achieve these objectives NHS Midlands and East has produced a range of materials for NHS organisations to support them in preparing and implementing MECC and in communicating MECC to staff and patients. These materials along with case studies of MECC in practice are available at <http://nhs.uk/makingeverycontactcount> and can be adapted for use by non-NHS organisations.





Making Every Contact Count

How does Making Every Count fit into the new Health System?

Making Every Contact Count is fundamental to providing people with the information, encouragement and support they need to make healthy lifestyle choices.

The NHS Future Forum's January 2012 report on public health set out a clear case for changing the culture of the NHS so that healthcare professionals take every opportunity to talk to patients and carers about how to improve their health – making "every contact count". The Carers Strategy also prioritises the early identification of carers and helping them to stay healthy.

The government's mandate to the NHS Commissioning Board (NHSCB) states that, **'We want people to live longer, and with a better quality of life. Too many people die too soon from illnesses that can be prevented or treated'**. The mandate goes on to say that National and local government, the NHS Commissioning Board, Public Health England and others will all need to take action, with each organisation having the same goal. In focusing the NHS on preventing illness, with

staff using every contact they have with people as an opportunity to help people stay in good health – by not smoking, eating healthily, drinking less alcohol, and exercising more.

Making Every Contact Count is a tool that organisations can use to take this collective action to help people to live longer and healthier lives.



What are the implications of Making Every Contact Count for the voluntary and community sectors

As providers of health and care services voluntary and community sector organisations have the contacts with the public that provide the opportunities to make every contact count. As such, organisations may wish to implement MECC as a way of enhancing the service they offer to local communities and to their staff and volunteers. Organisations may find that as MECC is implemented across the NHS and local government demand for their services increases, especially if they are providers of services that are signposted to. In some cases, organisations will find that commissioners of their services will incorporate MECC into their contracts. Consequently, voluntary and community sector organisations may wish to train staff to deliver MECC.

As employers voluntary and community sector organisations may wish to use MECC as a way of promoting employee health and wellbeing.



A range of training materials are available at <http://nhs.uk/makingeverycontactcount> and an e-learning package 'Every Contact Counts' is available at <http://www.education.nhslocal.nhs.uk/> and www.midlandsandeast.nhs.uk/ourambitions/everycontactcounts.aspx

Further information and contacts

For more information on MECC please visit the following web pages:

<http://nhs.uk/makingeverycontactcount> or

<http://www.midlandsandeast.nhs.uk/OurAmbitions/Everycontactcounts.aspx>

If you have any questions relating to MECC please send them to mecc@nhs.net

General Enquiries: mecc@nhs.net