

Our Action Plan

To help prevent a future winter respiratory health crisis, we are calling on the Government and the NHS to make better use of community pharmacies to support lung health, specifically by:

- 1 Commissioning a wider range of NHS vaccinations** – including RSV, pneumococcal and catch-up child flu vaccinations – from a larger number of community pharmacies.
- 2 Establishing a national Community Pharmacy Smoking Cessation Service**, which any smoker can access without needing a referral.
- 3 Launching a Community Pharmacist Prescribing Service to include the provision of annual asthma reviews**, with inhaler technique checks also available.

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Out of all major conditions, respiratory conditions are **most strongly** linked to deprivation. Pharmacies serve approximately 1.6 million people daily in England and are accessible to 99% of residents in the most deprived communities within 20-minute's walking distance¹. This accessibility, coupled with pharmacies' ability to offer flexible appointment times and their regular contact with NHS patients, positions them as key partners in improving public and lung health, and to challenge the disproportionate impact of lung conditions on the health inequality gap.

Henry Gregg, Chair of the Taskforce for Lung Health

Further information is available in the Annex to this Briefing Note. For further help, including with Parliamentary questions, contact either Zoe Long zoe.long@cpe.org.uk or Bethan Alderson balderson@asthmaandlung.org.uk.

Rationale and Benefits

To avoid another winter crisis, we are calling on the Government to follow our Action Plan and make the best use of community pharmacies.

This will involve deploying the right respiratory vaccines to the right people. The Government should build on previous successes by expanding the vaccinations provided from community pharmacies beyond the well-established flu and C-19 programmes, alongside the rollout of the RSV vaccine and widening of access to other key vaccinations.

The NHS can also make further significant contributions to making England a smoke-free society by supporting people to easily access stop smoking services through a nationally commissioned Smoking Cessation Service in Community Pharmacies. This would better support and build on the hospital referral service while addressing some of the current variations in access and provision at a local level.

Pharmacies could also do more to support the management of asthma and COPD, by providing inhaler technique checks and annual reviews as part of the Community Pharmacist Prescribing Service that the Government committed to in its Manifesto. This would help to improve lung health in the community and to reduce pressure on GP services, as well as providing patients with more choice as to where they can access advice and support.

By leveraging their accessibility, flexibility and established trust within communities, pharmacies can play a larger role in future vaccination programmes, stop smoking services, inhaler technique checks and annual reviews, benefiting lung health patients and the healthcare system alike.