

# Asthma and COPD patients to receive better care closer to home

17.3.2026 - | Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs

## **Asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease patients will receive better care closer to home under a landmark £10million partnership**

- Care for patients with asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) will be transformed through new, £10 million government partnership
- The government is co-funding the programme alongside NHS England and major pharmaceutical companies
- Delivering on government's 10 Year Health Plan, the partnership will move respiratory care from hospital wards to local communities

Tens of thousands of patients living with asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) will receive faster, better and more personalised care under a landmark new programme to tackle one of the leading causes of death and preventable hospital admissions in the UK.

The Respiratory Transformation Partnership (RTP) brings together NHS England, the Office for Life Sciences, 15 health innovation networks (HINs), and four leading pharmaceutical companies — AstraZeneca, Chiesi, GSK, and Sanofi — in a co-funded programme worth over £10 million. It will demonstrate how the NHS and industry can work together to deliver innovation at scale, as set out in the 10 Year Health Plan.

It will support teams on ground to overhaul care for the roughly one in five people affected by respiratory disease during their lifetime, with a focus on the communities most affected.

Respiratory disease is the third leading cause of death in the UK, contributing to more than 700,000 hospital admissions and around six million inpatient bed days each year — the vast majority of them unplanned.

The partnership will use data and digital tools to identify patients who would benefit from more targeted treatments, expand access to biologic medicines, and ensure community and primary care teams can support patients closer to home.

This will reduce the need for emergency admissions and ease pressure on hospitals, particularly during winter.

Better managed respiratory conditions will also mean fewer days lost to illness, helping people stay in work and supporting the government's wider ambition to reduce health-related economic inactivity and raise living standards. Respiratory disease is a significant driver of workplace absence across the UK, and earlier, more effective treatment has the potential to deliver meaningful gains for patients, employers and the broader economy.

Dr Zubir Ahmed, Health Innovation and Safety Minister, said:

Too many people with asthma and lung disease end up rushed to hospital when, with the right care and support, that admission could have been avoided entirely. For far too long these patients have been let down because of a broken system.

This government is bringing together the NHS, industry and local health innovation networks to make sure patients get the treatment they need, closer to home, before their condition reaches crisis point.

This £10 million partnership is a concrete example of what our reform agenda looks like in practice — shifting care out of hospitals and into communities, using data to reach patients who have been missed, and working hand in hand with industry to get the best treatments to the people who need them most.

The programme is chaired by Jonathan Fuld, National Clinical Director for Respiratory Disease, and is being coordinated by Health Innovation Oxford and Thames Valley (HIOTV) on behalf of the Health Innovation Network.

Dr Jonathan Fuld, National Clinical Director for Respiratory Diseases at NHS England said:

Around one in five people in England will be affected by respiratory illness in their lifetime and far too many are living with symptoms that are undiagnosed or poorly managed, often in communities that already face the greatest health challenges.

The Respiratory Transformation Programme can be a blueprint for how partnerships between the NHS, charities, professional bodies, and pharmaceutical companies can deliver better outcomes for people in every part of the country by improving rates of diagnosis, providing ongoing care and advise in local, neighbourhood services and offering innovative treatments that can keep people out of hospital.

It is backed by a broad coalition of clinical, academic and patient organisations, including Asthma and Lung UK, the Primary Care Respiratory Society, the British Thoracic Society, the National Respiratory Audit Programme, the Association of Respiratory Nurses and NICE.

Professor Ben Bridgewater, Executive Chair of Health Innovation Network, said:

Through the implementation of this innovative partnership working in local communities across the country, patient outcomes will be improved, and national productivity gains can be made. This programme will create a practical blueprint of how innovation and collaboration can deliver better outcomes for patients while reducing pressure on hospitals and driving economic growth.

