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The logo for the Oxford Academic Health Science Network, featuring a stylized geometric pattern of overlapping lines in purple, yellow, and blue.

Rapid Uptake Product programme 2021/22

Asthma Biologics & FeNO

NHS England and NHS Improvement



Dear Colleagues,

The Rapid Uptake programme is all about ensuring we ensure as many patients as possible get access to the best treatment. Each year our programme sets an uptake trajectory for each product which sets out our ambition for the increase in uptake our work will generate. We now have our reporting in for Month 5 and thought this would be a good point to share progress on year to date trajectory.

We have seen strong performance across the board with almost all products performing at, or above, planned growth. This is testament to the incredible work of our collaborative working groups to identify high impact actions and the engagement and support of AHSNs, regions and local organisations to adopt these products and implement positive changes. We are excited to see the further growth as the Pathway Transformation Fund projects begin to come online which should further support and drive access.

Regards,

Jenny Turton

**Deputy Director of Innovation, Research and Life Sciences &
Accelerated Access Collaborative**

Asthma Biologics Introduction

Asthma Biologics are an innovative group of medicines used by specialists to treat people with severe asthma. They provide a treatment option for people with severe asthma who continue to experience asthma attacks despite taking usual treatments (such as inhaled steroids). Currently there are four NICE approved biologics for severe asthma (Omalizumab, Mepolizumab, Reslizumab and Benralizumab). The asthma biologics work in a targeted way by disrupting pathways that lead to lung inflammation to reduce asthma attacks, improve symptoms and reduce reliance on oral steroids.

Programme priorities

1. Understanding the current context:
 - Development of an adoption scoping report to investigate barriers in prescribing biologics
 - Modelling on variation in prescribing and referral practices across Trusts and regions as a tool to engage and discuss changes in practice
 - Collection of biologic waiting times for initiating biologics
2. Early Identification, training healthcare professionals and enhanced roles (GPs, Nurses and Pharmacists)
3. Reducing variation and improving pathways
 - Development of an AAC algorithm / pathway
 - Grow home/self-administration
 - Grow home monitoring
4. Partner with specialist centres, acute Trusts and Primary Care (via AHSN) and gather best practice and utilise case studies
5. Reimbursement and coding mechanisms
 - Improve use/uptake of code for severe asthma

Uptake performance and raising awareness

Uptake performance (Slide 7 refers)

- As at August '21, the number of patients accessing biologics for the treatment of severe asthma is at **98%** of expected trajectory and is on track to deliver year end performance of **94%** of planned trajectory.
- Further increase in uptake is expected as pathway transformation funded projects commence over the next couple of months.

Raising awareness

- AAC, AHSN and clinical leads from the Rapid Uptake Product Working Group will be speaking at the [Respiratory Professional Care Show](#) on 13 and 14 October on why and how the programme is supporting stronger NHS adoption and spread of two innovations. In the field of respiratory.
- The sessions are 'Improving access to biologics in severe asthma' and 'Completing the jigsaw: the importance of FeNO in diagnosing asthma'.
- The discussions will cover how the products selected for support improve diagnosis and treatment, the priorities to remove barriers to their uptake, and the progress made so far.
- The link for healthcare professionals to register for the event can be found [here](#)

