

# National Allergy Education Strategy

## Improving Allergy Care through Education

Allergic diseases are common, affecting many people throughout life from birth to old age, and are often poorly managed. Appropriate, high-quality education for the clinical workforce, which we define as all healthcare professionals including doctors, nursing staff and dietitians involved in the delivery of care to patients with allergy, must be optimized to enable safe, effective and equitable care. This is currently not the case, standards are varied and therefore developing a national strategy will ultimately underpin high quality allergy care for the future. **Our vision is to ensure that quality allergy education is available to all Health Care Professionals (HCP) in a manner that is appropriate to their professional roles.** The three strategies included in this document cover education and training in undergraduate, community and hospital settings. This aims to encompass multi-professional roles providing healthcare and shared learning across the traditional hospital/community interface covering HCPs at all stages of their careers and reflecting the patient's journey through an integrated health care system.

Overarching strategic themes within this document include:

**Benefits for:** The whole National Allergy Education Strategy is ultimately for the benefit of our patients. To maximise engagement with the strategy, each section clearly outlines the benefits for the undergraduate or HCP and the institution.

**Embedding allergy within educational curricula and training:** Our strategy involves working with undergraduate education providers, professional organisations and other stakeholders to ensure appropriate and up to date coverage of allergy within the educational curricula and training of all HCPs. We recommend that this strategy is used as a guide by employers to ensure that practitioner annual appraisals are standardised and their identified training needs are met while ensuring that the appropriate training budget is allocated.

**Accreditation:** Part of this strategy is a role for the BSACI in the accreditation of educational courses to assure they are inclusive, accessible and of the appropriate standard to complement the training needs of HCPs. Educational courses awarded BSACI accreditation for a defined period will demonstrate quality assurance to defined standards giving the HCP learner confidence in the education they select. The accredited courses will be listed on the BSACI website for easy access of learners.

**Showcasing and promoting educational activities:** Our vision includes sharing best practice in education; through showcasing educational activities delivered by HCP for patients, families, our fellow HCPs and students, through the BSACI annual conference and through publication in BSACI literature. Our strategy also promotes educational research in allergy to enable the creation, advancement and innovation of the evidence base for allergy education.

**Being supportive and aspirational:** We recognise the advancing roles of non-medical professionals who are currently developing their allergy knowledge and skills. We aspire to support and promote these advance roles and ensure that progression is guided and supported at every level. Our strategy is to provide equal access to education to enable nationwide standardised practice which will in turn promote equal access to care, knowledge and expertise across the country and provide fair services to patients.

**Quality assurance of the Strategy:** To ensure relevance and currency, there will be an annual review and the strategy will be revalidated and published every 5 years.

Inclusivity and representation for all regions across the UK, all health care professions, all ethnicities and genders is at the core of both our Network and the National Allergy Education Strategy itself. In writing the Strategy, small working groups led individual sections but sought the views of the wider Network at regular meetings. Further to this, consultation on the document was sought from relevant stakeholders. Our vision and strategy represent the shared views of the BSACI Allergy Education Network and reflect an emerging consensus amongst clinicians, charities and patients for a radical upgrade in the delivery of high-quality education at the interface of excellent allergy care.

Professor Judith Holloway

On behalf of the BSACI Allergy Education Network, September 2021

**Figure 1: Developing our National Allergy Education Strategy<sup>1</sup>**

The National Allergy Education Strategy has been written by a multidisciplinary team of HCP, for all HCP across the UK, with the patient at the centre. Our vision is to ensure that quality education is available to all HCPs in a manner that is appropriate to their professional roles. This inclusive strategy will lead change and innovation in the systems that support education and training of HCPs so that access to, and expectation of allergy competencies become established norms at all stages of training. Commissioners will be able to deliver integrated care services and to train and optimize workforce agility and flexibility so ensuring consistent, effective patient care.



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## BSACI Allergy Education Network

To ensure that the consultation process was inclusive, extensive and transparent, representatives from as many key stakeholder organisations as possible were invited to participate in the Network and/or review the documents. The Network consisted of the following, and includes their discipline and location:

Chair: Professor Judith Holloway, Educator, Southampton

Undergraduate Strategy lead: Professor Gillian Vance, Hospital Doctor, Newcastle

Community Strategy lead: Dr Elizabeth Angier, Community Doctor, Hampshire

Hospital Strategy lead: Dr Siân Ludman, Hospital Doctor, Exeter

Administrator: Marie Gibbs, BSACI, London

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## With thanks to the following stakeholders:

Andy Collen, Paramedic, Surrey

Mary Halsey, Clinical Psychologist, Southampton

Rebecca Knibb, Health Psychologist, Aston

Lynne Regent, Anaphylaxis Campaign

Hadar Zaman, Pharmacist, Bradford

Jackie Gaventa, Health Visitor, London

Carla Jones, Allergy UK

Tim McLachlan, Natasha Allergy Research Foundation

Amena Warner, Patient Charity Nurse, London

BSACI Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity group

## Glossary

AHP	Allied Health Professional	AP	Advanced Practitioner
BDA	British Dietetic Association	CCT	Certificate of Completion of Training
CPD	Continuing Professional Development	FASG	Food Allergy Specialist Group
GMC	General Medical Council	GRID	Sub-specialty training programme for paediatric doctors
HCP	Health Care Professional	HEI	Higher Education Institution
ICS	Integrated care system	MDT	Multidisciplinary team
NMC	Nursing and Midwifery Council	PCN	Primary Care Network
SPIN	SPecial INterest (module for additional specialty training for paediatric doctors)		

## **Section 1: Undergraduate Allergy Education Strategy**

### **Vision statement**

To work collaboratively with stakeholders in undergraduate education to ensure graduates are prepared to meet the rising prevalence of allergy related problems and the changing needs of allergy patients in the modern healthcare context. This document covers undergraduate medicine, nursing and dietetics.

This section sets out three aims and associated objectives, which broadly seek to review curriculum content, facilitate access to high quality educational resources and promote engagement with and progression of tomorrow's HCPs.

### **Benefits for Undergraduates**

- A curriculum which best represents evidence-based educational requirements of HCPs to meet the health and care needs of allergy patients and their families.
- Access to accredited allergy education resources, which illustrate the value of multi-professional integrated systems of care delivery.
- Increased awareness of, and engagement with clinical and academic career development opportunities in allergy.

### **Benefits for the Higher Education organization**

- Clear guidance on the breadth and level of allergy knowledge and clinical skills students should be expected to attain in order to work safely and effectively in the relevant sphere of practice.
- Access to accredited, evidence-based and patient-centred educational resources that support curricular delivery.

### **Aim 1.1**

- To ensure learning outcomes in undergraduate curricula best represent up-to-date evidence-based knowledge and understanding of allergic diseases, patient health needs, and new developments in treatment and management options.
- To ensure learning outcomes meet the competency needs of future HCPs working with patients who have allergy, and their families.

### **Strategic objectives**

- Seek support from the relevant stakeholder organisations for the aims and objectives of the BSACI national education strategy.
- Shape assessment of allergy outcomes in undergraduate medical curricula by informing the work of the GMC's Medical Licensing Assessment [MLA] working groups.
- Work with other professional societies in order to develop a syllabus for undergraduate allergy education.
- Identify a named allergy 'champion' to work with each undergraduate course provider to help promote implementation of the strategic plan.
- Include a representative on BSACI council from the network of undergraduate allergy champions to feedback on progress in local implementation.
- Shape content of allergy outcomes in the undergraduate curricula by drawing on allergy syllabus to advise providers on potential gaps, and opportunities to enhance provision.
- Ensure allergy patient and public involvement is represented in curricular review and the development of assessment materials and relevant allergy outcomes.

### **Aim 1.2**

- To facilitate delivery of high-quality teaching/learning, which acknowledges the impact of allergy on patients and families and new multi-professional integrated systems of care delivery.

#### **Strategic objectives**

- Establish a bank of accessible BSACI accredited online resources, which can be used by healthcare students and organisations in classroom based, self-directed and interprofessional educational formats.
- Ensure allergy patient and public involvement is represented in design and development of educational resources.

### **Aim 1.3**

- Promote healthcare students' awareness of, and engagement with clinical and academic career development opportunities in allergy.

#### **Strategic objectives**

- Establish and maintain a dedicated undergraduate page on the BSACI website, which signposts funding opportunities, relevant educational events including upcoming conferences, and noteworthy academic outputs (which may involve healthcare students).
- Include a student representative on the education steering group, to provide a student perspective and be a point of contact for other students who have a developing interest in allergy.
- Establish creative forms of active communication among students that support information sharing and networking with members of the BSACI and signposting to stakeholder organisations.
- To support career progression in allergy for all health care professional undergraduates. For example, by providing support, guidance and signposting to relevant postgraduate curricular documents.
- Incorporate a dedicated undergraduate session in the annual BSACI conference to enable networking, careers advice and dissemination of project outputs that have involved students.

