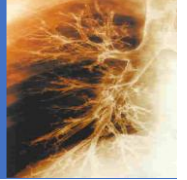




Cheshire & Merseyside Respiratory Clinical Network Latest News Autumn 2025



Introduction & welcome from our Clinical Lead



Welcome to the latest update from the Cheshire & Merseyside Respiratory Network. Over recent months, we've seen fantastic progress across a number of initiatives aimed at improving respiratory health and care for our population. Thanks to the dedication and collaboration of colleagues across the system, important work is moving forward at pace, and we're already starting to see the benefits of these efforts.

This newsletter highlights some of the key developments and initiatives currently underway, showcasing the great work being delivered both locally and regionally. From strengthening prevention and early diagnosis, to enhancing pathways of care and supporting national priorities, the Network continues to play a vital role in driving improvements for patients and supporting our clinical and system leaders.

We'd like to thank everyone involved for their commitment and contribution—your efforts are making a real difference.

Spotlight

Asthma Guidance Launch: From Study Day to Pathway

In June 2025, the Clinical Network brought together over 80 clinicians from across Cheshire & Merseyside for a study day in Liverpool. The event was buzzing with discussion, with much of the focus on the latest BTS/NICE/SIGN guidance as we prepared to finalise our local C&M Asthma guidance.

Dr Hassan Burham (Lead Consultant, Severe Asthma Unit, Liverpool) and Mrs Carla Shacklady (Lead Pharmacist, Halton Place) outlined the rationale for the AIR/MART step-one approach, following the extensive consultation process for the C&M guidance.



We're excited to share that last month the local C&M Asthma guidance was officially launched! You can view it here: [Asthma in persons aged 12 years and over](#). This guidance supports our newly developed [C&M Asthma pathway](#), designed to standardise diagnosis and management, reduce unwarranted variation, and ensure timely referral to secondary care when needed.



News and Updates

Back with Us and Moving Forward – Welcome Back Sarah!



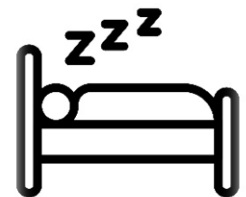
We are thrilled to welcome back Sarah Sibley after her period of extended leave. Not only is Sarah returning to her role within the Network, but she has also embarked on an exciting new chapter as Consultant at Mid Cheshire Hospitals Trust, beginning in October after an incredible 13 years of dedicated service at Liverpool Heart and Chest Hospital.

We are delighted for Sarah as she takes on this new role and look forward to benefitting once again from her expertise, passion, and commitment to respiratory care across the Clinical Network and ICB.

Rest Assured: The Future of Sleep Care in C&M

Cheshire and Merseyside Optimal Sleep Pathway

Cheshire and Merseyside are set to roll out an ICB-endorsed Optimal Sleep Pathway in the coming months. The Clinical Respiratory Network has led and facilitated its development, with expert clinical guidance from Clinical Sleep Lead Sonya Craig and Clinical Service Manager Gavin Phillips.



The pathway has been developed collaboratively with local teams to ensure it aligns with the latest NICE guidance on Sleep Apnoea and Home Sleep Testing. It offers a harmonised, end-to-end diagnostic and treatment approach, promoting consistent care and better outcomes for patients across the region.

The pathway will be implemented across all Provider Trusts shortly. You can view the pathway [here](#).

For further details, please contact Gavin Phillips gavin.phillips@liverpoolft.nhs.uk



Asthma Care: A Clearer Path Forward



NICE Quality Standard Update – Asthma guidelines for age 12+

New guidelines were launched in November 2024, in collaboration with NICE, BTS and SIGN which covers diagnosing, monitoring, and managing asthma in adults, young people and children. It aims to improve the accuracy of diagnosis, help people to control their asthma and reduce the risk of asthma attacks.

*It **does not** cover managing severe asthma or acute asthma attacks.*

There is a fundamental shift in the diagnosis of asthma, with the recommendation of using FeNO or blood eosinophils in people with symptoms suggestive of asthma if there is no timely access to spirometry. The guidelines now fall more in-line with GINA, the global asthma guideline, with a shift away from using SABA in the management of asthma. For more information on the new guidelines visit the following links:

www.nice.org.uk/guidance/NG245

www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng244

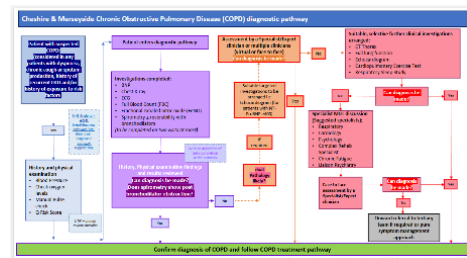
COPD Care: Breathing New Life into Practice

A new Diagnostic COPD pathway for C&M

A newly developed COPD diagnostic pathway has now been endorsed by the ICB. An implementation group will soon develop plans to roll out the pathway across Cheshire & Merseyside.

