

Asthma in Children & Young People: Educational Resources for General Practice and Primary Care Nurses

Background

Asthma is a heterogeneous disease, usually characterised by chronic airway inflammation. It is defined by a history of respiratory symptoms, such as wheeze, shortness of breath, chest tightness and cough, that vary over time and in intensity, together with variable expiratory airflow limitation. One or more symptoms (e.g., cough) may predominate and in children wheeze is an important characteristic feature ([GINA, 2024](#)). Allergic asthma is the most common type of asthma in children and signs of allergy are often easily recognisable (e.g., eczema, nasal symptoms). Poor air quality is, increasingly becoming a huge challenge factor in children's lung health and asthma control.

Airflow limitation may later become persistent; intervention in childhood is important to prevent long term changes and maintain lung health.

Asthma is usually associated with both airway hyperresponsiveness and airway inflammation, therefore it is critical to manage airway inflammation with regular controllers/preventers and not just treat the bronchoconstriction.

Professional resources:

National Bundle of Care for CYP with Asthma

The National Capability Framework for the care of CYP with asthma

National Respiratory Audit Programme

Clinical Guidelines, reports and strategies:

Joint NICE, the Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines

Network (SIGN) and the British Thoracic Society

(BTS) DRAFT guidance – In development (expected publication 27/11/24).

NICE Clinical Knowledge Summary (12/23)

Why Asthma Still Kills: The National Review of Asthma Deaths (NRAD) 2014

Global Strategy for Asthma Management and Prevention (GINA) 2024

Key messages

Affecting 1:11, asthma is the most common long-term condition in children and young people (CYP). It can be wrongly perceived as a mild disease, and research shows that it is often not taken seriously enough. Those with 'mild asthma' can deteriorate, causing increased morbidity and mortality. Education for children and their families, clinicians and wider members of health care teams about recognising and managing triggers, symptoms and asthma attacks is key to effective asthma control.

The 5 priorities set out in the National Bundle of Care for CYP with Asthma are *Environmental impacts *Early and accurate Diagnosis *Effective preventative medicine *Managing exacerbations *Severe asthma

Critical Call to Action

NHS England and NHS Improvement's ambition is to reduce avoidable harm to children and young people from asthma and improve their quality of life.

Urgent action is needed to end preventable asthma deaths.

Remember that CYP asthma management is not just a practice issue but a WHOLE TEAM approach:
*Community pharmacy *Practice pharmacists *School nurses & Health Visitors *District nurses
*Special Educational Needs Team *Secondary/Tertiary care team

Scope of Practice

Role Level Descriptor	Tier and Scope of Practice Aligned to Primary Care Core Career and Capabilities Framework	Asthma Specific Qualifications	Skills and Application of Knowledge and Scope of Practice
Health Care Support Worker (HCSW)	1	Asthma awareness training - NHSE CYP Asthma Capability Framework Tier 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness that asthma is a variable condition that can impact quality of life and can be life threatening Awareness that asthma treatment is primarily delivered via the inhaled route Knowledge of inhaler and spacer devices, and signposting to patient information and resources to support good inhaler technique
Nursing Associate (NA)	1	Asthma awareness training - NHSE CYP Asthma Capability Framework Tier 1-2	<p>As above plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge of modifiable risk factors and the importance of prevention treatment to control asthma Competent to assess and teach inhaler technique with a range of devices
General Practice Nurse (GPN) GPN Enhanced Level	2	<p>Fundamental asthma training - NHSE CYP Asthma Capability Framework Tier 2-3</p> <p>plus</p> <p>Completion of or working towards a diploma/degree level clinical asthma module or equivalent</p> <p>plus</p> <p>Ongoing clinical supervision with a qualified mentor working at an advanced or expert level</p>	<p>As above plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding of respiratory anatomy and function, common respiratory pathophysiology, including upper airways/nasal symptoms and differential diagnoses across age groups Recognition of the range of asthma triggers, including indoor and outdoor air quality, and able to discuss avoidance strategies with parents/carers Understanding of commonly used respiratory medications including indications, safety and optimal dosing Understanding of the holistic approach to the management of asthma in children, it's impact on physical, emotional and social well-being and the role of others supporting the wider determinants of health (public health, housing, education, social care and community support) for families to self-manage not only asthma but overall wellbeing Application of local, national and, where relevant, international guidelines for the treatment and management of asthma Recognition of when to seek support when to refer for specialist care.

