

The Re-Launch of the Asthma and Allergy Friendly Schools programme in Tower Hamlets – March 2023

Asthma in Tower Hamlets

Asthma is a treatable long-term condition that affects airways. Tower Hamlets has one of the highest levels of asthma in the country. Currently over 3,000 children under 19 years in Tower Hamlets are diagnosed with asthma. Care plans are one of the most effective ways to control asthma, improve wellbeing and prevent deaths. However, only 1000 of these children have had their care plan updated in the past year.

Whilst the responsibility for managing a child's asthma rests with parent/carers, GPs and/or asthma specialists, schools play a role in ensuring children are safe during school hours. In doing so, schools can spot where care is less than adequate and can flag this to relevant partners.

The Asthma and Allergy Friendly School (AAFS) programme

The Asthma and Allergy Friendly Schools programme aims to clarify and help schools to ensure that children with asthma are safe and supported when at school. The NHS North East London Integration Board (NHS NEL ICB) and London Borough of Tower Hamlets are encouraging all schools in Tower Hamlets to become Asthma and Allergy Friendly Schools

The programme was rolled out in Tower Hamlets in 2021 but paused in summer 2022 to review feedback from schools and is now being re-launched in March 2023 following the review and amendments.

The AAFS programme is a national programme aimed at improving outcomes for children with asthma by supporting schools to achieve six care standards for asthma and allergy management to:

- Increase knowledge and confidence in schools, teachers, pupils and parents on asthma management
- Improve school attendance (less days off school due to asthma)
- Reduce the risk of asthma and allergy in schools

The six care standards that schools must achieve to be recognised as an Asthma and Allergy friendly School are:

1. Have a signed off Asthma and Allergy policy
2. Have and maintain an Asthma and Allergy register
3. Appoint Asthma/Allergy Champion
4. Have 85% of staff complete Asthma and Allergy training
5. Check that all pupils have a generic Asthma and Allergy care plans

6. Have an Asthma/Allergy Emergency medicine kit

Currently only 12 (13%) schools in Tower Hamlets have AAFS status and a further 31 are working towards being certified.

We received feedback from a number of schools on the AAFS programme, which resulted in pausing the programme last summer (2022) to review and respond to the challenges reported by schools. The feedback indicated that schools found the standards for training, care plans and emergency kit challenging to meet. The standards were reviewed and amended as in **Table 1**.

Table 1

No	Standard	Previous Requirement	Revised Requirement
1	Asthma/Allergy Policy	Individual school version Accessible to school staff/parents A Named lead <i>Click the link for full details - Asthma and Allergy Friendly Schools Policy</i>	No changes
2	Asthma /Allergy Register	Name and DOB for each student Consent for emergency medication/inhaler Displayed prominently next to emergency poster Estimated no. of students 10% - consider more investigating if less. <i>Click the link for full details - Asthma Registry</i>	No changes
3	Asthma/Allergy Champion	Responsible for:	No changes

		<p>coordinating training, updating register, emergency pack requirements met. <i>Click the link for full details - Asthma Champion</i></p>	
4	Asthma/Allergy Training	<p>Training for 85-100% of staff annually</p>	<p>To comply with national standard and safety we are retaining the 85% staff target.</p> <p>Staff can either access a virtual or video awareness session.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The virtual sessions are provided by the School Nursing Team. <p>This is a half-termly awareness sessions. Emails are sent to schools with the eventbrite link to register and also advertised on School Health Service 2023-webinars. Twilight sessions are now also available.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. The awareness video: This requires watching the below videos: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Asthma and Allergy Friendly Schools Introduction (6minutes) <p>Introduction into Asthma & Allergy Friendly schools</p> b. Asthma Awareness Training (30minutes) <p>Asthma Awareness session</p> c. Allergy Awareness Training (20minutes) <p>Allergy Awareness session</p> <p>Staff should advise their Asthma and Allergy champion once they have attended either awareness session for</p>

			<p>record keeping or self-complete their school's training spreadsheet. Instruction on how to create individual school's spreadsheet is here</p> <p>Additional training, by request If requested, the new Asthma nurses (once in post) will offer face to face support on administration of Epipen to the Champions, First Aiders and other staff interested in assisting in emergency. More details will be shared once the nurses are in post.</p>
5	Care plans	All children have an Individualised Asthma Plan	<p>A generic School Care plan is sufficient and safe for the AAFS programme. However, for best practice we are advising schools to have a process in place for obtaining individualised care plan when a child with asthma/allergy joins the school. Where parents/carers fail to provide individualised plan on three or more occasions of requesting, the school should contact with School Nursing Team service who will liaise with clinicians (Thgpcg.schoolnurses@nhs.net /Tel: 02039 507176). If there are any safeguarding concerns, referral to Children Social Care should be considered.</p>
6	Emergency kit	The school has emergency kit/s on site that are accessible. These kits include inhalers, adrenaline pens and spacers. The emergency kits are maintained with out-of-date/used medication replaced.	<p>Schools said that the emergency kit was expensive to purchase so we have secured two community Pharmacies that can provide the kit at cost price:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lansbury Pharmacy @ 85 Chrisp Street, London E14 6GG 02079871875 & Nash Pharmacy, 817 Commercial Rd, London E14 7HG 020 7987 1398 2. The Bell Pharmacy at 557-559 Roman Road, Bow, Tower Hamlets, London, E3 5EL <p>The Sinclair's Pharmacy will give 20% discount.</p> <p>For steps on how to purchase the kit click the link below Emergency kit discount price pharmacies</p>

			<p>We are working on getting more pharmacies on the list for ease of access across the borough.</p> <p>Kits can be bought from other sources but may be more expensive as no discount may be offered</p>
--	--	--	--

Referral to the Asthma Nurse Specialist at- TH.paedasthmanurse@nhs.net

Refer children:

- Needing blue inhaler more than 3 times a week at school
- Not partaking in PE
- Missing lots of time off school due to asthma.

Self-certification Form

Once all the standards have been completed, complete and return the [AFS Certification Form](#) to th.paedasthmanurse@nhs.net and your school will be issued the Asthma and Allergy Friendly Schools Certificate.

Even if all the standards have not been completed, also, complete and return the form and a certificate to say your school is working towards becoming an Asthma and Allergy Friendly school status will be sent to you

For further information [Click here](#) for Asthma and Allergy Friendly Schools Toolkit

For more information contact

<p>Kate Smith Head of The Healthy Lives Team Tel: 0207 364 6433 Email: Kate.Smith@towerhamlets.gov.uk</p>	<p>Tori Hadaway Asthma Community Clinical Nurse Specialist Email: Th.paedasthmanurse@nhs.net</p>	<p>Geraldine Collins School Health & Wellbeing Service Lead Email: geraldinecollins@nhs.net</p>
--	---	---

Thank you for your support with this programme.

Kind regards,

Dr Julia Moody

Tower Hamlets Children and Young People Clinical Lead,
NHS North East London ICB

Dr Katie Cole

Associate Director of Public Health for Children and Families,
London Borough of Tower Hamlets