Feedback from healthcare professionals across the region highlights that diagnosing COPD can often be challenging, with symptoms sometimes overlapping with other long-term respiratory conditions. The new pathway aims to provide clearer, practical guidance to support accurate diagnosis.

Our new pathway aims to provide clearer, more practical guidance to support accurate diagnosis. In addition, a new APG medicines pathway will be introduced shortly, offering clinicians further guidance on optimal COPD management.





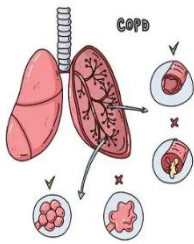
Resources included in the pathway.

1/. What contributes a Good Review?

As part of the COPD pathway, we've highlighted what makes up a good COPD review. We've also shared some quick tips to keep in mind when reviewing patients in a busy surgery. To make things easier, the full guidance will include a handy link for you to access.



2/. Exacerbations in COPD:



The COPD pathway also includes a dedicated link with guidance on how to carry out a post-exacerbation review, along with some handy reminders:

- ❖ Not every exacerbation requires both oral steroids and antibiotics
- ❖ Send a sputum sample to check if antibiotics are needed
- ❖ Follow up patients after an exacerbation — **don't wait** until their annual review

With the right approach, **we can reduce exacerbations in COPD.**

The importance of Rescue Packs to manage exacerbations

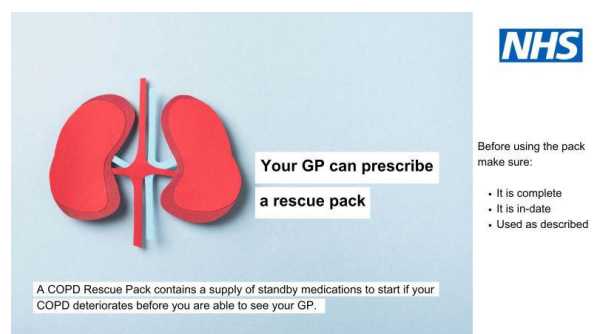
Rescue packs (pre agreed supply of medicines) are used for certain patients with chronic respiratory conditions (most commonly COPD) to help them self-manage flare-ups (exacerbations) quickly and safely.

It is not for everyday use, but for when a patient's symptoms suddenly get worse — for example, increased breathlessness, a change in sputum colour, or rising sputum volume.

A Few Reminders

1. **Always** include a personalised management plan
2. Send a **sputum sample** to check if antibiotics are needed — and ensure the right one is prescribed
3. **Remember:** not every exacerbation requires both oral steroids and antibiotics together
4. **Follow up** patients after an exacerbation, especially if symptoms persist after the initial course

Rescue packs are a valuable self-management tool for people with COPD and some other respiratory conditions — but only when backed up by **clear education, a personalised plan, and clinical follow-up.**





Stronger Lungs, Smarter Care – Defining the Respiratory Specialist

In June 2025, we asked colleagues across Cheshire & Merseyside what they felt truly defined a ‘respiratory specialist in primary care’. The feedback has shaped this practical one-page “aide-memoire” to help support your everyday practice.

So, what makes a specialist?

According to respondents:

“A qualified healthcare professional – such as a GP or nurse – who has completed higher-level respiratory training (e.g., Asthma/COPD diploma, degree or master’s level). Having prescribing rights was also considered invaluable in supporting patient reviews.”

Key Takeaways for Practice

The poll revealed a strong wish for local respiratory services, ideally a multidisciplinary team (MDT) led by a trained GP or nurse, to provide expert advice before patients are referred on to secondary care. Where this isn’t available, consider the following practical steps:

Identify a Respiratory Lead: With their agreement, nominate a dedicated GP, nurse, pharmacist, or physiotherapist to champion respiratory care within your practice.

Invest in Training & Time: Ensure your lead has access to further education and protected time to build confidence in the role.

Create Space for Collaboration: Establish a regular forum – such as a weekly respiratory MDT – to review complex cases, reducing unnecessary referrals.

