

ACEing Asthma: a health and housing partnership to improve outcomes for children with asthma

¹Marsh V, ²Jennings C, ¹Cummings L, ²King E, ³Iqbal N, ³Freeth S, ¹Ford H

¹Black Country Integrated Care Board, ²Walsall Housing Group, ³Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust

Context:

The national bundle of care for children and young people with asthma requires health to work in partnership with housing to improve health outcomes for children with asthma.

Asthma affects 1 in 11 children and can be fatal if not well controlled. A landmark case, resulting in the death of a child, has shown that asthma prognosis is particularly impacted by environmental factors such as housing. Walsall Housing Group (whg) is the main provider of social housing in Walsall (22,000 homes)

The problem:

Walsall is a severely deprived area within the Black Country Integrated Care System where 52% of residents are within the CORE20PLUS population. Rates of admission to hospital in Walsall for children with asthma are amongst the highest in England and are the highest of 4 places in the Black Country.

Strategy for change:

ACEing Asthma is a health and housing partnership project comprising:

- Proactively identifying children with asthma in whg properties,
- Working together to optimise asthma control
- Harnessing the power of social prescribing to support self-management
- Mitigating housing and wider socio-economic risks

The intervention is delivered by whg's team of Community Champions and Social Prescribers who themselves are social housing customers with lived experience of health inequalities. They are trained and supported by children's asthma practitioners and form a human bridge between families and local services. A pathway with the hospital is established and the ICB's children's asthma team support communications with primary care.

Outcomes:

This project provides asthma self-management support to families. It monitors referrals and delivery of the intervention, home surveyor assessment and priority repairs, and families rehoused or provided with wider support (see table 1)

Next steps:

We are establishing pathways with general practice and school nursing teams to enable us to widen the reach and impact of this project.

We are working with the Black Country Health & Housing Forum to scale up across the Black Country.

This project is a finalist in the 2024 HSJ award category - Early Intervention and Prevention for Children, Young People and Families

Messages for others:

Effective partnership work between health and housing is challenging – begin with creating shared understanding and intentions.



Children attending a community asthma education event

Table 1: September 2022 – March 2024

Number of children/families	217 children from 102 families received the ACEing Asthma intervention
Wider determinants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 82 were receiving means tested benefits • 96% met the threshold for child poverty • 55 were lone parents • 33 were in rent arrears <p>217 children were provided with warm clothing, shoes, food, and fuel vouchers</p>
Asthma assessments and support	<p>157 asthma assessments were completed with those who scored low signposted to the most appropriate health service</p> <p>Asthma self-management support packs and assistance to access information was provided to 102 families</p>
Housing issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priority repairs were carried out in 49 homes with damp and mould • 3 families were relocated due to housing conditions