Scope of Practice

Role Level Descriptor	Tier and Scope of Practice Aligned to Primary Care Core Career and Capabilities Framework	Asthma Specific Qualifications	Skills and Application of Knowledge and Scope of Practice
<p>Advanced Nurse Practitioner (ANP)</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>Advanced paediatric clinical practice skills plus:</p> <p>Accredited advanced level asthma training - NHSE CYP Asthma Capability Framework Tier 3-4</p> <p>or</p> <p>Completion of or working towards a degree/masters level clinical module or equivalent in paediatric asthma management</p> <p>plus</p> <p>Ongoing clinical supervision with a qualified mentor working at an advanced or expert level</p>	<p>As above plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application of evidence and guidelines to support early and accurate diagnosis of asthma in children and young people • Understanding of different types of wheeze and asthma in children across the age range • Application of evidence-based recommendations for the assessment and management of asthma attacks • Ability to clinically interpret a range of investigations such as spirometry reports and blood tests • Recognition and management of asthma related risk factors at individual patient and population level

Core Capabilities Framework

In 2021, Health Education England developed a framework articulating the core capabilities necessary for safe and effective primary care nursing. The capabilities (i.e., skills, knowledge, and behaviours) described in the framework are defined at 3 tiers.

Each tier articulates the minimum and core capability to be expected as opposed to the maximum:

- **Tier 1:** Capabilities that require a general understanding and that support provision of primary care/general practice nursing.
- **Tier 2:** Capabilities that enable the provision of care more independently and a degree of critical analysis.
- **Tier 3:** Capabilities that require an ability to provide care autonomously and independently, an ability to lead practice, operating at the cutting edge of innovation.

Further information can be found [here](#)

	Support Work Level Practice	Nursing Associate Level/Assistant Level Practice	Registered Nurse level	Registered Nurse: Enhanced Level Practice	Registered Nurse: Advanced Level Practice	Registered Nurse: Consultant Level Practice
Capability 1. Communication and consultation skills	Tier 1	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 2	Tier 3	Tier 3
Capability 2. Practising holistically to personalise care and promote public and person health	Tier 1	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 2	Tier 3	Tier 3
Capability 3. Working with colleagues and in teams	Tier 1	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 2	Tier 3	Tier 3
Capability 4. Maintaining an ethical approach and fitness to practice	Tier 1	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 2	Tier 3	Tier 3
Capability 5. Information gathering and interpretation	Tier 1	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 2	Tier 3	Tier 3
Capability 6. Clinical examination and procedural skills	Tier 1	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 2	Tier 3	Tier 3
Capability 7. Making a diagnosis			Tier 2	Tier 2	Tier 3	Tier 3
Capability 8. Clinical management		Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 2	Tier 3	Tier 3
Capability 9. Managing medical and clinical complexity		Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 2	Tier 3	Tier 3
Capability 10. Independent prescribing and pharmacotherapy		Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 2	Tier 3	Tier 3
Capability 11. Leadership, management and organisation		Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 2	Tier 3	Tier 3
Capability 12. Education and development		Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 2	Tier 3	Tier 3
Capability 13. Research and evidence based practice		Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 2	Tier 3	Tier 3
Capability 14. Strategic Management						Tier 3

[National-Capabilities-Framework-3.pdf \(e-lfh.org.uk\)](https://www.e-lfh.org.uk/National-Capabilities-Framework-3.pdf)

The national bundle of care for children and young people with asthma was published by NHS England in September 2021.

This is a clinically focussed resource that aligns with GPN Capability Framework.

It provides a plan for Integrated Care Systems to deliver high quality asthma care.

A 5-tiered capability framework guides the knowledge and skills required for any professional whose role includes caring for children and young people.

Further information can be found [here](#)

CYP Asthma Capability Framework Tiers

Tier	Level of care	Example profession	Knowledge and skills
1	Signposting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social care Education staff Childcare providers Leaders of children's clubs GP receptionists Health Care Assistants 	<p>Basic awareness of asthma, its management, inhaler use and basic modifiable risk factors.</p> <p>Able to signpost families to resources.</p>
2	Supporting prescribed care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practice, School, Community and ward nurses Health visitors Community pharmacist AHPs Ambulance staff 	<p>Greater understanding of the principles of asthma management and able to deliver prescribed care both routinely and in an emergency.</p> <p>Able to view asthma as a chronic condition and identify risk factors for poor control</p>
3	Assessment and prescribing of care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General Practitioners Emergency department doctors Paediatricians Doctors in training Nurses with a special interest Clinical pharmacist 	<p>Able to diagnose, assess and manage acute and chronic asthma.</p> <p>Able to address the factors that contribute to poor control</p>
4	Assessment and prescribing for the more difficult to treat asthmas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paediatricians with special interest Advanced nurse practitioners 	<p>In depth knowledge of asthma and the differentials and able to diagnose, assess and manage the more difficult to treat asthmatic.</p> <p>Able to work with wider teams to support all aspects of management and transition</p>
5	Managing the difficult and severe asthmas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tertiary paediatrician AHP member of the asthma MDT 	<p>Specialist knowledge and skills to diagnose, assess and manage the most severe and difficult to treat asthmatics</p>