Share Learning: Feedback successes and challenges across the team to grow collective experience and confidence.

Encourage External Networking: Support your respiratory lead to attend specialist events (e.g., PCRS) to pick up practical insights and innovations from other practices.

Use the Latest Pathways: Make full use of the new C&M Asthma and COPD pathways for evidence-based diagnosis, management, and patient care.

Adopt Clinical Tools: Consider investing in FeNO testing and structured review clinics to improve outcomes and reduce inappropriate prescribing.

Personalised Care Plans: Have approved asthma/COPD management and rescue plans in place, tailored to patient needs, to reduce daily GP reviews and enhance patient self-management.

Less Referral, More Confidence – Building Respiratory Skills in Practice

Building respiratory expertise within primary care not only supports safer patient care but can also reduce referrals, improve outcomes, and save valuable time and resources.



Partnership Working

Beyond: Children and Young People's Transformation Programme

Children and Young People's
Transformation Programme

New Campaign: Too much blue, get a review

'Too Much Blue - Get a Review' is a new campaign focused on child asthma, developed by Beyond, the NHS Cheshire and Merseyside children and young people's transformation programme. It will run throughout autumn 2025 and aims to encourage better self-management of asthma through a mix of education, practical tools, and community engagement.

For more information on this innovative campaign, visit the following link:

[Asthma - NHS Cheshire and Merseyside](https://cheshireandmerseyside.nhs.uk/TooMuchBlue)



Asthma + Lung UK Update

Respiratory Champions Making an Impact in C&M

Asthma and Lung UK have been running a pilot project to strengthen respiratory care by funding six 'Respiratory Champions' across different Integrated Care Systems. Sam has been leading the way as the Respiratory Champion for Cheshire & Merseyside.



Hayes

Over the past year, Sam has played a key role in advancing regional respiratory initiatives, including:

- Supporting the Cheshire & Merseyside COPD Pathway
- Contributing to COMET and related quality improvement work
- Coordinating and delivering educational events for clinicians
- Raising the profile of respiratory care and pulmonary rehabilitation across primary and secondary care

The project has now been extended into its second year, providing continued leadership and expertise to enhance respiratory services and patient outcomes across the region.



For more information about the project, visit:

www.asthmaandlung.org.uk/healthcare-professionals/resp-champions

To get in touch with Sam directly and to find out more, scan the QR code:



AstraZeneca Sentinel+ Project



An exciting package of support is now available for practices and PCNs across Cheshire and Merseyside. This ICB endorsed scheme will provide enhanced support for practices to review patients with a diagnosis of asthma. The service known as Sentinel Plus includes:

- The Asthma Medicines Optimisation review Service via Interface Clinical Services
- Non-promotional, CPD accredited education on the fundamentals of asthma management via the AZ Healthcare Delivery Partner (via a non-promotional role from the medical team within AZ)
- Access to Sentinel resources via the AZ Healthcare Delivery Partner (Medical, Non-promotional role)
- A wider focus on sustainable service improvement and legacy

Please note: this is a time limited funding offer of support. If you would like to know more, please contact helen.beaumont-kellner@astrazeneca.com directly.

Health Innovation North West Coast



Fuel Poverty Project: New Poster Resources Available

As part of the ongoing fuel poverty work in Cheshire & Merseyside, with Cheshire & Merseyside ICB, Health Innovation North West Coast and Energy Project Plus, a poster and flyer have been created (PDFs available here) with QR codes for patients to self refer for support to help keep their homes warm over winter.



Printed copies of these posters (A3 and A4) and flyers can be provided and we would like for practices to display these materials. Please contact Dominic Griffiths (dominic.griffiths@epplus.org) with how many of each you would like and he can arrange for materials to be printed and sent to your practice(s).

Please contact rhiannon.clarke@healthinnovationnwc.nhs.uk if you would like further information about the wider fuel poverty work in the region, or if you are interested in participating in a local project.



General Information

Pulmonary Rehab: Education and physical activity, all at a level your patient can manage.

Self-management and peer support in a group setting.

We know it's not always easy to encourage patients to attend pulmonary rehabilitation (PR), but when they do, it can make a real difference in managing their respiratory condition. Over the past five years, the network has supported all PR services across Cheshire & Merseyside, using national ring-fenced funding to drive improvements and help achieve national targets.