Key progress to date

- The Pharmacy Clinical Sub-group has now established the three workstreams to develop resources to support organisations embed the enhanced role. The workstreams are producing a national standard operating procedure for adherence assessment, a resource to toolkit comprising of business cases, job descriptions and educational material and a respiratory structured medicines review template. In addition, to support this role, a new metric has been developed with the NHS Business Services Authority. This will enable identification of respiratory patients concurrently prescribed high maintenance doses of oral corticosteroids and who may have undiagnosed severe asthma. The metric is currently undergoing some further quality assurance and we are aiming for a launch in October.
- The primary care risk stratification tool for identifying potential severe asthma patients has been provisionally launched to the AHSNs who will pilot and feedback on the tool. The tool will allow those leading on asthma care to identify and prioritise uncontrolled and potential severe asthma and take appropriate action to optimise medication, review adherence and where appropriate refer onwards (using the incorporated referral form in the tool).
- A clinical education training package is currently being developed which will include modules for healthcare professionals about how to identify uncontrolled asthma. The training package will be delivered in partnership with the provider Cogora and will be available on their platform.
- A patient-facing leaflet has been developed (focusing on those early in the pathway) to support identifying those that are uncontrolled and potential severe asthma patients in primary care. The leaflet advises patients on when to seek further advice from their clinician regarding the control of their asthma. This can now be found via the AAC Website under the Rapid Uptake Products (Asthma Biologics) [section](#).
- The collection of biologic waiting times is now complete and there is now data on 400 patients (with 280 complete cases across the whole pathway). Analysis has now begun and a report will be developed to outline the findings.

Key challenges and issues

- One of the key challenges is the lack of a secondary care code for severe asthma to track patients along the pathway. A code has been identified for severe asthma in primary care (SNOMED) but is currently underutilised. The RUP Working Group plans to encourage and support use of the code through promotion/reference to it within the high-level consensus pathway being developed with key stakeholders and the education package for healthcare professionals.

FeNO Introduction

- Over 5.4 million people in the UK suffer from asthma with the NHS spending £1.1 billion on asthma annually.
- Medication is 90% of this cost, including the excessive prescription of steroid inhalers. However, 30% of patients are suspected to be misdiagnosed.
- FeNO (fractional exhaled nitric oxide) measurements are included in NICE clinical guidance for asthma diagnosis and are recommended to support asthma management in people who are symptomatic despite using inhaled corticosteroids. FeNO's Rapid Uptake Products include Nobreath and Niox Vera

Programme priorities

1. Develop an educational training package for FeNO. Consider delivery through existing education providers. Pursue endorsement from NICE and PCRS
2. Collect real world experience with exemplar sites on cost and operational benefits realised and patient outcomes and document the model and approach
3. Identify potential funding models and incentives to support uptake (prescribing savings achieved at GP level will be realised at system level) working with e.g. commissioners, STPs and ICSS
4. Develop a rollout toolkit to support organisations to implement including;
 - Dissemination of emerging hub model from national respiratory programme GIRFT
 - Advice on how to implement FeNO
 - Business case and financial modelling support
 - Training package and deployment
 - Dissemination of exemplar pathway and clinical decision-making tools
 - Pathway Transformation Funding support
 - Summary of best practice case studies from exemplar sites.

Uptake performance and raising awareness

Uptake performance (slide 7 refers)

- As at August '21, the number of patients accessing FeNO testing for the purposes of diagnosis is already estimated to be at 67% of the AAC's full year trajectory.
- This high level of performance could be attributed to the recovery of existing FeNO sites as COVID restrictions have eased, or due to the inclusion of FeNO as an objective test alongside spirometry in the Quality and Outcomes Framework (QOF) indicator guidance for asthma diagnosis incentivising use within Primary Care.
- Further increase in uptake is expected as pathway transformation funded projects commence from this month.

Raising awareness

- Working in collaboration with Asthma UK and British Lung Foundation, the [Accelerated Access Collaborative \(AAC\)](#) has produced an informative patient video to accompany the patient leaflet that was recently launched.
- The video details useful information that patients need to know about FeNO testing. It demonstrates how the test is performed and what patients can expect during their consultation in a very accessible format to reach a wide audience.
- The goal of both the video and leaflet is to support patient education and understanding of FeNO testing, its purpose and how it can be used as an aid to support healthcare discussions with their respiratory team.
- The video will shortly be added to on Asthma UK's revamped FeNO page, but can currently be accessed through the following link [here](#)

