

Factsheet 46

Updated on 28 May 2021

Respiratory Today and in the Future

This factsheet has been designed for use by healthcare professionals only.

Whilst the pandemic has enabled us to accelerate our thinking of delivering healthcare care, it has also caused disruption to a wide range of healthcare services such as spirometry. This factsheet looks to provide an outline of how the NHS will look to support people with respiratory diseases.

The NHS Long Term plan clearly identified respiratory disease as a clinical priority and outlined how investment will be targeted to improve treatment and support for those with respiratory diseases.

So, what do we know today?

As outlined by the NHS:¹

- Respiratory disease affects one in five people
- It is the third biggest cause of death in England (after cancer and cardiovascular disease). Lung cancer, pneumonia and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) are the biggest causes of death.
- Hospital admissions for lung disease have risen over the past seven years at three times the rate of all admissions generally.
- Respiratory diseases are a major factor in the contribution of winter pressures faced by the NHS. Many respiratory admissions are non-elective and these double in number during the winter season.
- The annual economic burden of asthma and COPD on the NHS in the UK is estimated as £3 billion and £1.9 billion, respectively. In total, all lung conditions (including lung cancer) directly cost the NHS in the UK £11 billion annually.
- Incidence and mortality rates from respiratory disease are higher in disadvantaged groups and areas of social deprivation. This gap is widening and leading to worse health outcomes. The most deprived communities have a higher incidence of smoking rates, exposure to higher levels of air pollution, poor housing conditions and exposure to occupational hazards. Further details on the disparities in the risk and outcomes of COVID-19 can be seen in [Factsheet 10](#).

NHS future plans on respiratory disease treatment

The NHS outlined a new programme which set out to improve the treatment and support people with respiratory diseases and deliver the outcomes highlighted in the NHS plans. This programme aims to:

- Enable the early and accurate diagnosis of respiratory diseases, by supporting the training of staff to deliver tests such as spirometry. The ARTP and PCRS have recently issued a guidance around how to aid the restoration of spirometry in primary care. Further details can be seen in [Factsheet 45](#)
- Expand pulmonary rehabilitation services across the country.



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- Improve appropriate prescribing of medicines and the way they are reviewed.
- Support patients to use their inhalers properly. Please see our [previous factsheets](#) on how you can support patients with using their inhaler correctly.
- Design and develop tools and programmes that will support patients to manage their condition themselves and receive personalised care.
- Improve the treatment and care of people who present with community-acquired pneumonia.
- A new Commissioning for Quality and Innovation (CQUIN) indicator for Community Acquired Pneumonia (CAP) has been introduced from April 2020.
- The NHS are working with The Taskforce for Lung Health which aims to prevent more people from developing lung disease as well as transforming the care of people living with lung disease.

At Education for Health, we aim to support healthcare professionals by building their knowledge and know-how to deliver positive outcomes for people with respiratory diseases. Please visit our [website](#) to see how our courses can support you do this.

References:

¹ NHS England, (2021), Respiratory Disease, Available from:
<https://www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/clinical-policy/respiratory-disease/>