



#AskAboutAsthma Campaign

Partner Toolkit

#AskAboutAsthma 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.¹ Many have badly managed asthma, to the extent that over 20,000 are admitted to hospital every year in England and over 4% of these have such a severe episode that they require admission to intensive care^{2,3}.

At the worst end of the spectrum, children die of asthma in England every year. 90% of these deaths have avoidable factors.⁴ 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](#) 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 support and educate our workforce to use such tools to improve outcomes, recognising that making a significant change requires agreement and coordinated effort.

The #AskAboutAsthma campaign asks professionals to implement simple measures to improve the care and management of CYP with asthma. It also aims to increase awareness of the risks of poor air quality for lung health. The campaign supports the aims of the National Bundle of Care for CYP Asthma, to be published in Spring 2022.

¹ Asthma UK: <https://www.asthma.org.uk/about/media/facts-and-statistics/>

² Fingertips data: <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/>

³ Numbers based on London PICU audit

⁴ Royal College of Physicians. Why Asthma Still Kills 2014. National Review of Asthma Deaths

Our Aims

The [#AskAboutAsthma](#) campaign encourages children and young people and their families, and all 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.⁵
2. [Using inhalers effectively](#): less than ¼ 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.

5. Royal College of Physicians, National Asthma and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease Audit Programme (NACAP) Clinical Audit of CYP Asthma 2021

Key Facts

- The UK has a higher rate of illness and death in children and young people because of asthma compared to other European countries^{6,7}
- Asthma is one of the top three causes of emergency admission to hospital. 75% of these admissions would be avoidable through the implementation of simple interventions⁴
- Nearly half of the children admitted 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 action plan on how their asthma should be managed
- Outcomes are worse for children and young people living in the most deprived areas.⁸
- 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 each year; 90% of these deaths are preventable. These children should have gone on to lead full and productive lives.⁴
- While Covid-19 is not thought to be a particular risk for CYP with asthma, it makes good asthma control and avoidance of unnecessary emergency hospital attendances more important than ever.
- The NHS spends around £1 billion a year treating and caring for people with asthma.⁹

6. Nuffield Trust: International comparisons of health and wellbeing in adolescence and early adulthood:

https://www.nuffieldtrust.org.uk/files/2019-02/1550657729_nt-ayph-adolescent-health-report-web.pdf

7. <https://www.england.nhs.uk/2019/09/nhs-warning-to-parents-as-asthma-season-hits>

8. Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (2020) State of Child Health. London: RCPCH. [Available at: stateofchildhealth.rcpch.ac.uk]

9. <https://www.asthma.org.uk/about/media/facts-and-statistics/>

#AskAboutAsthma for hospitals

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

Acute hospitals should make sure that they:

ASK children and young people with asthma about triggers and how to manage them

ASK if they understand how to use their medications or inhaler before discharge and give help and advice

ASK if they have an asthma action plan and, if not, ensure they get one

ASK about and offer flu vaccination to CYP and their families

ASK about smoking and refer/ offer stop smoking services to children and young people or parents/carers

ASK for a clinic appointment or a review within 48 hours in the community. Trust asthma clinics should offer an appointment within 1 week to any asthma referral. clinics should be set up with an urgent slot

ASK about transition to adult services when appropriate

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 with asthma. It aims to ensure that existing national and local **asthma standards** are met 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 share 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 the hospital 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: a personalised 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 using your inhaler. #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

