

Appendices

Paying to breathe:

Why unfair asthma
prescription charges
must be stopped



Contents

- 3 **Appendix A:** Survey methodology

- 5 **Appendix B:** Survey questions

- 7 **Appendix C:** Data tables

Appendices

Appendix A: Survey methodology

Asthma UK’s Prescription Charges Survey is the largest ever conducted on prescription charges in England, with over 9,000 respondents. The survey was conducted online and ran from mid-November 2018 for three weeks. The survey was promoted through our regular newsletters, social media and website.

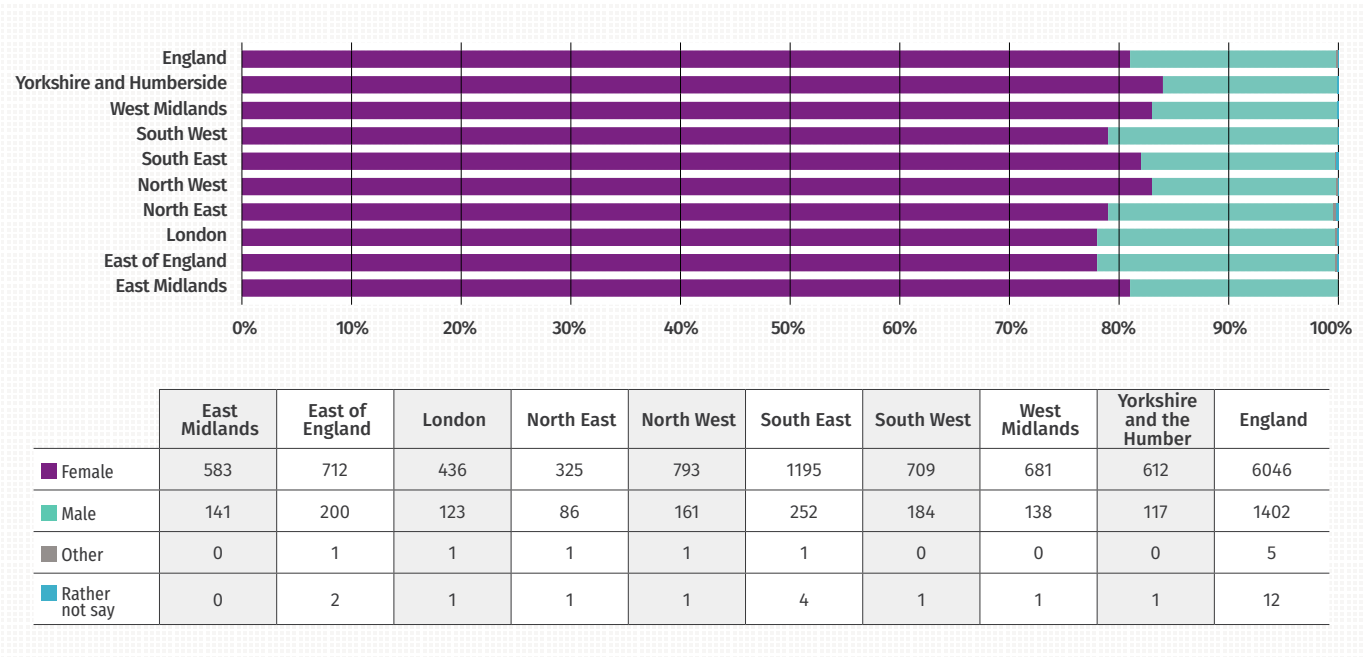
Survey respondents

The survey received 9,246 responses, and after data cleaning, 9,001 respondents were included in the analysis¹. Of these responses, 1,745 (20%) came from the South East of England, 1,146 (13%) from the North West of England, 1,100 (12%) from the South West of England, 1,092 (12%) from the East of England, 965 (11%) from the West Midlands, 875 (10%) from the East Midlands, 864 (10%) from Yorkshire and the Humber, 646 (7%) from London and 484 (5%) from the North East of England. Figure 1 shows this breakdown for only those paying.

