**Expert Working Group on reducing the climate change impact of inhalers**

Terms of Reference: 3rd draft version 2018

**Geography-** England, however maintaining correspondence with devolved administrations

**Purpose of group:** To establish the approach and a potential target for reducing the climate change impact of inhalers.

**Roles:**

* Consider the Governments Environmental Audit Committee recommendation of 50% Low GW impact inhalers by 2022.
* Review evidence to date on the widest possible range of potential options for reducing the level of climate change impact of inhalers. Considering scale of impacts from aspect such as packaging, propellants, plastics and metals used in production.
* Establish the process that is required to seek any additional evidence, where and if necessary, to propose a level of ambition in this area.
* Establish an approach, taking into account wherever relevant, patient, economic or logistical impacts, to achieve a proposed level of ambition in lower GW impact inhalers.
* Establish the best way to support timely implementation of a proposed level of ambition in the interest of patients, protecting the environment and efficient use of resources.
* Identify any co-benefits from reducing the climate change impact of inhalers, and where this exists as a co-benefit to ensure these are recognised and valued.
* Ensure that patient safety, treatment efficacy and adherence are always central to the Group’s discussions. The outcome being that patients with respiratory diseases who require inhalers, including people with asthma, are not adversely affected by any of the changes proposed by the Group.

**Background:** Asthma and COPD are 2 of the most common health conditions. Several million people in England use inhalers to manage their conditions. There are more than 65m inhalers prescribed every year. The most prevalent device types being Dry Powder Inhalers (DPI) or Metered Dose Inhalers (MDI).MDIs use fluorinated gasses (F-gases) as propellants**.**  These propellants are potent greenhouse gasses. Life cycle assessment of inhalers has shown that 96% of the carbon impact of inhalers is from the use phase, as a result of the emissions of these gases. The impact of the F-gases released each year in England from inhaler use is equivalent to around 850,000 tonnes of carbon emissions. This is equivalent to the carbon emissions from all NHS road mileage in England, including business travel and emergency vehicles.

The F-gas propellants in MDIs do not have as high a global warming or ozone depletion impact as the CFCs they replaced, however they are still 1,500-3,350 times worse than CO2 as greenhouse gasses. F-gases are highly controlled and are being phased out in all other industries, such as refrigeration.

In its recent scrutiny of F-gases the EAC set a target of 50% for the prescription of low global warming impact inhalers in the NHS by 2022. They should also increase the recycling of waste canisters.

Climate change is of significant concern to the majority of the UK general public. There is a significant potential for prescribing practice, patient choice, industry innovation and health sector engagement to reduce the greenhouse gasses released by inhalers. Any improvement in the GW impact of inhalers will require cross sector collaboration and engagement.

**Meetings:**

Face to face or virtual, at least quarterly.

**Administration:**

The SDU will provide secretariat and chair for the meetings.

Jerome Baddley Head of Unit for the SDU will Chair

**Membership:**

Initial membership will consist of the representatives below though additional members may be brought in as the groups’ work requires.

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| **Sustainable Development Unit** | **Primary Care Respiratory Society** |
| **National Institute for Health and Care Excellence** | **British Thoracic Society** |
| **Asthma UK** | **Centre for Sustainable Healthcare** |
| **British Lung Foundation** | **Department of Health and Social Care** |
| **NHS England** | **UKIG (UK Inhaler Group)** |
| **Imperial College** | **Royal College of Nursing** |
| **RCGP** | **Care Quality Commission** |
| **DEFRA** | **Royal Pharmaceutical Society** |

**Jerome Baddley, SDU.**

**12 Oct 2018.**

#### Appendix

EAC recommendation text: (<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmenvaud/469/469.pdf>).

*We recommend that low GWP inhalers should be promoted within the NHS unless there are specific medical reasons for not doing so. Promotion should include raising awareness of low GWP inhalers and training amongst NICE, the medical community and patients. The NHS should set a target that by 2022 at least 50% of prescribed inhalers are low GWP. It should publish annual progress reports. We were disappointed to find that so few MDIs are disposed of responsibly. We therefore recommend that the Government should work with medical professionals, pharmacists, the pharmaceutical industry and patients to significantly improve the recycling of MDIs; this makes both environmental and economic sense. The Government should ensure that by 2020, at least 50% of MDIs are recycled. The Government should publish annual data showing progress in reaching and exceeding this target. It should also consider medical waste, such as MDIs, in its waste strategy. (Paragraph 27)*