Key initiatives include:

- Developing a C&M-wide service specification to reduce variation across the region
- Enhancing data collection through a standalone dashboard to highlight improvements and areas for focus
- Supporting all teams to engage with the national accreditation programme through the Royal College of Physicians (RCP)

So far, both the Knowsley and Sefton teams have achieved accreditation, which recognises a high-quality PR programme meeting all national standards, with a focus on quality and patient outcomes. The remaining seven PR services in C&M are currently working towards accreditation, with the goal of having all nine services accredited by Spring 2026.

Pulmonary Rehabilitation (PR) – Making a Real Difference

Did you know that encouraging patients to attend PR can have a huge impact on their health and wellbeing? Evidence shows PR can:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| • Reduce exacerbation rates | • Ease breathlessness |
| • Shorten hospital stays | • Reduce anxiety and depression |
| • Lower 30-day re-admission rates | • Improve overall quality of life |
| • Reduce mortality | • Reduce social isolation |

Which is why PR is such a powerful tool for people living with chronic respiratory disease, but it is especially beneficial for:

- Patients with a chronic respiratory condition
- People limited by breathlessness
- Those with MRC scale 3 symptoms

**Remember..... Referral is simple:**

- Referral forms are uploaded to your clinical system
- Email the completed form directly to your local team

By supporting patients to access PR, you're helping them not only manage their condition better but also live fuller, healthier lives.

The importance of supporting self-management: Unlocking Independence in Care

Supported self-management means increasing the knowledge, skills confidence a person has in managing their own health and care by putting in place interventions.

For COPD, this is vital because it can significantly improve both health outcomes and quality of life.



and

Low levels of self-management are linked to increased cost, faster disease progression, early mortality and increased multi morbidity. However, these trends can be reduced/reversed.

Top 5 Reasons Self-Management Matters in COPD

1. **Fewer flare-ups & hospital visits** – patients spot problems early and act quickly.
2. **Better quality of life** – more confidence, less anxiety, greater independence.
3. **Improved treatment use** – correct inhaler technique and regular medication.
4. **Healthier lifestyle choices** – more activity, better nutrition, smoking cessation.
5. **Stronger mental wellbeing** – reduced anxiety and depression linked to breathlessness.

Supporting self-management doesn't mean patients coping alone — it means giving them the tools, knowledge, and confidence to stay well and in control.

A&LUK offer groups both on-line and face to face to support people to manage their own condition more effectively, use the link below to find out more.

www.asthmaandlung.org.uk/groups-support



BTS Winter meeting

26th-28th November 2025 at the QEII Centre in London [BTS Winter Meeting](#)

NHS Confed – Integrated Care systems Conference

26th November 2025, London

NHS Confed are planning an NHS Confederation Integrated Care Systems Conference 2025, working with members to develop an agenda which will accurately reflect the needs of those working in and across systems. To find out more about this event, [register your interest](#)

Awareness Campaigns

World COPD Day 2025

World COPD Day takes place on Wednesday 19th November 2025. The theme of the global event this year will “Short of Breath, Think COPD.”

The day provides a platform for individuals, healthcare professionals and organisations to come together and address the challenges posed by COPD. [#WorldCOPDDay](#)

Get Winter Strong

For some, flu or COVID-19 can be extremely dangerous and even life-threatening. Flu and COVID-19 vaccines reduce the risk of serious illness in colder months. [Find out if you are eligible](#)

Stoptober 2025

When you stop smoking for 28 days, you are 5 times more likely to give up for good. This October, join the thousands of smokers committing to quit. It's much easier when you get the right support. Check out the free tools, tips, and support to help stay on track. [Quit smoking this Stoptober](#)



Resources



- [Language guides to help manage your asthma](#)
- [Cheshire and Merseyside's Breathing Point website](#)



For further details on any of the information above; please do not hesitate to contact one of the C&M Respiratory Network Team;

Tracie Mackenzie
Programme Manager
Tracie.mackenzie@nhs.net

Sarah Sibley
Clinical Lead
Sarah.sibley@mcht.nhs.uk

Paul Walker
Clinical Lead
Paul.walker@liverpoolft.nhs.uk

Sam Hayes
PR Workstream Clinical Lead
Samantha.hayes@lhch.nhs.uk

Kirsty Jardine
Project Manager
Kirsty.jardine3@nhs.net

For any further information in relation to the COPD good review guide or primary care specialist information please contact:

Jacqui Brereton
Respiratory Nurse Consultant
Jacqui.brereton@nhs.net