

Dear Parliamentarian,

Did you the know that 1 in 3 of your constituents is living with one or more allergic disorders? **In fact, over 44% of adults and 50% of children in the UK now live with a least one allergic condition.** That's why our theme for this year's Allergy Awareness Week is Too Big To Ignore.

The UK has one of the highest prevalence rates of allergies in the world. Despite these alarming statistics, allergy is still not considered to be a major public health issue. **In the past 20 years hospital admissions for severe allergic reactions have risen an astonishing 110%, whilst allergic conditions cost the NHS around £900 million per year.** However, the greatest cost of all is paid in the tragic and avoidable loss of precious lives to allergy that we see each year.

Allergy UK is the only national charity representing the patient voices from across the full spectrum of allergic conditions. We are all too aware of a health system that doesn't meet the needs of the allergic community and a society that doesn't take allergies seriously. These shortcomings may have even led to one or more of your constituents getting in touch with you, to highlight the challenges they face living with an allergic condition.

To help you support your constituents living with allergies, we've compiled a toolkit with resources on allergic conditions, information on our services including our helpline, relevant website links and further information on Allergy UK.

The statistics and information presented in this toolkit paint a bleak picture of this complex medical condition. **However, having worked closely with the allergic community for 33 years now, Allergy UK can see a way in which the unmet needs of the allergic community can be addressed.**

I would welcome the opportunity to provide further details about Allergy UK's proposed solutions to some of the biggest issues facing the allergic community as well the resources and services we have available that may assist you or your allergic constituents. If this would be of interest, please do not hesitate to contact our policy officer Daniella Rotimi; daniella.rotimi@allergyuk.org or myself directly at simone.miles@allergyuk.org

It's time to take allergy seriously.

We hope that you find this toolkit helpful for your constituents.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "S Miles".

Simone Miles
Chief Executive of Allergy UK

Allergy In Statistics

Did you know?

Allergy and related conditions are estimated to cost the NHS about £1 billion a year.

Living with a food allergy – 2023 Allergy Survey

- 63% of parents caring for a child with a food allergy worry about the financial cost of their child living with this condition.
- 66% of participants report that their food allergy has impacted their mental health.
- 59% of participants have faced challenges with accessing the proper diagnosis or care for their food allergy/allergies.
- 97% of them worry about allergic reactions when not in control of food preparation.

Allergy Perception -2021 Allergy UK Survey

- 61% would like government to do more to help people with allergies.
- 65% of parents would like to see specialist allergy nurses in GP surgeries.
- 72% of parents feel that sometimes their children's allergies are not taken seriously.
- 65% say their child has felt discriminated against in a restaurant, because there was nothing they could safely eat.

Toolkit for MPs and MPs' caseworkers

Key facts and figures

- Allergy and related conditions are estimated to cost the UK NHS about **£1 billion** a year.
- The percentage of children diagnosed with allergic rhinitis and eczema have both **trebled** over the last 30 years.
- **Over 200,000** people require the prescription of emergency adrenaline due to their allergic condition.
- Allergic rhinitis affects **29%** of people in the UK.
- The prevalence of cow's milk allergy in children living in the developed world is **approximately 2% to 3%**, making it the most common cause of food allergy in the paediatric population.
- Around **10** people each year die in England and Wales as a result of having a food allergy.

Useful sources of information/advice for constituents

Call our Allergy UK helpline: [01322 619898](tel:01322619898)
Opened Monday – Friday 9:00 am – 5:00pm

FACT SHEETS FOR CONSTITUENTS

- [Allergy to Cosmetics](#)
- [Anaphylaxis and Severe Allergic Reaction](#)
- [Atopic Dermatitis \(Eczema\) Triggers Allergens and Irritants](#)
- [Egg allergy](#)
- [Food allergy testing and diagnosis](#)
- [Food intolerance](#)
- [Fish and shellfish allergy](#)
- [Guidance for early years settings](#)
- [Health and well-being, social media and bullying](#)
- [Histamine intolerance](#)
- [House dust mite allergy](#)
- [Lactose intolerance](#)
- [Lipid transfer protein allergy](#)
- [Mustard allergy](#)
- [Peanut allergy](#)
- [Pet allergy](#)
- [Reactions to wheat](#)
- [Rubber latex allergy](#)
- [Sesame allergy and other seed allergies](#)
- [Shopping and cooking for a restricted diet](#)
- [Soya allergy](#)
- [Starting a New School: Advice for parents and children](#)
- [Tree nut allergy](#)
- [Wasp and bee sting allergy](#)

Link to all our fact sheets and resources for people with allergies:
[Resources](#) | [Allergy UK](#) | [National Charity](#)

Toolkit for MPs and MPs' caseworkers

In- house dietitian services

Over 25 per cent of calls to our Helpline calls are relate to food allergy, this has increased by 5% since last year. To provide clinical support to all these callers, Allergy UK has an established a Clinical Dietitian Advisor Clinic. That provides a weekly clinic to calls escalated from the Helpline for dietetic advice, appointments are given for a one-to-one discussion with the dietitian, with a letter written to the GP if necessary.

