



#AskAboutAsthma Campaign

Partner Toolkit

#AskAboutAsthma is back for 2021! As always, the campaign is about making simple changes to children and young people's care that will make a big difference to how they experience their asthma.

The 2021 campaign theme is **#AskAboutAsthma**
#AAsharethemessage

Introduction

Asthma is the most common long-term medical condition affecting children and young people (CYP). 1 in 11 CYP are affected by the condition, around 3 in every classroom – meaning approximately 240,000 CYP have asthma in London. Many have badly managed asthma – to the extent that 4,000 are admitted to hospital with asthma every year and 170 have such a severe episode that they require admission to intensive care.

At the worst end of the spectrum, children die of this disease in the capital every year. 90% of these deaths have avoidable factors. Poorly controlled asthma affects every aspect of children's lives – their ability to learn, enjoy time outside school with friends or take part in sport. It affects their time with their families and how they sleep.

There are [tools and guidance](#) that exist to help healthcare professionals and others treat and manage asthma and support patients to self-care. We do not have to wait for new medicines or a cure for asthma: we need to educate and support our workforce to use these tools to achieve improved outcomes. However, making a significant change requires agreement and coordinated effort.

The #AskAboutAsthma campaign asks professionals to ensure they implement simple measures to improve care and management of CYP with asthma. The campaign supports the aims of the National Bundle of Care for CYP Asthma, to be published in Spring 2022. We have also asked NHS organisations to commit to reducing their contribution to air pollution, recognising the role played by air quality in triggering attacks. Our [toolkit on air pollution reduction](#) for NHS trusts describes simple and free changes NHS organisations can make.

Our aims

The [#AskAboutAsthma](#) campaign encourages children and young people and their families, and those involved in their care, to ensure three simple and effective measures are in place to help them control their asthma:

1. [A written asthma action plan](#) drawn up between a clinician and asthma sufferer means people are four times less likely to have to go to hospital for their asthma. A recent audit showed that a personalised asthma action plan was only recorded in 45.5% of cases.
2. [Using inhalers effectively](#) less than $\frac{3}{4}$ of CYP have any form of instruction in how to use their inhalers – meaning they may not be getting the full benefit of their asthma medication
3. [An asthma review](#) every year and after every attack to ensure effective management of the condition

We also look at air quality and the impact it has on lung health.

Key Facts

(see [asthma case for change](#) for more details)

- In 2018 London Ambulance Services (LAS) attended 2,737 children for asthma and 9,855 children for breathlessness
- London has a higher rate of illness and death in children and young people because of asthma compared to other European countries
- It is one of the top three causes of emergency admission to hospital (4,000 in London each year). 75% of these admissions would be avoidable through the implementation of simple interventions
- Nearly half of these children have had an asthma attack in the previous year and 30% have had daytime symptoms in the previous week – however only a fraction have a personalised asthma plan on how their asthma should be managed
- 170 children were admitted to intensive care in 2016/17, with an average length of stay of 3 days. This represents a spend of over £1million on intensive care for this population
- Nitrogen dioxide, particulate matter and other forms of air pollution are known triggers for asthma and poor health more widely, particularly in children
- Children die of asthma in London each year; 90% of these deaths are preventable. These children should have gone on to lead full and productive lives
- While Covid-19 is not thought to be a particular risk for CYP with asthma, it makes good asthma control and avoidance of unnecessary ED attendances more important than ever

#AskAboutAsthma for the LAS

The campaign identifies questions that staff should ask of their organisations to help optimise asthma care for children and young people.

The LAS should make sure their staff:

ASK if patients have an asthma action plan and, if not, advise them to contact their GP or asthma nurse to request one

ASK if they understand how to use their medications or inhaler and, if their condition allows it (mild-moderate asthma), coach the patient in how to take their inhaler correctly (advice, including videos, on effective use of inhalers can be found [here](#))

ASK if they have had an asthma review every year and after every attack. If not, advise them to book one with their GP, asthma nurse or consultant.

How can you help

The 2021 [#AskAboutAsthma](#) campaign runs from 20 – 26 September to raise awareness of the measures that should be taken to manage all children and young people (CYP) with asthma. It aims to ensure that existing [asthma standards](#) and [ambitions](#) are met across London and that no more children die from preventable asthma attacks.

