



Leicestershire  
**Take AIR**  
ACTION FOR INHALER RECYCLING



# University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust

## Information Leaflet

## What is Take AIR?

The Leicestershire **Take AIR (Action for Inhaler Recycling)** scheme is an initiative that enables you to help the environment by disposing of and recycling your empty, unwanted or out-of-date inhalers through the post.

The scheme started in February 2021 and is being piloted across community pharmacies in the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR) area for 12 months. It is now being extended to include hospital wards and departments within the University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust, at Leicester General Hospital, Glenfield Hospital and Leicester Royal Infirmary.



of people would recycle their used inhalers on a more regular basis if they could just post them to a recycling centre.<sup>1</sup>

**Nearly two-thirds of community pharmacies in the LLR area have signed up to the scheme.<sup>2</sup>**

## How does the service work?

Participating UHL hospital wards and departments will give **Take AIR pre-paid postage envelopes** to outpatients and inpatients prescribed an inhaler before they go home. Each envelope can fit up to four empty, used or expired inhalers, of any brand and any type.

When the inhaler is empty or you no longer need to use it, all you need to do is take off any dispensing labels that may be on the inhaler itself. Place the inhaler(s) into the envelope and seal it. Ideally wait and send three or four inhalers at a time in each envelope, as this will increase the benefits of the scheme. Post the sealed envelope through your local Royal Mail post box and we will do the rest.



**All inhalers – of any brand and type – can also still be returned to ANY community pharmacy for safe disposal.**



## How does recycling inhalers help the environment?

Some inhalers contain plastics which are not readily recycled in council recycling schemes. Additionally, local councils are not able to dispose of or recycle the gas contained in 'puffer' (also called pressurised metered dose) inhalers.

Disposing of puffer inhalers correctly prevents the release of greenhouse gases from the canister into the atmosphere, which occurs when the inhalers are sent to landfill.<sup>3</sup>

Through this postal scheme, the aluminum canisters will be recycled and reused. The plastic components will also be recycled and put back into the plastic supply chain. Any remaining propellant gas will be extracted and reused in items such as fridges and air conditioning units.<sup>3</sup> Non-recyclable materials will be converted into energy through a process called *energy-from-waste*.<sup>4</sup>

Did you know that in the UK  
**73 million inhalers**  
are used every year?<sup>3</sup>

## What type of inhalers can be recycled?

Through **Take AIR**, you can safely and responsibly recycle **all** inhalers used for asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), including:

- Pressurised metered dose inhalers (pMDIs) or 'puffer' inhalers
- Dry powder inhalers (DPIs)
- Soft mist inhalers

If you are unsure what type of inhaler you have, please ask a member of the pharmacy team at the hospital, or alternatively you can check with your community pharmacist when you are home.

**Please note:** The most sustainable inhaler is the one that you can use correctly and gain maximum benefit from. For advice on inhaler technique, please speak with your healthcare professional. Additionally, Asthma UK has a range of helpful videos about improving your inhaler technique on its website.





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This is a Chiesi Limited scheme supported by University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust and Leicestershire and Rutland Local Pharmaceutical Committee (LPC).



**University Hospitals  
of Leicester**  
NHS Trust



**LPC.**

Leicestershire & Rutland



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4. Department for Environment and Food affairs. Energy from Waste: a guide to the debate. Available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/284612/pb14130-energy-waste-201402.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/284612/pb14130-energy-waste-201402.pdf). Last accessed August 2021.