

PULMONARY REHABILITATION INFORMATION FOR REFERRERS

What is Pulmonary Rehabilitation?

Pulmonary Rehabilitation is a community-based exercise programme which aims to improve the function of people with a long-term respiratory disease. An education element is also run alongside this program. The aim of the education is to give the participant a more informed knowledge of their lung condition to enable them to manage it on a day-to-day basis, with the goal of trying to reduce hospital admissions and the need for antibiotics and steroids.

Types of Courses:

The West Pulmonary Rehabilitation team are able to offer home-based, virtual and face-to-face exercise courses depending on the patient's preference.

Face-to-face Classes – These courses are usually held in local community centres or leisure centres. In west Suffolk they are currently available in Haverhill Leisure Centre, Sudbury Kingfisher Leisure Centre, Mildenhall Hub, Brandon Leisure Centre, Newmarket Leisure Centre and Anselm Community Centre, Bury St. Edmunds. For those who live in Norfolk, there are also courses run in Thetford. The course is 2 sessions a week for 2 hours, including and exercise and education component.

Virtual Classes – a small group of up to 8 patients are invited to take part in twice weekly classes, from the comfort of their home, via the Microsoft Teams platform (for a period of 6 weeks). These classes will be led by a Physiotherapist and an Assistant. Patients choosing this option will need to have a PC, laptop or tablet with a webcam & microphone, internet access and a personal e-mail address. The patient will be provided with any equipment needed to complete these classes.

Home Exercises Programme – patients taking part in this program will be provided with the exercise sheets and education leaflets so that they can carry out their exercises two days per week at home (for a period of 6 weeks). They will be provided with any equipment needed to complete these sessions and will receive weekly telephone support from a Physiotherapist or Assistant.

Should you wish to attend a PR class to learn more about how it is run please contact the PR Team via the CCC on 0300 1232425.

Referrals:

Patients may be referred for one of our courses by their Consultant, GP, COPD Nurse, Respiratory Nurse Specialist or Physiotherapist. Patients also now have the option to self refer to pulmonary rehabilitation. Once referred, the patient will be triaged and placed on a waiting list.

- **Please** make sure that all Referral Forms are filled in with as much detail as possible, especially with regards to medical history, as sometimes this is the only information that we have access to.
- **Please** also make sure that your patient wishes to attend Pulmonary Rehabilitation and meets the criteria to attend before referring them.

- Any referral forms that are not filled out correctly may have to be returned which may delay your patient taking part in a course.
- Patients can now self refer via: www.physioselfrefer.co.uk/snee
 - Please do consider your patients ability to complete this and their motivation. It may be they continue to need support to access pulmonary rehabilitation. If in any doubt, please continue to refer via the usual referral form

Please refer by the following routes:

- Email via CCC at: suffolk.ccc@esneft.nhs.uk
- Telephone CCC on 0300 123 2425
- Clinic letter to the CCC
- PR Referral form found on Evolve or DXS referral system

Waiting times:

Waiting times vary depending on demand for the service at different locations. The team aims to see patients with stable lung disease within 90 of receipt of referral. More urgent patients including those following hospitalisation for an exacerbation of COPD or chest infection or those pre or post lung surgery should be seen within 30 days of receipt of referral.

Inclusion Criteria:

- Participants need to be over the age of 18 years
- A diagnosis of COPD (emphysema and/or chronic bronchitis), who are functionally limited by their breathlessness
- A diagnosis of Bronchiectasis, Asthma, Idiopathic Pulmonary Fibrosis, Sarcoidosis, Asbestosis, and other lung conditions who are functionally limited by their breathlessness
- Pre- or Post-lung surgery
- Have an MRC score of **2-5**
- On optimal therapy as per NICE guidelines
- Must have consented to a referral with a good understanding of what the course involves
- Participants must be motivated to attend regularly and actively participate
- If on long term oxygen therapy, ambulatory oxygen must be prescribed
- Need to be able to mobilise at least 10 metres (with or without a walking aid)
- Need to cognitively be able to follow instructions – those with mild dementia or learning difficulties may be accepted, but will need to attend with a relative or carer for supervision and to assist them with paperwork
- Priority will be given to those who have not already completed a course of Pulmonary Rehabilitation. Those who have attended previously can complete further courses **once per year**
- Need to be able to provide their own transport to and from the venue

Exclusion Criteria:

- Patients with an MRC of 1. These patients can be signed up for the MyCOPD app or referred for exercise on prescription classes held at the Abbeycroft Leisure sites. If these patients have other issues (e.g. dysfunctional breathing patterns, difficulty clearing secretions), then these patients should be referred to Respiratory Physiotherapy Clinic at the West Suffolk Hospital.
- Unstable or uncontrolled cardiac conditions/awaiting cardiac investigations

- Unstable angina
- Uncontrolled arrhythmias causing symptoms or haemodynamic compromise
- Syncope
- Active endocarditis
- Acute myocarditis or pericarditis
- Symptomatic moderate to severe aortic stenosis
- Uncontrolled heart failure (ejection fraction <35%)
- Hypertrophic cardiomyopathy
- Unstable hypotension or hypertension
- Myocardial infarction in the 6 weeks prior to the programme commencing
- Those awaiting a pacemaker and those who are < 6 weeks post-pacemaker fitting
- Poorly controlled hypertension (systolic > 220mmHg, diastolic > 120mmHg) or hypotension
- Those with an untreated embolism or unstable INR
- Those with AAA >5.5cm and require surgery. If not a candidate for surgery, then instructions for exercise to come via Vascular Consultant
- Poorly controlled diabetes
- Musculoskeletal or neurological condition which will limit their ability to exercise
- Anything else the assessing clinician determines meaning the patient is not safe to exercise.

What Happens if a Patient is not Suitable?

Those patients who are not deemed suitable to commence a Pulmonary Rehabilitation course could still benefit from any of the following:

- Respiratory Physiotherapy at WSH via therapyreferrals@wsh.nhs.uk.
- Chest Clinic at West Suffolk Hospital
- Other community led support services e.g. One-Life Suffolk for Health Walks, Breathe Easy support group. The British Lung Foundation is available for telephone support and online advice.

Patients with an MRC of 1 can be signed up for the MyCOPD app or referred for exercise on prescription classes held at the Abbeycroft Leisure sites. If these patients have other issues (e.g. dysfunctional breathing patterns, difficulty clearing secretions), then these patients should be referred to Respiratory Physiotherapy Clinic at the West Suffolk Hospital via therapyreferrals@wsh.nhs.uk.

If you wish to discuss a patient with a clinician the Pulmonary Rehabilitation team can be contacted via the CCC on 0300 1232425.

What Happens After a Course?

Once the patient has finished their 6-week course they will undergo a final assessment. This involves repeating some of their initial tests to see their improvement.

A discharge letter summarising their progress will then be sent to their referring clinician.

Patients will be encouraged to continue with their exercises routine and/or will be signposted to local groups to assist them with this. They will also be given details of local support groups.

Patients may take part in one Pulmonary Rehabilitation course per year.