The age group with the largest number of respondents was 40-49 (2603), equivalent to 29% of total respondents. Whilst the gender split of respondents is not representative of the asthma population as a whole, with 7,278 (81%) of respondents to the survey being female, we consider that 1695 male respondents is a large enough number for the sample to be representative. Furthermore, asthma is generally more prevalent in females than males in the age groups consulted (i.e. over 16).

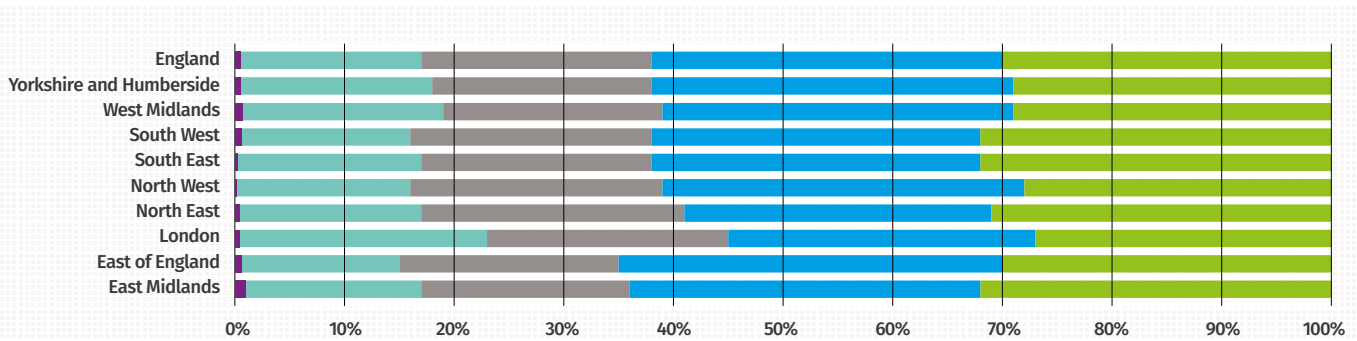
The number of respondents who paid for their prescriptions was 7,465 (84%); therefore, most data used in the report reflects the answers given by this group.

Figure 1: Respondents paying for their asthma prescriptions, by region and gender



* The data cleaning included removing duplicates. Duplicates were indicated by IP address and similar demographic question answers.

Figure 2: Respondents paying for their asthma prescriptions, by region and age



	East Midlands	East of England	London	North East	North West	South East	South West	West Midlands	Yorkshire and the Humber	England
16-18	11	6	3	2	3	4	6	7	3	44
19-29	112	136	127	67	154	239	135	144	125	1239
30-39	139	184	121	100	216	306	200	175	149	1590
40-49	232	317	160	117	313	439	264	260	242	2344
50-59	229	273	150	130	270	458	290	235	209	2244
60+	1	1	1	0	2	6	1	1	2	15

Qualitative research

We also conducted a qualitative analysis on the open text box at the end of the survey and created a word cloud. The word cloud was formed from the question, ‘Do you have any other comments on prescription charges and their effect on people with asthma?’ We first cleaned the data generated by the responses to the question by removing blanks, ‘No’, ‘No comment’ and other similar entries. “Do you have any other comments on prescription charges and their effect on people with asthma?” To create the word cloud, we first cleaned the data, removing blanks, ‘No’, ‘No comment’ and other similar entries. We then used an online tool, [DataBasic’s WordCounter](#), to analyse the comments and identify the most used single words, two words and three words. We then cleaned the resulting data, combining misspelt or similar phrases and using those with 20 or more counts that were relevant to the topic area. We were pragmatic in our choices, choosing words and phrases that stood alone or conveyed feeling/opinion and avoided repetition.

Appendix B: Survey questions

1) What is your gender?

- a) Female
- b) Male
- c) Other
- d) Rather not say

2) What is your age?

- a) Under 16
- b) 16-18
- c) 19-29
- d) 30-39
- e) 40-49
- f) 50-59
- g) 60+

3) What region of England do you live in?

- a) East Midlands
- b) East of England
- c) London
- d) North East
- e) North West
- f) South East
- g) South West
- h) West Midlands
- i) Yorkshire and the Humber

4) Please tell us the total annual income of your household (before tax deductions, but including benefits/allowances)? If you're a student at university, please include your maintenance loan and any contributions (e.g. from parents) in your answer.

