

# Plan launched to improve respiratory health in Wales

It sets out the Welsh Government's vision for respiratory services in Wales and identifies the actions the NHS in Wales will take in response. The plan will focus on delivering care that best impacts on patient experience and outcome and tackling variation in the quality of care.

The plan outlines work to improve smoking cessation services, better diagnose chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and reduce variation in prescribing. Health boards have all committed to:

- appointing a flu jab champion
- ensuring carbon monoxide monitoring and referral is routine smokers attending a respiratory outpatient appointment
- offering patients and parents asthma action plans for better self care
- improve access to exercise-based programmes for people with chronic respiratory conditions.

In 2015, around 15% of adults in Wales were being treated for a respiratory condition and respiratory diseases caused more than 16% of all deaths in Wales. Asthma UK estimates there are around 59,000 children with asthma in Wales, 9.5% of the total.

The Health Secretary has published the plan following a visit to Prince Charles Hospital in Merthyr Tydfil to meet the winner of the prestigious Royal College of Nursing Nurse of the Year award 2017, Louise Walby.

Louise has worked as a Respiratory Nurse Facilitator in a part of the Welsh valleys with one of the worst mortality figures in Britain for chronic lung disease. She was recognised for her work in improving the patient experience and management of COPD, and her work is now being used as an example of best practice across Wales.

Health Secretary Vaughan Gething said;

“I was delighted to speak to Louise again, following her great achievement at the RCN Awards last year. I am in no doubt that the people of Merthyr Tydfil will benefit from such a dedicated health professional for years to come.

“Improving the respiratory health of the people of Wales is a major challenge for healthcare services. With this plan, we hope to improve the quality of life for many patients with acute or chronic respiratory diseases.

“This plan will support health boards to provide more consistent services across Wales and to deliver services reaching national standards of care for respiratory disease.”

Head of Wales, British Lung Foundation Joseph Carter said;

“We now need health boards to respond positively and deliver the plan locally to improve the lives of their citizens.

“We are delighted that the Welsh Government is continuing to provide leadership with a new extended Respiratory Health Delivery Plan.

“The plan recognises the need to invest in pulmonary rehabilitation, NERS and self-management in order to keep people with lung conditions active, informed and out of hospital.