

Embargoed until 00:00, Monday 6th October

Chiesi Launches 'Look Beyond the Bias' with Olympian Laura Kenny, Patient Groups and Healthcare Professionals, as 70% Report Hiding Health Conditions Due to Fears of Judgement

- New survey data from over 1,000 people across the UK reveals that 70% have experienced stigma, judgement or blame based on their health condition – with over half avoiding medical help as a result¹
- 'Look Beyond the Bias' aims to tackle harmful biases, spark national conversation, and reduce health inequalities
- The campaign highlights the damaging impact of bias – silencing people, delaying diagnosis and leaving certain conditions overlooked, with serious consequences

Manchester, UK – Monday 6th October – Chiesi UK and Ireland today launch *Look Beyond the Bias*, to shine a light on the harmful impact of stigma and bias faced by people living with health conditions. The campaign is informed by new UK survey data from 1,148 people living with chronic or rare conditions, including: asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), rare diseases, those who have undergone organ transplants and parents of children born prematurely. It demonstrates a stark warning: bias may impact access to fair and inclusive care.

Key findings from the survey include:

- 70% have experienced stigma, judgement or blame based on their health condition¹
- 57% have avoided seeking medical support due to stigma or bias¹
- 70% have isolated themselves from loved ones for fear of judgement¹
- 82% of young adults have experienced bias - almost twice the rate of over-55s¹
- 79% say they've played down the impact of their condition¹
- Over 60% of people have hidden their condition from colleagues or their employer¹

The campaign shows how stigma and bias cut across every part of life, with those surveyed saying it plays a role in delaying diagnosis, limiting research funding and leaves some conditions overlooked and deprioritised.¹ This is particularly true for conditions such as COPD and asthma, where the UK has poorer disease outcomes than in other comparable countries, high rates of emergency admissions, falling diagnosis rates, and significant preventable deaths.^{2,3} In liver disease, deaths also continue to rise, now exceeding 11,000 annually - four times higher than 50 years ago.⁴

Dame Laura Kenny comments: *"After being diagnosed with asthma at a young age, I experienced the same assumptions that many people do when diagnosed with respiratory conditions. Chiesi's Look Beyond the Bias campaign highlights how stigma can affect so many of us, and why it's so important to speak up. Health related bias shouldn't be a barrier for anyone and by shining a light on it through this campaign, we can help ensure that everyone feels valued and empowered with the confidence to get the care and support they deserve."*

Look Beyond the Bias brings together patient organisations, healthcare professionals and advocacy partners to call out harmful assumptions, elevate patient voices and advocate for inclusive, equitable care. The campaign features powerful stories and imagery from people living with health conditions, showing the real impact of stigma on health, work and everyday life.

Jonathan Blades, Director of External Affairs at Asthma + Lung UK, said: *"Stigma around lung conditions is too often ignored, but the damage it causes is far reaching. Our research shows people with lung conditions often feel judged as lazy or unfit, avoided on public transport because of their cough, or too embarrassed or guilty to seek the medical help they need. With 12 million people in the UK expected to develop a lung condition in their lifetime, we must break down these barriers so everyone can access the care they need and deserve."*

The launch of *Look Beyond the Bias* marks the start of a long-term commitment to tackling the stigma uncovered in the survey. Chiesi is working with the NHS, patient groups and the wider healthcare community to champion more inclusive approaches to care. This includes initiatives such as the [FRONTIER](#) clinic in Hull and the [COMET](#) clinic in Wirral, which support earlier diagnosis of COPD in communities facing high risk and social deprivation.

Ralph Blom, General Manager, Chiesi UK and Ireland, commented: *"Look Beyond the Bias is our commitment to tackling harmful biases that exist in the UK that are deeply affecting the patients we serve. The stigma, judgement and blame that people feel on a regular basis is widespread and deep-rooted, and we're proud to be working with partners across the community and NHS to address this challenge. At Chiesi, we feel strongly that no one should be made to feel ashamed, dismissed or blamed because of their health, and this belief sits at the heart of Look Beyond the Bias."*

For more information about Look Beyond the Bias, please visit www.chiesi.uk.com/look-beyond-the-bias.

