

COMET

COPD MANAGEMENT, EARLY INTERVENTION & TREATMENT

Authors: Karen Ault¹ Dr Catherine Griffith¹, Rachel Voller¹, Laura Dugdale², Jennifer Gilroy-Cheetham²
¹ National Health Service (NHS), ² Chiesi Ltd

COMET is a targeted diagnostics pathway transformation project within Primary Care, designed to manage and treat patients identified as 'at high risk' of having COPD based on findings identified as part of the NHS Lung Cancer Screening Programme (LCS)

Introduction

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) affects around 3 million people in the UK, with up to two million undiagnosed, often called 'The Missing Millions.' COPD puts strain on acute care, causing ~130,000 hospital admissions annually, and diagnosis can be difficult due to limited public awareness and challenges in confirming cases.¹ Diagnosis remains particularly challenging in deprived communities where access to spirometry and other respiratory diagnostics is often limited despite a higher burden of disease.² The Wirral is ranked among the more deprived local authorities in England with approximately 23% of neighbourhoods classified as highly deprived³ which exemplifies this challenge. From November 2024- May 2026, the COMET project addressed the issue of undiagnosed COPD on the Wirral by integrating a community-based targeted diagnostic clinic, leveraging the results of the Lung Cancer Screening Programme to target patients at high risk of having COPD.

Aims

- To support participants on the Wirral at high risk of having COPD based on symptoms, imaging and spirometry findings identified through LCS.
- To invite an identified cohort of LCS participants at risk of having COPD to attend a diagnostic clinic which will provide patients with a comprehensive, holistic, clinical assessment.
- To initiate evidence-based pharmacological and non-pharmacological interventions for newly diagnosed COPD patients with the goal of improving short, medium, and long-term health outcomes.

The COMET Patient Pathway

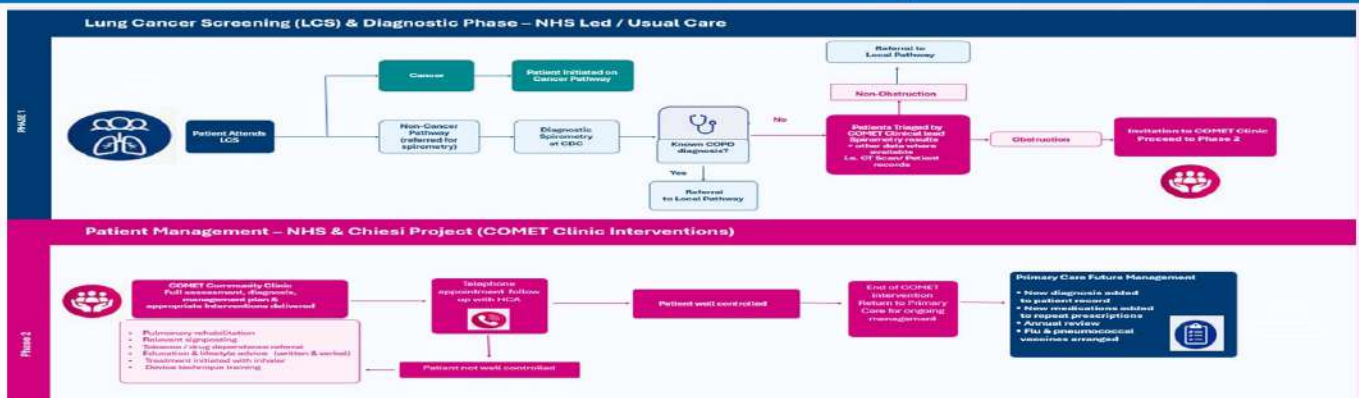


Figure 1. A flow diagram demonstrating the COMET patient pathway.

Results



Figure 2. Infographics depicting COMET patient pathway outputs

Integrating a **community-based targeted case finding pathway** alongside an existing Lung Cancer Screening Programme uncovered a number of undiagnosed COPD cases in a **'high-risk' population**. Results of this can be found in figure 2.

This cross-service, targeted approach to undiagnosed COPD supported **timely diagnosis in a deprived area** and **addressed health inequalities**, indicating strong alignment with **Core20PLUS**

Patient postcode data collected as part of the project was assessed using the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) data and showed that:

~50% of newly diagnosed patients lived in the most deprived Wirral neighbourhoods (Deciles 1 & 2).

Conclusions

The COMET model shows promise for a scalable pathway for broader adoption to proactively case find and treat COPD in similar high-risk populations aligned to Lung Cancer Screening which could help to address the challenge of the 'Missing Millions' and underdiagnosis in COPD.

Key lessons included leveraging LCS data to prompt early intervention and COPD diagnosis in a high-risk population, and the importance of engaging local Primary Care partners in service design.

Acknowledgements

This work is part of a collaborative working project in conjunction with Wirral Primary Care Collaborative and Chiesi UK Limited, with thanks and acknowledgements to North West Coast Clinical Network, Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care Board, and Asthma and Lung UK for their support

References: 1. National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE). Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease. How common is it? Available at: <https://cks.nice.org.uk/topics/chronic-obstructive-pulmonary-disease/background-information/prevalence-incidence/>. 3. Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. English Indices of Deprivation 2025 <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2025>