## Section 2: Community Allergy Education Strategy

### Vision statement

For the BSACI to lead approaches to education that enable a culture of 'allergy awareness' and opportunities for lifelong learning that ensures HCPs in the community provide allergy care that is up-to-date, responsive and adaptable to the changing needs of allergy patients across the life cycle.

Through its education strategy, for the BSACI to lead and empower system change that will support safe, effective and efficient allergy care in the context of community settings with recognition of the differing burden, presentation and management challenges across socioeconomic and ethnic groups.

For all community HCPs to engage with the educational network and outputs afforded by the BSACI Educational Strategy.

The network will work in partnership with relevant stakeholders to deliver the following aims and strategic objectives:

### Benefits for the Healthcare Professional working in the Community

- Allergy is represented in the content and assessment of relevant healthcare professional curricula
- Access to high quality, affordable allergy educational resources for all healthcare professionals who work in the community
- Intra- and inter-professional networks to promote opportunities for career development in allergy, including leadership, management and research
- Medical scholarships for FY2 doctors, GP trainees and community health care professional trainees, IMT and Paediatric trainees up to ST3 to attend the BSACI Annual Conference

### Benefits for the organization

- Clear guidance on the breadth and level of allergy knowledge and clinical skills health care professionals should be expected to attain and maintain, in order to safely care for patients and which is specific to their sphere of practice.
- Access to accredited, evidence-based, collaborative and patient-centred educational programmes that are responsive to changes in learning needs
- Through education, the opportunity to develop cost-effective and evidence-based pathways within multi-professional integrated systems of care that have patients' quality of life at their centre

### Aim 2.1

- To drive curricular developments in allergy that meet the competency needs of primary care HCPs by supporting relevant organisations. Curricula should represent up-to-date evidence about allergic diseases, patient health needs and expectations, and new developments in therapeutic options, which are appropriate to each HCP group.

### Strategic objectives

- Develop relevant allergy outcomes and work towards their inclusion in mandatory training requirements of all HCPs working in community settings.
- Ensure allergy is represented adequately in the content and assessment of relevant HCP curricula.
- Ensure allergy patient and public involvement is represented in curricular activities.
- Ensure that all community HCP have regular training in anaphylaxis as part of mandatory training and CPR.
- Where HCP want to work in an extended role capacity in allergy such as GPwER work with the relevant colleges to ensure the competencies and training and support in this role alongside career progression and research.

## **Aim 2.2**

- To enable access to high quality and affordable CPD educational resources for all members of the healthcare team who work in community settings.

### **Strategic objectives**

- Establish a menu of high-quality accredited learning opportunities which meet the learning and practice needs of target HCPs.
- Ensure content of the educational offer is representative of the health and social care needs of allergy patients, across the ages, in communities in the UK.
- Establish and support access to accredited CPD programmes that are designed to meet the different learning needs of a range of clinical and non-clinical staff working in community settings (which includes the ambulance and 999/111 services).

## **Aim 2.3**

- Through education, to enable HCPs working in primary care to develop and implement cost effective and evidence-based pathways within multi-professional integrated systems of care (including emergency care and staff working within the 999/111 settings) that have patients' quality of life at their centre

### **Strategic objectives**

- Raise awareness of allergic disease, as a public health need and educational priority, among all professional groups working in primary care through a Primary Care Network allergy champion, and also at integrated care system (ICS) level
- Frame educational design and delivery to take account of the context of workforce delivery and training needs at primary care network level. Specifically, effective system change must be underpinned by an understanding of population health and value-based pathways.

## **Aim 2.4**

- Promote intra- and inter-professional networking, awareness and opportunities for career development and progression in allergy, including leadership, management and research.

### **Strategic objectives**

- Establish and maintain a dedicated community and integrated pathway page on the BSACI website, which signposts to relevant educational events and specialist interest groups, including conferences and access to funding
- Support research in primary care through links with relevant professional societies and establishing a community of research interested clinicians.
  - Establish creative forms of active communication and other activities within the BSACI that support networking, information sharing and dissemination of outputs, mentoring opportunities and signposting to stakeholder organisations.
- Lead developments in establishing and setting standards for HCPs with extended roles in allergy through working with professional bodies/societies.
- To support career progression in allergy of under-represented groups through online and face-face activities that promote awareness of strategy outputs – such as curricular documents, career pathways and the work of clinicians in community settings.
- Provision of a mentoring scheme, approved through BSACI, for HCPs wishing to specialise in allergy, or working in a single-handed post or in remote areas.
- Actively support primary care attendance for both students and HCPs at the BSACI annual conference, EAACI annual conference etc, through promotion, concessionary rate and bursaries



## Section 3: Hospital Allergy Education Strategy

This section aims to meet the needs of HCPs working in hospital care in any facet of allergy care allowing them to access holistic, collaborative, up to date information with support and input from patients and public in shaping the educational needs. There is an aspirational element to encourage HCP to achieve appropriate knowledge and competency if fulfilling a specialist role, so ensuring allergy standards of care are equitable across the country. This section is structured to highlight education needs which are common to all healthcare profession and which are profession specific.