Helpline services

At Allergy UK, our helpline serves as a vital core service and is frequently the first point of contact for individuals seeking access to the comprehensive range of services we provide. Our dedicated helpline advisors offer valuable information to callers throughout the UK. Their assistance encompasses, but is not limited to, guiding callers to Allergy UK's extensive resources and fact sheets, referring patients to our dietitian services when necessary, or, at times, simply lend a compassionate ear. Additionally, our helpline can also assist in connecting callers with leading allergy specialists provided by the health advisory board when specialised consultation is required.

Translation Cards for Foreign Travel

Allergy UK offer translation cards for constituents travelling abroad. The cards ensure that others are made aware of the individual's allergy, despite any language barriers. Cards for over 150 different allergens are available in 35 languages:

Balinese, Bulgarian, Cambodian (Khmer), Chinese (Simplified), Croatian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, Finnish, Flemish, French, German, Greek, Hindi, Hungarian, Icelandic, Italian, Indonesian, Japanese, Lao, Malay, Maltese, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, Punjabi, Russian, Slovene, Spanish, Swahili, Swedish, Tamil, Thai, Turkish and Vietnamese.

Further details on the cards and travelling abroad with an allergy can be found here: [Translation Cards | Allergy UK | National Charity](#)

HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT PEOPLE WITH ALLERGIES

1. **Table parliamentary questions and debates.** We have included some sample parliamentary questions below.
2. **Show your support on social media** by posting our [social cards](#) and using the hashtag #Toobigtoignore or sample tweets tagging @AllergyUK1
3. **Visit Allergy UK and allergy services** in your local area. E-mail info@allergyuk.org to arrange a visit in your local area.
4. **Join our Parliamentary Allergy Champions.** E-mail Daniella.rotimi@allergyuk.org to become an allergy champion. See our current Allergy Champions here: [Our Champions | Allergy UK | National Charity](#)

Toolkit for MPs and MPs' caseworkers

SAMPLE TWEETS

- As we mark #AllergyAwarenessWeek, it's clear: allergies are #toobigtoignore. The UK is among the top three countries for allergy rates. That's why I support @AllergyUK1's Election Manifesto calls that address the growing needs of those living with allergies.
- Did you know? By 2026, 1 in 2 Europeans will have an allergy. The numbers are rising, and so should our attention. This #AllergyAwarenessWeek, I endorse @AllergyUK1's Election Manifesto calls for better allergy care because allergies are #toobigtoignore.
- The growing prevalence of allergies in the UK is alarming. By 2026, 1 in 2 Europeans will have at least one allergy. Join me in endorsing @AllergyUK1's Election Manifesto this #AllergyAwarenessWeek because allergies are #toobigtoignore.
- Allergies affect the lives of millions of people in the UK. With hospital admissions for anaphylaxis doubling in the last 20 years, allergies are now #toobigtoignore. I'm proud to support @AllergyUK1's Election Manifesto calls for better allergy care this #AllergyAwarenessWeek.

SAMPLE PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS

- *To ask the Secretary of State for Education what steps her department is taking to improve allergy awareness in schools*
- *To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care what steps her department is taking to improve allergy awareness in health care settings.*
- *To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care what assessment her department has made of the adequacy of allergy services by (i) region (ii) Integrated Care System*
- *To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if she will make it her policy to adopt Allergy UK's Manifesto calls as a plan for patient rights for people living with allergic conditions.*
- *To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether her department has made a recent assessment of the (a) adequacy and (b) availability of allergy training for GPs.*
- *To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care what assessment she has made of Allergy UK's Patient Charter*
- *To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care what assessment she has made of Allergy UK's call for each ICS to have both a specialist allergy nurse and dietitian.*
- *To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he is taking steps to help improve the (a) clarity and (b) accuracy of allergen information on food labelling.*

Toolkit for MPs and MPs' caseworkers

About Allergy UK

Allergy UK is the leading national and only patient charity supporting people with all types of allergies we cover the full breadth of allergies, from skin to respiratory, food to drugs and anaphylaxis. For 33 years, we have been dedicated to assisting the allergic community through advocacy, education, and support. Our mission is for everyone to take allergy seriously. We believe people with allergies deserve equal access to quality services and care. That's why we remain dedicated to furthering initiatives that will comprehensively improve allergy understanding and management – from diagnosis to treatment to ongoing care and social inclusion.