Richard Torbett, Chief Executive of the Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry, said:

For the millions of people living with asthma and COPD, partnerships like this can make a real difference to daily life. By combining the NHS's clinical expertise with the innovation and scientific capabilities of the life sciences industry, we can help ensure patients get earlier diagnosis, better treatment and more support closer to home. I look forward to seeing this collaboration turn innovation into practical improvements in care for patients across the country.

Sarah Sleet, Chief Executive of Asthma + Lung UK, said:

The UK has the worst death rate in Western Europe for lung conditions and the impact falls most heavily on people living in the most deprived areas. Focusing on lung health will lead to huge improvements to the nation's health and the Respiratory Transformation Partnership shows the power of bringing together the government, NHS, life sciences firms and patient organisations. Through the partnership, our combined resources can be harnessed to improve lung health and reduce inequality. There is now real momentum behind improving the lives of people with respiratory conditions, paving the way for a national approach to improving lung health across the country.

## **Partner comments**

Tom Keith-Roach, UK Country President, AstraZeneca, said:

AstraZeneca is delighted to be joining the Respiratory Transformation Partnership to scale guideline directed care across the NHS - bringing our scientific innovation and expertise in transforming care, to improve outcomes for people with asthma and COPD.

By uniting the NHS, clinicians, patients, industry and system partners, the RTP will cut avoidable exacerbations and reduce the burden of respiratory disease on patients, the NHS and the economy, advancing the ambitions of the 10 Year Health Plan and the Life Sciences Sector Plan.

Neale Belson, UK General Manager GSK, said:

With more than fifty years of leadership in respiratory science and innovation, GSK brings deep experience and a strong commitment to improving outcomes for people living with asthma and COPD. We welcome the opportunity to work with NHS and industry partners to improve respiratory care across the UK and expand access to innovative treatments that can make the biggest difference for patients.

Ahmed Moussa, Country Lead, Sanofi UK and Ireland, said:

The launch of the Respiratory Transformation Partnership represents a pivotal moment for respiratory care in England and is a powerful example of what's possible when the NHS, government, and industry come together with a shared purpose. The collective ambition to create a blueprint for large-scale NHS transformation is exactly the kind of effort that patients need and deserve, and we're proud to contribute our investment and expertise and to improve outcomes and tackle deep-rooted health inequalities.

Ralph Blom, General Manager, Chiesi UK, said:

Respiratory outcomes in the UK have been among the poorest in Europe for decades - far too many people currently live with undiagnosed or poorly managed asthma and COPD.

By embracing a joined-up approach; from driving advanced diagnostics to redesigned

pathways that support earlier, more accurate care, we have a real opportunity to transform outcomes for patients. The Respiratory Transformation Partnership embodies a spirit of collective action, and we are proud to play our part in accelerating the change that patients across the UK deserve.

Professor Richard Russell, Chair of the British Thoracic Society, said:

The British Thoracic Society welcomes this groundbreaking initiative, which brings together for the first time all those who work with the goal of improving outcomes for those living with respiratory disease. This will speed up their journey from presentation to diagnosis and treatment of lung disease and facilitate access to new and innovative treatments. By working in partnership, respiratory clinicians will be well placed to shape and lead new clinical pathways with the goal of reducing the impact of respiratory disease on patients, our health service and society.

Professor Gary Ford, CEO Health Innovation Oxford and Thames Valley, said:

Respiratory disease places an enormous burden on patients, families and the NHS, yet we know that earlier diagnosis and better long-term management can make a transformative difference. The Respiratory Transformation Partnership brings together the NHS, industry, innovators and patient groups to tackle these challenges collectively, using data, diagnostics and new technologies to redesign how care is delivered. By working across partners and systems, we can support earlier identification of disease, improve access to effective treatments and help people manage their conditions closer to home. Health Innovation Oxford and Thames Valley is proud to be leading the Respiratory Transformation Partnership on behalf of the Health Innovation Network.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/asthma-and-copd-patients-to-receive-better-care-closer-to-home>