### Vision statement

To ensure that all HCPs working in hospitals across the UK have:

clear guidance on the breadth and level of allergy knowledge and clinical skills that they should be expected to attain and maintain, in order to safely care for patients and which is specific to their sphere of practice.

access to accredited, evidence-based, collaborative and patient-centred educational programmes that are responsive to changes in learning needs and allows them to achieve this knowledge and skills.

To ensure that HCPs wishing to offer educational activities are supported by the BSACI in appropriate methods such as the design, development and implementation of high-quality education.

To aspire to encourage an increase in the number of HCPs from a range of disciplines within hospital-based care, who have recognised training and clinical expertise within allergy, thereby complementing the existing workforce of Allergy and Immunology specialist HCPs in the UK.

To establish seamless educational links with HCPs working in primary care via accredited national, local and online educational platforms.

### Benefits for the Healthcare Professional working in the Hospital

- Access to high quality, affordable allergy educational resources for all healthcare professionals who are based in hospitals
- Intra- and inter-professional networks to promote opportunities for career development in allergy, including leadership, management and research
- Medical scholarships for FY2 doctors, IMT and Paediatric trainees up to ST3 to attend the BSACI Annual Conference

### Benefits for the organization

- Clear guidance on the breadth and level of allergy knowledge and clinical skills health care professionals should be expected to attain and maintain, in order to safely care for patients and which is specific to their sphere of practice.
- Access to accredited, evidence-based, collaborative and patient-centred educational programmes that are responsive to changes in learning needs
- Through education, the opportunity to develop cost-effective and evidence-based pathways within multi-professional integrated systems of care that have patients' quality of life at their centre

### Aim 3.1: For all Hospital based HCPs

- To define the minimum standard of education and skills attainment expected of each HCP group within hospital care, broken down by specialty within each profession.
  - To ensure these standards are in collaboration and aligned with their lead college/professional organisation via strong links with BSACI and regular audit and involvement of liaison HCPs.

- Ensuring allergy education and training is comparable and of a high quality for all hospital-based practitioners across the United Kingdom
- To work towards standardised minimum training in anaphylaxis as part of national statutory and mandatory training requirements
- To ensure all HCPs have access to a wide ranging, evidence based, up to date educational programmes to meet their continuing professional development needs in allergy.
  - To enable newly qualified HCP to access widely available accredited primary levels of training including a basic understanding of mechanisms and clinical presentation of allergic disorders in line with requirements for mandatory training and undergraduate studies. This aim links with Section 1: Undergraduate based Strategy.
  - To advocate that prescribing courses for non-medical prescribers provide training in allergy specific scenarios and medications
- To ensure that all HCPs working within allergy can join, engage with, and contribute to a regional network representing the communities they serve.
  - These networks should collaborate across existing and future educational platforms
  - The networks will standardise guidelines, operating procedures and share best practice
- For the BSACI to quality assure and map the education needed to support the professional bodies to implement a new graded role progression, development and accreditation of AHPs to Advanced Allergy Practitioners (e.g. Foundation Allergy AP, Allergy AP, Advanced Allergy AP)
- To introduce a BSACI led allergy mentorship scheme with local and national mentors. This will include a peer mentoring/buddy scheme to support career progression, education and foster links around the country specifically focussing on underrepresented communities within allergy.
- To establish regional “champions” to support/signpost suitable allergy education and build on local interests and encourage HCPs with a fledgling interest in allergy
- All HCPs to promote allergy education in all departments and areas of trust governance as well as safety committees and regional networks
  - Promote learning and shared education across primary, secondary and tertiary care
  - To explore an annual national educational survey to highlight the nature of allergic disease relevant to trainees and their educational needs
  - To ensure interested HCPs can develop higher expertise via online, face to face or distance learning, e.g. courses, higher degrees (certificate, Diploma, MSc) or research opportunities (MD, PhD).
- To support educational packages for educational and clinical supervisors to enable them to ensure quality and breadth of CPD as appropriate.
- To develop a BSACI nationwide mentorship programme to help guide and support training irrespective of financial access.

