

Policy Round-Up

A summary of the latest developments in the UK health services, including any major new reports, guidelines and other documents relevant to primary care respiratory medicine



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2019 was the year where new systems for improving respiratory care at national level became established in order to deliver the respiratory aspirations of the NHS Long Term Plan. PCRS has been instrumental over decades in getting us to this point and is now very much at the table at decision-making and at working-group level.

The start of 2020 has seen the emergence of a respiratory issue that of course has changed the way we work and live and will do so for some time to come. Over the coming weeks and months, the Policy Forum, other committees and PCRS Executive will need to recalibrate and adapt to continue to be a support for our members and wider audience. Normally in this update we would let you know about our progress and that of the country programmes. There is obviously a lot of work on hold but we will keep in touch and keep you up to date on policy issues of interest to you.

mentation and clinical work has now had to scale back to focus on more pressing matters.

The draft Respiratory Care Action Plan for Scotland consultation deadline has been postponed due to the pandemic. We will continue to work with our members in Scotland when this resumes. You can access the consultation document here.

NHSE/I funding for spirometry training was launched at the start of the year but has coincided with the need now to refocus efforts to COVID-19. In addition, respiratory tests such as spirometry and FeNO are aerosol generating and increase the risk of viral spread and are no longer a current clinical priority. Over the next weeks and months, we will inevitably need to get back on track with long term condition diagnosis and management as we see already that there may be collateral effects from COVID-19 beyond direct infection.

What is happening with the big national programmes?



The Taskforce for Lung Health continues to meet online but as the prime audience are policymakers who are now redeployed and focused on COVID-19 there is a reduced programme of work. The data tracker is now up and running and you can read more about what has been achieved in the 2019 annual report which you can find at www.blf.org.uk/taskforce/plan/one-year-on.

Similarly, the NHSE/I respiratory delivery board and its work programmes with a membership responsible for policy, imple-

PCRS Opinion
Policy briefings, consensus documents, pragmatic guides and more
Translating policy into practice to improve respiratory care

PCRS Opinion: Our new website page and helping you to influence and use policy for change

In the last few months, we have updated our presence on the PCRS website so you can now go to one place to find out about PCRS Opinion (www.pcrs-uk.org/pcrs-opinion).

Here you can find links to pragmatic guides, consensus and position statements. We are also keen for you to feedback on how you think our PCRS Opinion is standing up, does it need an update, is there something else we should be looking at?

Keeping up to speed with COVID-19 to try and give the pragmatic advice that we know readers value

We have responded to the Rapid NICE guideline consultations on Severe asthma, COPD and Pneumonia so that the voices of the COVID-19 primary and community care community are being heard and that the guidance is realistic and practical. You can find the latest COVID-19 rapid guidance from NICE on a variety of topics at www.nice.org.uk/guidance/conditions-and-diseases/infections/covid19/products?Status=Published

We have developed a COVID-19 web page where we have tried to place all the materials we think people might find useful which you can access at www.pcrs-uk.org/coronavirus. Not surprisingly, evidence for everything we want answers to is not always available and we have had to adjust sometimes on a day by day basis as we learn more on what we think can be shared and used. If there are materials or resources you are finding useful, let us know so we can include them on our COVID-19 for everyone to access.

Our pragmatic guides we know are helpful to our clinicians so we also developed early on a consensus informed by evidence



about how to support people with COPD and asthma during the crisis which you can access at www.pcrs-uk.org/coronavirus. We keep an eye on this and update as further evidence emerges.

Our Policy Forum membership has grown and diversified

At the beginning of 2020 we recruited new members to our Policy Forum. We now have a member from Northern Ireland, Leon O'Hagan who joins Darush Attar Zadeh as one of our two pharmacists now on the forum for the first time. We also welcome Beverley Bostock, nurse practitioner and renowned respiratory writer and teacher who strengthens our nursing voice on this committee.

The PCRS position

Despite the current pandemic, some of our policy influencing work has continued in the background and since the beginning of 2020 we have issued position statements on CRP testing in COPD, the use of eCigarettes and environmental issues in respiratory care. These can all be accessed through our dedicated PCRS Opinion web page. Upcoming position statements include the respiratory management of frail elderly patients and digital GP services.



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