- a) Below £20,000
- b) £20,001-£30,000
- c) £30,001-£40,000
- d) £40,001-£70,000
- e) Above £70,000
- f) Rather not say

5) Have you experienced any of the following in the last 12 months?

- a) I've been on a zero hours contract
- b) I've had no savings
- c) I've been overdrawn
- d) I've used a payday loan
- e) I've been unemployed
- f) None of the above
- g) Rather not say

6) Do you currently pay for your asthma medicine prescriptions (including if you buy a Prescription Prepayment Certificate)?

- a) Yes
- b) No

7) Are you aware of the Prescription Prepayment Certificate (PPC)? This is like a season ticket for prescriptions, and can be bought for 3 or 12 months to cover all prescriptions that are needed in that period

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Not sure

8) Do you usually buy a Prescription Prepayment Certificate?

- a) Yes, I buy a yearly certificate at £104
- b) Yes, I buy a 3-monthly certificate at £29.10
- c) No
- d) Not sure

9) In an average year, how many times do you buy the 3-monthly Prescription Prepayment Certificate?

- a) Once
- b) Twice
- c) Three times
- d) Four times
- e) I don't know

10) Why don't you buy a Prescription Prepayment Certificate?

- a) It's not worth it – I wouldn't save anything
- b) I didn't know about it
- c) I can't afford it
- d) I don't know if I'll need it, as my asthma changes over time
- e) I'd like to get one, but I don't know how to go about getting it

11) How often do you pay the £8.80 prescription charge for your asthma medicine? This includes inhalers, spacers, peak flow meters, spacers and antihistamines.

- a) 4 or more times per month (spend more than £422 a year)
- b) About twice a month (spend about £211 a year)
- c) About once month (spend about £105 a year)
- d) About once every 2 months (spend about £53 a year)
- e) About once every 4 months (spend about £26 a year)
- f) About once every 6 months (spend about £18 a year)
- g) About once a year (spend about £8.80 a year)
- h) Less than once a year (spend less than £8.80 a year)
- i) I don't know

Appendix C: Data tables

Table 1: Percentage of respondents paying for prescriptions

Paying for prescriptions	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	7465	84%
No	1452	16%
All	8917	100%

Table 2: Respondents paying for prescriptions by age and gender

Age Group		Female	Male	Other	Rather not say	Total
16-18	Respondents	32	12	0	0	44
	Percentage	73%	27%	0%	0%	100%
19-29	Respondents	1027	206	2	4	1239
	Percentage	83%	17%	0%	0%	100%
30-39	Respondents	1291	297	1	1	1590
	Percentage	81%	19%	0%	0%	100%
40-49	Respondents	1927	411	2	4	2344
	Percentage	82%	18%	0%	0%	100%
50-59	Respondents	1761	469	0	3	2233
	Percentage	79%	21%	0%	0%	100%
60+	Respondents	8	7	0	0	15
	Percentage	53%	47%	0%	0%	100%
All ages	Respondents	6046	1402	5	12	7465
	Percentage	81%	19%	0%	0%	100%

Table 3: Respondents paying for their prescriptions by region and gender

Region		Female	Male	Other	Rather not say	Total
East Midlands	Respondents	583	141	0%	0	724
	Percentage	81%	19%	0%	0%	100%
East of England	Respondents	712	200	1	2	915
	Percentage	78%	22%	0%	0%	100%
London	Respondents	436	123	1	1	561
	Percentage	78%	22%	0%	0%	100%
North East	Respondents	325	86	1	1	413
	Percentage	79%	21%	0%	0%	100%
North West	Respondents	793	161	1	1	956
	Percentage	83%	17%	0%	0%	100%
South East	Respondents	1195	252	1	4	1452
	Percentage	82%	17%	0%	0%	100%
South West	Respondents	709	184	0	1	894
	Percentage	79%	21%	0%	0%	100%
West Midlands	Respondents	681	138	0	1	820
	Percentage	83%	17%	0%	0%	100%
Yorkshire and the Humber	Respondents	612	117	0	1	730
	Percentage	84%	16%	0%	0%	100%
England	Respondents	6046	1402	5	12	7465
	Percentage	81%	19%	0%	0%	100%