2022 Patient Charter

In 2022 we launched our Patient Charter, the first patient charter for those living with allergies. Our aim was to articulate the challenges those with allergies face in every aspect of their lives. These range from accessing high quality care, to feeling equal in a society that dismisses their condition and disregards their needs.

The Patient Charter represents the voices of the allergic community; people whose lives have been impacted by a disease with no cure and who live with the anxiety, stress and mental health burden that comes with allergies.

Click [here](#) to learn more about our Patient Charter.

2023 Policy Call – Inclusion of Specialist Allergy Nurses in ICS

In 2023 we launched our policy call through a government petition to a specialist allergy nurse and dietitian in every Integrated Care System (ICS) across the UK. We believe this call would help to address the gaps in care and support for those living with allergies. The addition of these healthcare professionals into the ICS framework would provide specialised medical advice and guidance to allergy patients in their communities.

Did you know?

Our 2023 Policy call was borne from the findings of 2017 Allergy UK research project with the University of Edinburgh and NHS Lothian which trialled a novel approach to the provision of allergy services within primary care. The trial demonstrated the acceptability, feasibility, and potential effectiveness of a nurse-led primary care-based allergy clinic for patients with suspected/confirmed allergies.

Key stats:

- Over a 30-month period (2017-2021), 426 patients were accepted and seen in the nurse-led allergy clinic.
- 53% of the patients referred were young people and adults with a history of anaphylaxis or suspected anaphylaxis.
- Waiting time between referral and being seen in the clinic was 4-8 weeks, compared to 6-18 months for an allergy specialist within the NHS.
- Of the 426 patients seen, only 5% required referral to secondary care specialties, demonstrating a potential reduction in demands across the healthcare system.
- 92% of patients maintained their personal management/treatment plan advised by the allergy nurse.
- 82% of patients reported improvements in their allergic conditions since attending the allergy clinic.
- Healthcare professionals reported high levels of satisfaction with convenience, speed of access, quality of consultation, and time for discussion in the clinic.



Patient Charter

#itstimetotakeallergyseriously

**TAKE
ALLERGY
SERIOUSLY**



Toolkit for MPs and MPs' caseworkers

Allergy UK's Patient Charter

Allergy UK has developed a Charter for people who live with allergic disease in collaboration with patients, parents, and leading clinical experts.

The Vision of the Patient Charter:

- Achievement of a quality standard of care for everyone with allergy throughout the UK
- Empowerment of patients with allergic conditions to understand and manage their condition with support from informed healthcare professionals.
- Promotion of a better awareness and understanding of allergy so that people with allergic conditions are not discriminated against in any aspect of their daily lives.

1. THE RIGHT TO A QUALITY STANDARD OF CARE

- The Right to a healthcare system which recognises allergy as a chronic long-term condition and provides continuity of quality care for all allergic diseases.
- The Right to equitable access to care and treatment regardless of where I live in the UK.
- The Right to a healthcare professional who can recognise allergic disease and make a timely diagnosis.
- The Right to a referral to specialist care for the best possible evidence-based treatment, if appropriate.
- The Right to timely access to scientifically proven allergy testing and diagnosis of allergic disease.
- The Right to be involved in decision-making for the choice of treatment and care, with a person-centred approach.
- The Right to timely transitional care for children and young people as they move into adulthood.
- The Right to holistic care and multi-disciplinary follow ups, as appropriate, that recognises the impact of allergic disease on mental health and well-being.

Toolkit for MPs and MPs' caseworkers

2. THE RIGHT TO ACCURATE INFORMATION AND EDUCATION

- The Right to education and training on allergic disease management, including medical devices.
- The Right to accessible education and information about all allergic conditions.
- The Right to clear and accurate information about living with an allergic condition.
- The Right to be informed about new treatments, condition management and quality of life impacts.

3. THE RIGHT TO EQUALITY IN SOCIETY

- The Right to live without fear of discrimination, exclusion or prejudice.
- The Right to an education system and childcare provision that is informed, trained in allergy awareness, and can manage the healthcare needs of pupils living with allergic conditions.
- The Right to clear and accurate information needed to make safe food choices to confidently eat in or out of the home without the fear of allergic reaction.
- The Right to travel with confidence knowing that the needs of those living with allergy will be catered for.
- The Right to carry the medication needed to respond to allergic reactions at all times.
- The Right to access emergency medicines at all times and in all places.
- The Right to live in a society that understands the lifelong impact of allergic disease.
- The Right to live in a society that takes allergy seriously.