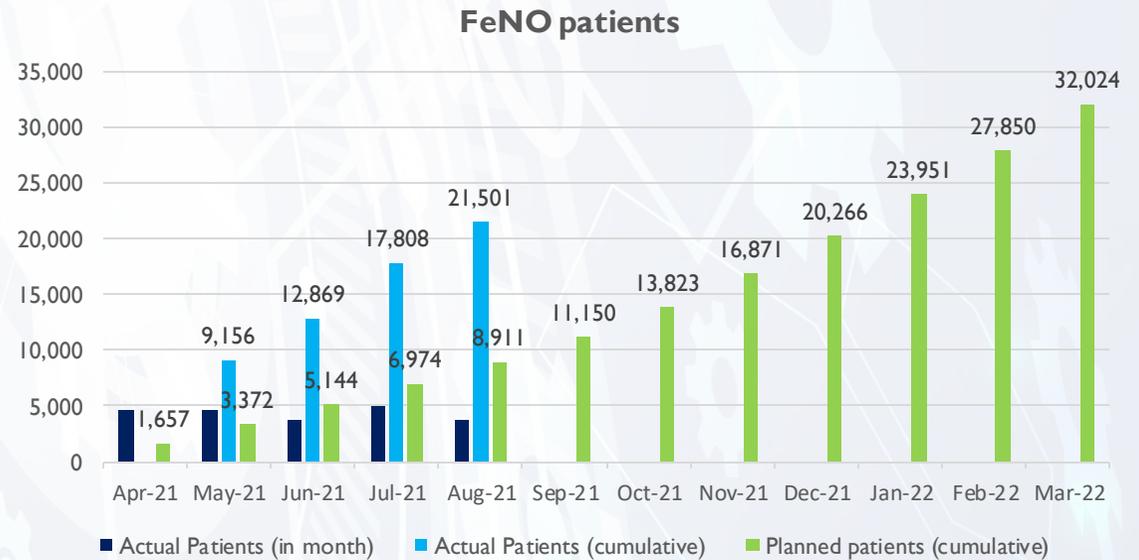
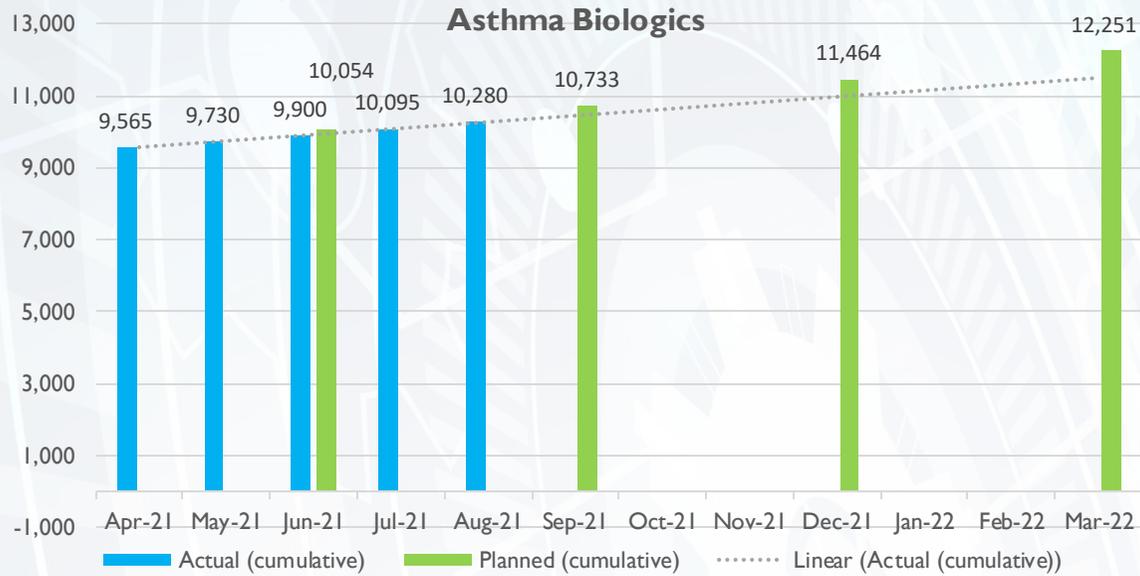
Key progress to date