This next section highlights profession specific aims:

### **Aim 3.2: For Doctors**

#### **General allergy for all doctors**

- To support excellence in allergy education so that all doctors have access to high quality resources and can maintain the relevant knowledge and skills ensuring patients have access to the most up to date, holistic care

#### **Specialty Allergy**

- Support interested trainees in undertaking further opportunities to engage with regional and national face to face or online educational packages
- To ensure the BSACI liaises with HEI providers to optimise awareness and engagement in allergy education

#### **Specialty Allergy: Training**

- To support existing medical training opportunities (GRID, SPIN and adult specialty) continue to offer high quality education
- To raise awareness and interest in the educational and training pathways available in allergy and engage trainees from underrepresented groups and regions
- To encourage and signpost all doctors can develop higher expertise via online, face to face or distance learning with HEIs
- Courses, higher degrees (certificate, Diploma, MSc) or research opportunities (MD, PhD)
- Post CCT, that there is nationwide access to a recognised programme of education to reach a national standard for consultants.
  - Increase the numbers and diversity of physicians with a subspecialist interest in general Allergy, by supporting existing post-CCT subspecialist training in Allergy for adult and paediatric doctors. This would be in line with the college curriculum and GMC requirements

#### **Continuous Professional Development**

- For any physician seeing allergy patients pre- or post-CCT to ensure that good quality continuing professional development in multi-system allergic disease occurs via a blend of informal and formal educational activities and reflection
  - As part of the annual appraisal, revalidation process and as per curriculum
  - BSACI to liaise with the relevant colleges to encourage general medical professionals to take part in allergy CPD

### **Aim 3.3: For Nurses**

#### **General Allergy for all Nurses**

- To raise awareness of allergy amongst general nurses ensuring that patients receive the most up to date, holistic care from all nurses they meet in secondary care.

Seek to encourage engagement from nurses from diverse backgrounds

#### **Specialty Allergy: Training**

- To utilise existing training opportunities and funding to allow nurses to take on greater responsibility with a set of formalised educational competencies aligning with the NMC and the other professional HCP bodies
  - The ability to access a variety of platforms both regionally, nationally and internationally
  - Utilisation of existing national and international competency frameworks, such as the BSACI Nurse Competency Framework, to reach a national standard for all nurses involved in allergy

## **Continuous Professional Development**

- To work with the NMC/regulatory body to launch an online portfolio for nurses wishing to train in allergy to allow formal recognition of education
- Advocate continuing professional development in multi-system allergic disease for those involved in assessing, managing and evaluating allergy patients.

## **Aim 3.4: For Dietitians**

### **General Allergy for all Dietitians**

- To map expected/minimal requirements for allergy knowledge and skills to competencies for dietitians working within allergy in secondary care roles, across the range of grades in both paediatric and adult allergy, including Advanced Practitioner Roles. The competencies are under development by the BDA FASG.
- To support a set of competencies for dietitians working within allergy in secondary care roles, across the range of grades to determine expected minimum levels of knowledge and skills including understanding of regional and ethnic variation in diet.
- To ensure that all dietitians working within allergy have access to a structured, robust and engaged network for sharing of national guidelines and best practice, linking with the FASG of the BDA to achieve this
- Encourage and support interested dietitians to engage with underserved communities.

### **Specialty Allergy: Training**

- To work with their accrediting body to support and develop a dietetic specialist allergy scheme where attainment of a recognised skill or competency relevant to the management of allergic conditions is documented and provides credits towards advancement

## **Aim 3.5: For Other HCPs**

This section is designed to include professionals such as (but not limited to) clinical pharmacists, clinical and health psychologists.

### **General Allergy**

- To develop a set of competencies for other HCPs working within allergy in secondary care roles, across the range of grades to determine expected minimum levels of knowledge and skills.

### **General Allergy: Training**

- To ensure that all HCP trainees complete foundation level training with a basic understanding of mechanisms of allergy
- In collaboration with national educational induction packages and curriculum
  - Certain highlighted conditions to be mandatory e.g. anxiety, disordered eating or management of drug allergic reactions via clinical scenarios and refresher training

### **Specialty Allergy: Training**

- To encourage and support allergy champions to establish key competencies relevant to the area with their specialist society and support the provision/signposting of the required education
- Support interested trainees in undertaking further opportunities to engage with regional and national face to face or online educational packages

## **Continuous Professional Development**

- For any HCP seeing allergy patients to ensure that some of their continuing professional development is around allergic based presentations
  - As part of the annual appraisal and revalidation process

1. Vance G, Ludman S, Angier E, et al. Time to act to solve gaps in practice: The BSACI National Allergy Education Strategy. *Clin Exp Allergy* 2021;51(1):6-8.