About Look Beyond the Bias

Look Beyond the Bias has been developed in response to national research conducted by Chiesi UK and Ireland which reveals just how deeply bias is embedded into the everyday lives of people living with chronic and genetic diseases. In a survey of 1,148 people across the UK, 70% said they had experienced stigma, judgement or blame due to their health condition.¹ Bias was reported across a wide range of conditions, from asthma and COPD to premature birth, rare diseases and liver and kidney transplant, shaping not only how people are perceived, but also what support they access and how their conditions are systematically deprioritised.¹ This bias has tangible consequences, leading to poorer health outcomes, increased strain on NHS resources and wider economic impacts such as unemployment.^{5,6,7} For further information, please visit www.chiesi.uk.com/look-beyond-the-bias.

About Chiesi Group

Chiesi is a research-oriented international biopharmaceutical group that develops and markets innovative therapeutic solutions in respiratory health, rare diseases, and specialty care. The company's mission is to improve people's quality of life and act responsibly towards both the community and the environment.

By changing its legal status to a Benefit Corporation in Italy, the US, and France, Chiesi's commitment to create shared value for society as a whole is legally binding and central to company-wide decision-making. As a certified B Corp since 2019, we're part of a global community of businesses that meet high standards of social and environmental impact. The company aims to reach Net-Zero greenhouse gases (GHG) emissions by 2035.

With over 85 years of experience, Chiesi is headquartered in Parma (Italy), with 31 affiliates worldwide, and counts more than 7,000 employees. The Group's research and development centre in Parma works alongside 6 other important R&D hubs in France, the US, Canada, China, the UK, and Sweden.

For further information, please visit www.chiesi.uk.com.

Media contacts:

Yasmin Ghariani, Chiesi UK
Head of External Communications
Phone: (+44) 161 488 5555
Email: y.ghariani@chiesi.com

References:

¹ Chiesi UK survey conducted in 2025 of 1,148 people. Data on file.

² Asthma + Lung UK. Asthma care crisis: charity sounds siren as asthma death toll rises. Available at: <https://www.asthmaandlung.org.uk/media/press-releases/asthma-care-crisis-charity-sounds-siren-asthma-death-toll-rises>. Last accessed September 2025.

³ Asthma + Lung UK. Lung conditions kill more people in the UK than anywhere else in Western Europe. Available at: <https://www.asthmaandlung.org.uk/media/press-releases/lung-conditions-kill-more-people-uk-anywhere-western-europe>. Last accessed September 2025.

⁴ British Liver Trust. Liver disease in numbers. Available at: <https://britishlivertrust.org.uk/information-and-support/statistics/>. Last accessed September 2025.

⁵ Mathioudakis AG, Ananth S, Vestbo J. Stigma: an unmet public health priority in COPD. The Lancet Respiratory Medicine. Available at: [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanres/article/PIIS2213-2600\(21\)00316-7/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanres/article/PIIS2213-2600(21)00316-7/fulltext). Last accessed September 2025.

⁶ Thomas, T. (2024, July 23). 'National disgrace': Black mothers in England twice as likely to have NHS birth investigated. The Guardian. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/society/article/2024/jul/23/national-disgrace-black-mothers-in-england-twice-as-likely-to-have-nhs-birth-investigated>. Last accessed September 2025.

⁷ Van Beukering IE, Smits SJC, Janssens KME, Bogaers RI, Joosen MCW, Bakker M, van Weeghel J, Brouwers EPM. In what ways does health related stigma affect sustainable employment and well-being at work? A systematic review. Journal of Occupational Rehabilitation. 2022;32:365–379. Available at: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10926-021-09998-z>. Last accessed September 2025.