- A Case for Change Template and interactive data dashboard has now been completed and added to the [FeNO Implementation Toolkit](#) page located on Wessex AHSN's website. The template has been designed to encourage ICS investment into FeNO testing and implementation within local clinical pathways. The [Case for Change Template](#) document supports clinical teams looking to implement FeNO testing at scale and it is further supported by the [interactive data dashboard](#) which allows users to identify the cost associated with asthma across CCGs in England, and estimates the cost of FeNO equipment as part of project deployment. The resource also provides a background into FeNO's importance and relevance, patient benefits and the impact of asthma within specific localities.
- Content for the educational training package has been agreed and shared with the Technology and Enhanced Learning (TEL) team. They have begun the process of creating the two modules that will sit on Health Education England's (HEE) 'e-learning for health' platform. The modules will contain an overview of FeNO, its purpose, how to perform a test, and how to interpret the results. The first draft is expected imminently. The package will include a simplified asthma diagnosis pathway based on NICE guidelines which will highlight the importance of clinical history and examination in decision making. It will also make refer to the other tests, referrals and actions to be taken depending on the results obtained from Spirometry (testing for airway obstruction) and FeNO (testing for inflammation). Once the modules are complete, the package will be promoted through HEE's networks as well as by the AAC to ensure that healthcare teams know how and where to access the training.
- All PTF sites have now completed and signed their agreement and contracts and are ready to progress onto the next stage. Local AHSNs are working closely with sites as they prepare to formally begin projects and for devices to be released. Ardens will shortly complete the creation of EMIS and SystemONE compatible templates which will further support sites to collect, document and report on useful FeNO data.

Key challenges and issues

- The key challenge continues to be sustainable funding for FeNO testing. To help address this challenge we ask that you distribute the Case for Change template and supporting data dashboard to all healthcare teams interested in implementing FeNO within their healthcare pathways to support the development of business cases. Local AHSNs are also on hand to provide further support and guidance ([see here for more information](#)). The AAC is keen to test and monitor the adoption and usefulness of the template and dashboard in supporting successful investment discussions. Please forward any feedback on these tools to the AAC contacts listed above.

Year to date performance



Further Information

Asthma Biologics

The relevant NICE guidance can be found here:

[Benralizumab](#), [Mepolizumab](#), [Omalizumab](#) and [Reslizumab](#)

If you would like to discuss further with us then please reach out to the key AAC and AHSN Contacts shown below

Sarah Ramjeet (AAC) Relationship Manager - sarah.ramjeet@nhs.net

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James Rose (AHSN) Project Lead - james.rose@oxfordahsn.org

FeNO

The relevant NICE guidance can be found here:

- Measuring fractional exhaled nitric oxide concentration in asthma: NIOX MINO, NIOX VERO and NObreath. Diagnostics guidance [[DG12](#)]
- Asthma: diagnosis, monitoring and chronic asthma management. NICE guideline [[NG80](#)]

If you would like to discuss further with us then please reach out to the key AAC and AHSN Contacts shown below:

- Therese Dodoo (AAC) Relationship Manager – therese.dodoo@nhs.net
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Distribution list

This pack has been shared with the groups/ bodies shown below. Please feel free to share throughout your networks or advise us of additional groups you think should be included in this regular circulation

- Association of Respiratory Nurse Specialists (ARNS)
- Primary Care Respiratory Society (PCRS)
- Asthma UK and British Lung Foundation
- The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE)
- British Thoracic Society (BST)
- Royal College of GP's (RCGP)
- Health Education England (HEE)
- Get It Right First Time (GIRFT)
- Association of Respiratory Technology (ARTP)
- NHS England and Improvement – Respiratory Clinical Policy Unit
- Regional Medicines Optimisation Committee (RMOC)
- Beneficial Change Network
- British Medical Association (BMA)
- National Association of Primary Care (NAPC)
- Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS)
- NHS England and Improvement – Chief Professionals Office (CPO) - Pharmacy