Educational resources for Tier 1

Asthma+Lung UK Information pages – [Asthma and your child](#)

Asthma+Lung UK – [Inhaler Technique videos](#)

Asthma+Lung UK - [Healthcare Professional hub](#)

NHSE CYP Asthma Capability and Education - [Tier 1 and 2 recommended courses](#)

Rotherham Respiratory – [Introduction to Paediatric Asthma course](#)

Educational resources for Tier 2

Rotherham Respiratory – [Asthma Foundation Course](#)

University of Western England – [L6 module Asthma Care and Management](#)

Education for Health – [L5 asthma module](#)

Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health – [How to manage: Childhood Asthma Masterclass](#)

Rotherham Respiratory – [Performing Paediatric Spirometry](#)

Rotherham Respiratory – [Reporting Paediatric Spirometry](#)

Asthma+Lung UK – [Inhaler Technique videos](#)

Asthma + Lung UK - [Healthcare Professional hub](#)

Primary Care Respiratory Society – [Asthma Resources](#)

eLearning for Healthcare – [FeNO in Asthma](#)

NHSE CYP Asthma Capability and Education - [Tier 2 and 3 recommended courses](#)

Educational resources for Tier 3

Asthma+Lung UK – [Inhaler Technique videos](#)

Asthma + Lung UK - [Healthcare Professional hub](#)

Primary Care Respiratory Society – [Asthma Resources](#)

eLearning for Healthcare – [FeNO in Asthma](#)

NHSE CYP Asthma Capability and Education - [Tier 3 and 4 recommended courses](#)

Rotherham Respiratory – [Advancing Paediatric Asthma Care](#)

University of Western England – [L6 & L7 module Asthma Care and Management](#)

Education for Health – [L6 asthma module](#)

[Rotherham Respiratory – Performing Paediatric Spirometry Seven steps to success](#)

Middlesex University/Great Ormond St Academy – [L7 module Physical examination and assessment of children and young people](#)

University of South Wales – [MSc in Respiratory Medicine](#)

For more information...

- Many ICSs offer free training to primary care staff. Every practice and PCN will have access to Training Hub resources and guidance. There are 42 at Integrated Care System (ICS) level, with several locality hubs that help support links between practices and PCNs. Click [here](#) to find your local Training Hub or email the national team on traininghubs@hee.nhs.uk.
- The NHS [knowledge and library hub](#) connects healthcare staff and trainees to a significant range of high-quality knowledge and evidence resources, services, tools, and databases. Accessed using NHS [OpenAthens](#) or through a local NHS Health library, it's a good resource for GPs and practice staff.

Useful Links and Resources

[Asthma + Lung UK](#)

[Ask About Asthma](#)

[Association of Respiratory Nurses](#)

[Beat Asthma](#)

[British Thoracic Society – Asthma guidance](#)

[Clean Air Hub](#)

[National Paediatric Respiratory and Allergy Nurses Group](#)

[National Institute for health and Care Excellence – Asthma guidance, advice and quality standards](#)

[Primary Care Respiratory Society – Asthma Right Care](#)

[The Ella Roberta Foundation and the Prevention of Futures Deaths Report](#)

Steering Group and Faculty

Steering Group Faculty

Heather Henry, RN, QN, MBA. Voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise member, [BreathChamps CIC](#)

Viv Marsh; RN, QN, Clinical Lead for Children's Asthma Transformation, Black Country ICB

Laura Rush; RN, Respiratory Nurse Specialist, Somerset and Respiratory Champion, Bridgwater Bay PCN

Rosamund Adoo-Kissi-Debrah, Mum of Ella Roberta and founder of the Ella Roberta Foundation

Peer Review Faculty

Rhian Last RN, Author, editor and journalist

Dr Liz Corrigan BEM, PhD; RN (Adult); Queen's Nurse; FRSPH. GPN System Lead & Primary Care Quality Lead Nurse

Professional Nurse Advocate, Black Country Integrated Care Board

Naomi Watt RN and Healthcare Professional Engagement Manager, Asthma + Lung UK

Steph Hobson, Specialist Nurse Practitioner, Stag Medical Centre, South Yorkshire

Louise Brady Primary Care Nursing Lead NHSE

Disclaimer: The signposted resources have been included based on their professional or educationally accredited status and the faculty recognise that other resources are or may become available.