A week of events is planned, with daily webinars, an online conference, podcasts, blogs and other content from people working with children and young people with asthma from all over the country. Information about the events will be uploaded [here](#) throughout the week so do check the page for more details, and join in with as much as you can.

Please publicise the campaign locally. You may wish to highlight local examples of good practice or innovations as part of it.

This year's theme is #AAsharethemessage. The idea is for people to choose one thing they will do to spread the message about the aims of the #AskAboutAsthma campaign. Tweet us at @HealthyLDN to let us know, using #AAsharethemessage and #AskAboutAsthma.

Resources

Our [communication toolkit](#) includes resources to help you, including posters for your sites and ambulances which can be printed as well as a short video for staff.

Social media resources

Social media is a great way to spread the word and support our campaign. On the following pages you will find suggested copy for posts that you can use on your social media channels.

Please do not forget to:

Use **#AskAboutAsthma** when communicating messages in your social media channels, especially on Twitter. We will retweet and like any messages you use.

Follow us and share and retweet:

Twitter [@HealthyLDN](#)

Facebook [@HealthyLDN](#)

Instagram [healthy_ldn](#)

LinkedIn [healthy-london-partnership](#)

Suggested generic social media messages

1. This week, we are supporting an NHS campaign #AskAboutAsthma to help improve the lives of children and young people living with asthma. #AskAboutAsthma
2. The NHS are calling on parents to keep asthma medicine close at hand this week, with children up to three times more likely to need medical help as the school year starts. Avoiding ED is even more important this year with Covid-19 #AskAboutAsthma
3. One in 11 young people has asthma, with spikes in demand for help from GPs and hospitals in the weeks after school holidays. #AskAboutAsthma
4. Three simple steps save lives: an asthma action plan, being able to use an inhaler and having a review annually and after every attack. #AskAboutAsthma
5. #Airpollution is associated with the development and worsening of asthma in children. Children are more at risk from the effects of pollution because they have faster breathing rates and their lungs are still developing. #AskAboutAsthma
6. If a child has a personalised asthma action plan, they are four times less likely to have an asthma attack that requires emergency hospital treatment. Ask your GP for an asthma plan. #AskAboutAsthma
7. Your asthma action plan will tell you everything you need to know about looking after your asthma in one place. Ask your GP for an asthma plan. #AskAboutAsthma
8. Make sure you have a review annually and after every attack to help manage your asthma. Talk to your GP. #AskAboutAsthma
9. 1 in 11 children and young people in have #asthma but less than half of them know how to use their inhaler correctly. Ask your GP or pharmacist for help. #AskAboutAsthma
10. Ask your pharmacist to show you how to use your inhaler properly; you don't even need an appointment. #AskAboutAsthma

Suggested generic social media messages

11. Good inhaler technique can make a big difference to how well people manage their asthma. It could also mean that they don't need to be prescribed higher doses of medication. #AskAboutAsthma
12. Living with asthma can take a big toll on mental health, especially in these difficult times. Find out where to get support and advice to stop stress triggering your asthma. #AskAboutAsthma www.asthma.org.uk

London's ambitions for asthma care for children and young people

Each organisation (primary and community care, acute care, pharmacy, schools) will have a clear named lead who will be responsible and accountable for asthma (which includes children and young people) and the delivery of the following:

As a child with asthma:

PROACTIVE CARE



I should have access to a **named set of professionals working in a network**.



I will be **supported to manage my own asthma** so I am able to lead a life free from symptoms.



I will grow up in an **environment that has clean air that is smoke free**.



I will have access to an **environment that is rich with opportunities to exercise**.

ACCESSIBLE CARE



I will have my **diagnosis** and severity of wheeze established quickly.



I will have **prompt access to my inhaler device** and other medicines and asthma care and advice everywhere I go.



I will have access to **immediate medical care, advice and medicines** in an emergency.



I will have access to **high quality, evidence based care** whenever I need it.

CO-ORDINATED CARE



My carer and I will know how to manage my asthma with the help of a written **asthma management plan**.



I will have a **regular structured review**



I will have a **package of care** which meets all my needs including my educational health and well-being.



I will expect all professionals involved in my care will **share clinical information to ensure my care is seamless**.



I will move safely into **adult services** when I grow up.