Table 4: Respondents paying the £8.80 (pay as you go) charge

Frequency	Number	Percentage
4 or more times per month (spend more than £422 a year)	120	4%
About twice a month (spend about £211 a year)	419	12%
About once month (spend about £105 a year)	974	29%
About once every 2 months (spend about £53 a year)	1037	30%
About once every 4 months (spend about £26 a year)	457	13%
About once every 6 months (spend about £18 a year)	221	6%
About once a year (spend about £8.80 a year)	75	2%
Less than once a year (spend less than £8.80 a year)	28	1%
I don't know	75	2%
All	3406	100%

Table 5: Respondents aware of the Prescription Prepayment Certificate (PPC)

Awareness of PPC	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	6400	86%
No	893	12%
Not sure	172	2%
All	7465	100%

Table 6: Respondents buying the Prescription Prepayment Certificate (PPC)

Buying the PPC	Respondents	Percentage
Yes, I buy a 3-monthly certificate at £29.10	792	12%
Yes, I buy a yearly certificate at £104	3211	50%
No	2341	37%
Not sure	56	1%
All	6400	100%

Table 7: Reason for not buying the Prescription Prepayment Certificate (PPC)

Reason for not buying the PPC	Respondents	Percentage
It's not worth it – I wouldn't save anything	1142	45%
I didn't know about it	35	1%
I can't afford it	557	22%
I don't know if I'll need it, as my asthma changes over time	628	25%
I'd like to get one, but I don't know how to go about getting it	181	7%
All	2543	100%

Table 8: Respondents' difficulty in paying for prescriptions

Frequency	Respondents	Percentage
Always	1801	24%
Sometimes	3860	52%
Never	1804	24%
All	7465	100%

Table 9: Respondents' difficulty paying for prescription charges, by income

Frequency		Below £20,000	£20,001-£30,000	£30,001-£40,000	£40,001-£70,000	Above £70,000	Overall
Always	Respondents	765	451	242	136	21	1615
	Percentage	46%	29%	19%	10%	4%	25%
Sometimes	Respondents	788	902	752	685	146	3273
	Percentage	47%	58%	60%	51%	30%	52%
Never	Respondents	128	211	268	528	326	1461
	Percentage	8%	13%	21%	39%	66%	23%
All	Respondents	1681	1564	1262	1349	493	6349
	Percentage	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 10: Respondents' difficulty paying for prescription charges, by region

Region		Always	Never	Sometimes	Total
East Midlands	Respondents	191	159	374	724
	Percentage	26%	22%	52%	100%
East of England	Respondents	196	260	459	915
	Percentage	21%	28%	50%	100%
London	Respondents	119	164	278	561
	Percentage	21%	29%	50%	100%
North East	Respondents	106	81	226	413
	Percentage	26%	20%	55%	100%
North West	Respondents	247	219	490	956
	Percentage	26%	23%	51%	100%
South East	Respondents	322	354	776	1452
	Percentage	22%	24%	53%	100%
South West	Respondents	208	216	470	894
	Percentage	23%	24%	53%	100%
West Midlands	Respondents	226	177	417	820
	Percentage	27%	22%	51%	100%
Yorkshire and the Humber	Respondents	186	174	370	730
	Percentage	25%	24%	51%	100%

Table 11: Respondents' difficulty paying for prescriptions, by age

		16-18	19-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60+	All ages
Always	Respondents	22	439	393	503	439	5	1801
	Percentage	50%	35%	25%	21%	20%	33%	24%
Sometimes	Respondents	16	638	876	1222	1104	4	3860
	Percentage	36%	51%	55%	52%	49%	27%	52%
Never	Respondents	6	162	321	619	690	6	1804
	Percentage	14%	13%	20%	26%	31%	40%	24%

Table 12: Essential items respondents said they had to cut back on because of the cost of prescriptions

Essential items	Respondents	Percentage
Food	2577	35%
Bills	1577	21%
Rent/mortgage	470	6%
School uniforms for my children	329	4%
School trips for my children	587	8%
None of the above	3854	52%
Other things (free text)	328	4%

