**Press release**

**Cutting carbon with greener inhalers**

Suitable people in Norfolk and Waveney will soon be given the option to swap to a more environmentally-friendly “greener” inhaler which could reduce their carbon footprint by the equivalent of driving around 1,740 miles a year.

The NHS, supported by NHS Norfolk and Waveney Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), is promoting the use of dry powder inhalers (DPI) instead of metered dose inhalers (MDIs) for respiratory conditions such as asthma and COPD.

This is because evidence shows that many people will be able to achieve the same benefit from using a DPI, which is much kinder to the environment than a metered dose inhaler as it does not use powerful greenhouse gases to propel the medication into the patient’s lungs.

As a result, greener inhalers have an estimated carbon footprint equivalent of just 20g per dose compared with 500g in MDIs.

Over the next few weeks, GPs across Norfolk and Waveney will begin writing to patients who use inhalers to explain the options which are available.

They will then be invited to work alongside their healthcare professional to make the right choice for them using a new [decision aid](https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng80/resources/inhalers-for-asthma-patient-decision-aid-pdf-6727144573), which has been developed by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE).

Patients who are suitable and opt to change to a greener inhaler will be given training on how to use it.

Michael Dennis, Head of Medicines Optimisation at the CCG, said: “We are pleased to support this initiative, which will help people to make shared decisions on which inhaler is both best for them and best for the environment.

“Anyone who does choose to switch will be given all of the training they need to use the inhaler effectively, in turn helping them control their respiratory condition rather than have it control them.

“People who need to use metered dose inhalers should absolutely continue to do so – but if you have the choice of a greener option, do think about the environment. Cutting carbon emissions is good news for everyone, especially those with respiratory conditions.”

Dr Daryl Freeman, specialist respiratory doctor and chair of the Norfolk and Waveney Respiratory Working Group, said: “It’s vital we all engage with the process of reducing greenhouse gasses, at work and in our normal lives. Using DPIs will help.”

The CCG is also urging patients to return their used inhalers to their pharmacy or GP practice dispensary for environmentally safe disposal or recycling.

**Ends**

**Note to editors:**

1. The NHS long term plan includes an ambition to reduce the health service’s carbon footprint through initiatives such as shifting to lower carbon inhalers. This is because inhalers are estimated to contribute 3.9% of the total carbon footprint of the NHS.
2. Greener inhalers are not suitable for every patient. Patients will be encouraged to choose the inhaler which is best for them and, if possible, better for the environment too.
3. More than 26m prescriptions for metered dose inhalers were written in primary care in England in 2016/17. They made up 70% of UK inhaler sales in 2017, compared with fewer than half in other European countries and just 13% in Sweden.

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