

Living Well

Respiratory Disease

Revised: 2014

Introduction

Respiratory disease can be conceptualised as a disease that ‘affects the air passages including the nasal passages, the bronchi and lungs’, ([World Health Organisation](#)).

[The NHS National Institute for Health Research](#) highlights that respiratory diseases are a major cause of morbidity and death in the UK with Asthma affecting one in seven individuals. Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) is the fourth most common cause of death worldwide; more infections are spread via the respiratory tract than by any other route; and cystic fibrosis is the most common single gene disorder of childhood.

[Public Health England](#) have calculated that approximately 8 million people in the UK are affected by chronic lung diseases, mostly through Asthma or COPD, referring to the diseases as being a hidden disability with those affected experiencing severe restrictions on their ability to undertake routine daily activities.

COPD is the umbrella term for a number of diseases including emphysema, chronic Bronchitis and Bronchiectasis and is characterised by an obstruction of the airways and limitation of air in and out of the lungs making it difficult to breathe. The disease is progressive and not reversible. Associated risk factors are smoking, second hand smoke fumes and dust. Air pollution has also been cited as an attributable factor. Smoking is considered to be the primary cause of COPD ([NHS Choices COPD](#)).

Asthma affects the airways in the lungs and presenting symptoms include coughing wheezing and breathlessness and a tightness in the chest. Effective treatment can leave patients symptom free. There has been a rise in the number of people who have asthma over the last few decades and it is believed that this may be linked to changes in diet, housing, and levels of hygiene ([NHS Choices Asthma](#)).

Incidence and mortality rates of respiratory disease is said to be higher in disadvantaged groups and areas. Smoking is said to be the leading cause of COPD and smoking is closely linked with deprivation and inequalities ([Department Health-Living Well for Longer](#)).

This section will highlight the main issues surrounding respiratory disease with a focus on what this means locally for the residents of West Berkshire.

What do we know?

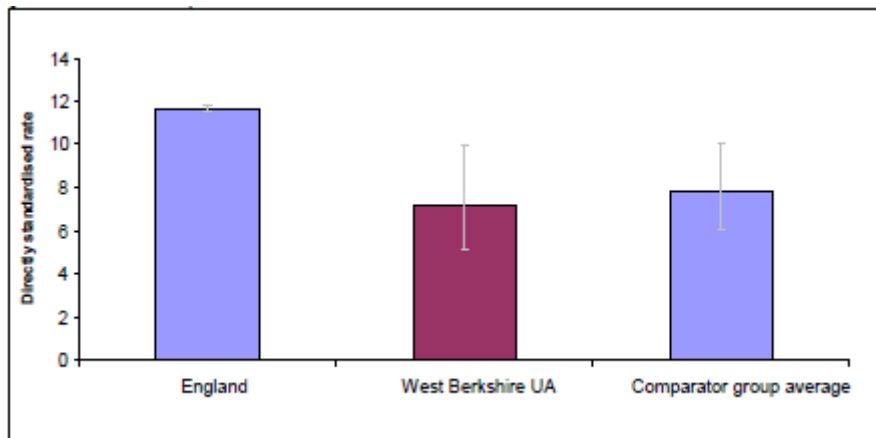
National Picture

It is estimated that 3 million people have COPD in the UK and 2 million of those have not been diagnosed, predominately those with milder symptoms. 214,000 people died of respiratory disease in the UK and COPD is the second most common cause of emergency admission to hospital in the United Kingdom.

Local Picture

An average of 43 people from the West Berkshire Local Authority (LA) dies from COPD each year. This is a rate of 27 per 100,000 for males and 12 per 100,000 females; 39% of these deaths were in people aged less than 75 years of age. People from West Berkshire Local Authority (LA) are not significantly more or less likely to die from COPD than the national, regional, and NHS Berkshire West area average. However, approximately 7 in 100,000 people aged less than 75 years living in West Berkshire die from a respiratory disease where the death is considered preventable.

Figure 1: Under 75 mortality rate from respiratory disease considered preventable, 2009-2011



Source: Public Health England – Public Health Outcomes Framework

What is the data telling us?

The number of people in West Berkshire (aged less than 75) who die from a respiratory disease has slightly decreased over the past 10 years. However, there are also a number of preventable deaths caused by respiratory disease.

Recommendations for consideration

The key recommendation is to align resources to tackle the preventable deaths. This could include:

- earlier identification of respiratory disease;
- GP screening;
- raising awareness of symptoms amongst the general public;
- to continue the smoking cessation programmes

Other services and partner organisations

Local services include:

- Hospital services for inpatient and outpatient care

- [Community COPD Respiratory Service](#), including [West Berkshire Breathe Easy](#)
- Community Pharmacists
- [West Call out of hours GP service](#)
- [South Central Ambulance Service](#)
- [NHS 111](#)
- Services to help with diet and exercise including:
 - [West Berkshire Activity for Health](#)
 - [Easy Breathing Classes](#)
 - [Eat for Health](#)

National and local strategies

Nationally, the [National Institute for Health and Care Excellence \(NICE\)](#) have several clinical guidelines for respiratory disease including:

- [Asthma Inhaler Devices \(TA10\) for children under 5](#)
- [Asthma Inhaler Devices for Older Children \(TA38\)](#)
- [Respiratory Tract Infections \(CG69\)](#)
- [Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease \(CG101\)](#)

Nice also produce the following quality standards:

- [Quality Standard for Asthma \(QS25\)](#)
- [Smoking Cessation and Supporting People to Stop Smoking \(QS43\)](#)

These guidelines are aimed at practicing doctors to facilitate the correct treatment of those with the relevant diagnosis.

Other chapters you might be interested in

Air Pollution

Smoking

Independence in Older Age

Deprivation

Life Expectancy

If you have any questions about this chapter, please contact Public Health and Wellbeing Team on publichealthandwellbeing@westberks.gov.uk or 01635 503437