



Medicines Optimisation Campaign Greener Inhalers

Communications Toolkit

September 2023

Introduction

The ICB's Medicines Optimisation Team are working to launch four behaviour change campaigns across North East and North Cumbria ICB. These public-facing campaigns complement major ongoing areas of clinical work, where prescribing has an impact on health and outcomes. This toolkit has been designed to help you share the messages with patients and colleagues.

Respiratory review and inhaler choice (Greener Inhalers)

North East and North Cumbria NHS wants to create healthier futures in the region by encouraging greener inhaler behaviours including a switch over to more environmentally friendly inhalers. Inhaler emissions account for approximately 3% of the NHS carbon footprint. Salbutamol prescribing constitutes a high proportion of the carbon footprint across all inhalers and Sunderland is the 4th highest prescriber of Salbutamol per 1,000 patients in England.

About the toolkit

This toolkit provides a brief overview of the four medicines optimisation campaign Greener inhalers that have been running successfully for a number of years and are now being implemented across North East and North Cumbria NHS.

It includes key messages, newsletter items, a one-page staff explainer, links to patient-facing materials and social media posts for you to customise and use in your comms and engagement work.

Promotional Material

A range of promotional materials, such as patient leaflets, posters, digital display screens, and social media graphics, are available to download from the Campaign Hub website (nenc-campaignhub.nhs.uk).

For further information please contact victoriacasey@nhs.net

Key messages

Greener Inhalers - tackling respiratory review and inhaler choice

Inhaler emissions account for approximately 3% of the NHS carbon footprint. Salbutamol prescribing constitutes a high proportion of the carbon footprint across all inhalers and Sunderland is the 4th highest prescriber of Salbutamol per 1,000 patients in England.

Research conducted in 2022 had two aims:

1. To understand patients' perceptions of the value of salbutamol inhalers and to what extent they consider the environmental impact of them.
2. To inform the development of behaviour change interventions including campaign messaging.

Two key messages were identified and tested with the public, resulting in the Greener Inhalers campaign being developed in early 2023.

1. **Dispose of old or used inhalers safely**

Throwing them in the bin (even household recycling bins) means they end up in landfill with the remnant harmful gases being released into the environment.

2. **Use a dry powder inhaler (DPI) or soft mist inhaler (SMI) instead**

These alternatives have a significantly lower carbon footprint than MDIs and are clinically equivalent for many patients.

General public

What can I do about it?

- **Take your old inhaler with you when you collect a new one**
 - There's a safe and correct way of disposing your old inhaler
 - Improper disposal harms the environment
 - Return your old inhaler when you get a new one
- **Change to a more environmentally friendly inhaler when offered it in your review**
 - Some inhalers are more harmful to the environment than others
 - Speak with your prescriber about trying a new inhaler at your next review
 - Greener alternatives exist - you can give it a try and switch back if it doesn't work for you

Suggested bulletin/newsletter copy

Greener Inhalers

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- **Take your old inhaler with you when you collect a new one**
 - There's a safe and correct way to dispose of your old inhaler
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One-page explainer for staff

The North East and North Cumbria ICB Medicines Optimisation Team will be rolling out four impactful behaviour-change campaigns across the region. One of which is Greener inhalers.

These campaigns align with ongoing clinical work, emphasising the critical role of prescribing in healthcare outcomes:

Respiratory review and inhaler choice - Greener Inhalers

- Aims to reduce the carbon footprint by encouraging environmentally-friendly inhaler choices.
- Promotes safe inhaler disposal and switching to eco-conscious options.

Why are they being launched?

These public-facing campaigns have been developed to complement major ongoing areas of clinical work, where prescribing has an impact on health and outcomes.

How can we help?

There are four main areas where you can help with the roll out of the campaigns and key messages:

Conversations: Engage in meaningful discussions with patients about the campaign topics.

Resources: Utilise campaign materials to support your conversations and educate patients.

Promotion: Encourage patients to visit campaign websites for additional information.

Awareness: Raise awareness of these campaigns within your practice and among colleagues.

Social media posts

Below we have written some sample posts for social media channels, including Facebook and X (formally known as Twitter). Please note that these are to be accompanied by the relevant campaign social graphics which can be downloaded from the Campaign Hub website (nenc-campaignhub.nhs.uk).

Staff facing:

Greener Inhalers

#DidYouKnow that inhaler emissions account for approximately 3% of the NHS carbon footprint?

Most inhalers contain gases that contribute to global warming, if they are not disposed of correctly. But we can make a difference by educating patients on how to dispose of old or used inhalers safely.

Patient facing:

Greener Inhalers

#Didyouknow Some of the more popular inhalers could release the same harmful gases into the environment as a car journey from Sunderland to Glasgow.

You can talk to your nurse, doctor, or pharmacist about trying a new inhaler. Contact your practice today

Greener Inhalers

#Didyouknow you can take your old inhalers to the pharmacy when you pick up a new one. They will dispose of your old inhalers safely.

Hand them in. Don't put them in the bin.

Patient Text Messages

Greener Inhalers

#Didyouknow Some of the more popular inhalers could release the same harmful gases into the environment as a car journey from Sunderland to Glasgow

You can talk to your nurse, doctor, or pharmacist about trying a new inhaler

For further information on any of the campaigns please contact victoriacasey@nhs.net