Table 13: Respondents sparing with medication because of the cost

Sparing with medication	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	4259	57%
No	2881	39%
Not sure	325	4%
All	7465	100%

Table 14: Respondents sparing with medication because of the cost, by age

Age		Yes	No	Not sure	Total
16-18	Respondents	31	12	1	44
	Percentage	70%	27%	2%	100%
19-29	Respondents	850	324	65	1239
	Percentage	69%	26%	5%	100%
30-39	Respondents	1054	481	55	1590
	Percentage	66%	30%	3%	100%
40-49	Respondents	1286	961	97	2344
	Percentage	55%	41%	4%	100%
50-59	Respondents	1032	1096	105	2233
	Percentage	46%	49%	5%	100%
60+	Respondents	6	7	2	15
	Percentage	40%	47%	13%	100%
All ages	Respondents	4259	2881	325	7465
	Percentage	57%	39%	4%	100%

Table 15: Respondents sparing with medication because of the cost, by income

Income		Yes	No	Not sure	Total
£20,001-£30,000	Respondents	1046	461	57	1564
	Percentage	67%	29%	4%	100%
£30,001-£40,000	Respondents	732	475	55	1262
	Percentage	58%	38%	4%	100%
£40,001-£70,000	Respondents	640	663	46	1349
	Percentage	47%	49%	3%	100%
Above £70,000	Respondents	141	330	22	493
	Percentage	29%	67%	4%	100%
Below £20,000	Respondents	1185	420	76	1681
	Percentage	71%	25%	5%	100%
Rather not say	Respondents	495	518	68	1081
	Percentage	46%	48%	6%	100%

Table 16: Medication respondents were sparing with because of the cost

Medication were sparing with	Respondents	Percentage
Preventer inhaler	3124	73%
Reliever inhaler	2336	55%
Oral steroid tablets	778	18%
Other medicines related to asthma triggers e.g. antihistamines	1517	36%
None of the above	77	2%

Table 17: Consequences of not taking medication because of the cost

Consequences of not taking medication	Respondents	Percentage of those who were sparing	Percentage of those paying for prescriptions
My asthma symptoms got worse (e.g. wheezing, tight chest)	3482	82%	47%
I had an asthma attack	1025	24%	14%
I had to borrow an inhaler	1246	29%	17%
I had to see my GP	1056	25%	14%
I had to call 999	237	6%	3%
I had to call the Asthma UK helpline	43	1%	1%
I had to have emergency treatment (e.g. went to A&E or taken to hospital)	561	13%	8%
None of the above	354	8%	5%
Other	35	1%	0%

Table 18: Awareness of other long-term conditions being exempt from prescription charges

Aware other long-term conditions are exempt	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	6947	77%
No	1881	21%
Not sure	152	2%
All	8980	100%

Table 19: Respondents finding it unfair that people with asthma have to pay for their prescriptions

Unfair that people with asthma have to pay	Number	Percentage
Yes	8359	93%
No	312	3%
Not sure	330	4%
All	9001	100%

Table 20: Prescription charges should be scrapped for people with asthma

Prescription charges should be scrapped	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	8277	92%
No	208	2%
Not sure	516	6%
All	9001	100%

Table 21: Support for Asthma UK's campaign to scrap prescription charges

Support Asthma UK's campaign	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	8674	97%
No	297	3%
All	8971	100%

For any data enquiries, please contact: data@asthma.org.uk

Every ten seconds someone in the UK has a potentially life-threatening asthma attack and three people die every day. Tragically two thirds of these deaths could be prevented, whilst others still suffer with asthma so severe current treatments don't work.

This has to change. That's why Asthma UK exists. We work to stop asthma attacks and, ultimately, cure asthma by funding world leading research and scientists, campaigning for change and supporting people with asthma to reduce their risk of a potentially life-threatening asthma attack.

We fight asthma in three ways:

- We fund world class asthma research.
- We campaign to improve the quality of care received by people with asthma.
- We help hundreds of thousands of people a year with our expert advice and support.

To find out more about Asthma UK's work:



Asthma UK Helpline:
0300 222 5800



Email us:
info@asthma.org.uk



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