

# Children and Young People's Allergy Network (CYANS)

## Annual Report 2022/23

**Lead Clinician:** Dr Adrian Sie  
**Programme Manager:** Hazel Johnstone  
**Programme Support Officer:** Amy Donaldson

## **Introduction**

The Children and Young People's Allergy Network Scotland (CYANS) was initially established in 2011 as a 2-year network project before being designated as a National Managed Clinical Network (NMCN) in 2013.

A review of the network was undertaken in 2017. Based on evidence provided, the ERG noted that prevalence of severe allergy in children and young people was increasing and was continuing to grow, with food allergy in particular becoming more persistent past the age of five years. This also concluded that the network scope was too broad to enable tangible improvement in allergy services and patient outcomes across the whole spectrum.

Since then, the network reviewed their scope and through the findings of a needs assessment, concluded that in order to maximise effectiveness, the focus of the network would be re-prioritised to children and young people from birth to 19 years with an initial focus on anaphylaxis and type 1 food allergy.

## **Current Position**

The network, along with other national managed clinical and diagnostic networks, have been impacted as stakeholder ability to be involved in network activity has reduced. This reduction has been due to pressures brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic and an increased prevalence of flu, RSV and other winter viruses which have had a severe impact across our health and care system.

During 2022/23 the network had a change in core team management with the appointment of Dr Adrian Sie (NHS Lanarkshire) as Lead Clinician (LC) from 1 April 2022. The network previously was without a LC for 5 months after Dr Mariette Nortier left her role in October 2021. A new Programme Manager (Hazel Johnstone) and Programme Support Officer (Amy Donaldson) also joined the team. The ability to progress a number of tasks has been affected as staff settle into their roles.

Although the network has an established Steering Group (SG), chaired by the LC, there are no established sub or working groups. There is still significant work to be done to understand the reasons why stakeholders are not able to support identified projects, and/or take part in new groups.

There has been a refresh of Steering Group (SG) membership with attendance at SG meetings continuing to increase from 38% in May 2022 to 58% in February 2023.

Following agreement to re-baseline the network's activities during 2022/23, the network is on schedule to achieve or has achieved 11/12 (92%) of its service delivery aims.

Plans to set up a new Communication and Engagement Subgroup were not completed during this period. This has been carried over into 2023/24.

## Highlights

### Guidelines

Final updates to the 'Diagnosis and Management of Food Allergy Guidelines' were finished in March 2023. These link multiple different guidelines into one comprehensive document in an easier to read format for non-specialists and includes the latest BSACI recommendations on egg and peanut allergy.

The SG considered the need to develop an NHSScotland version of the updated 2021 Resuscitation Council UK 'Emergency treatment of anaphylactic reactions: Guidelines for healthcare providers' and agreed to roll out the UK guidelines. This ensures consistency between Scotland and England but does mean there is no reference to existing CYANS family resources.

The CYANS website was updated, signposting professionals to the [Resuscitation Council UK](#) website and then promoted via the CYANS Newsletter and SG members.

Further work will be undertaken to promote and evaluate their use during 2023/24 as part of the Communication and Engagement strategy.

### Communications

In order to update historic distribution lists and identify interested stakeholders to support future workplan activity, a stakeholder questionnaire was issued in August 2022 to gauge their ongoing interest in CYANS and if they would like to contribute to any projects (as a professional or as a parent/carer/patient).

36 responses were received, of which, 69% were not involved with the current SG. The programme team offered to meet with all respondents. 7 meetings were held that resulted in 3 new SG members and details of others willing to be actively engaged with the network based on their area of interest. Distribution lists were updated accordingly.

The network then held a virtual 'Planning for the Future' event in October 2023 for SG members that identified the following main priorities:

- To review education provision across various professionals, including GP's, Health Visitors, Schools, Education Departments, Pharmacists and Ambulance staff.
- Agree common aims, practice, and guidance to support equality of service provision.
- Improve stakeholder engagement and methods of communication to raise the profile of CYANS, and recruit stakeholders to support workplan activities.
- Make patient information clearer across all formats and improve signposting to third sector and public agencies.

The above outputs were then compared against the CYANS 2022/23 and 5 year-plan workplan to make sure these were still important. No new issues were identified.

In January 2023, CYANS introduced a monthly update for SG members to show progress of workplan activity. Although only 2 monthly updates have been issued, feedback has been positive with members citing this as a useful resource to share with colleagues. It is hoped that by continuing to issue regular updates this will encourage colleagues to see how their input can improve and influence service provision and persuade them to support ongoing workplan activities.

The network has issued 3 digital newsletters during 2023/23 to its wider membership. These have been viewed over 1000 times in total.

The network carried out an exercise to update contact details for key stakeholders involved in allergy care. This has helped raise awareness of the network and will support the network to engage directly with an updated and wider audience in 2023/24.

The continuation of a monthly update will be incorporated into the 2023/24 Communication and Engagement Strategy.

## **Education**

The network has successfully delivered high quality primary and secondary care allergy education and training, through 4 individual online lectures. Each lecture, as listed below, was delivered by a reputable professional working within allergy care in the UK.

- Lecture 1 - Thresholds for Allergic Reactions with Dr Shelley Dua
- Lecture 2 - New Pollen Food Syndrome Guidance from BSACI with Dr Isabel Skypala
- Lecture 3 - Food Allergy Diagnosis for Primary Care & General Paediatricians with Dr Ana Cockburn
- Lecture 4 - Suspected Anaphylaxis Initial Management with Dr Adrian Sie

The overall feedback from the on-line-lectures' series confirmed their learning objectives were achieved, with respondents scoring the overall series as a 4 or 5, out of a maximum score of 5.

Over 50% of respondents stated their learning from this education event will change their practice

As these events were held virtually, and later placed on the website, these are accessible to a larger audience than if held face to face and also supports NSS/NHSScotland climate and financial sustainability goals.

Following the success of The Health Visitor (HV) Allergy Management Resource Tool webinar in 2022, the network had planned to deliver this in February 2023 in collaboration with National Education for Scotland (NES). 300 delegates had registered to attend, however, unfortunately, this was delayed to allow a review of training resources to ensure they follow the World Health Organisation (WHO) international Code of Marketing of Breast-Milk Substitutes. Once finalised, the network is well placed to deliver this at the earliest date. The aim of this training is to increase Health Visitors' knowledge, recognition, diagnosis and management of food allergy in the community.

### **Audit and Continuous Quality Improvement**

The network has obtained clinical allergy prescribing data (hydrolysed and amino acid formulas, adrenaline autoinjectors) collated by Public Health Scotland (PHS). Initial analysis has shown that there is variation of prescribing of Auto Adrenaline Injectors (AAI) throughout Scotland. CYANS will explore this further with stakeholders to enable the network to identify and implement more targeted education and training to improve prescribing practice and quantify potential cost savings in allergy prescribing as part of the 2023/24 workplan activity. This supports the realistic medicine aim of reducing unwanted variation.

The Network continued to make use of technology and remote communications to progress work this year. This has continued to be effective, saving time on travel and promoting economic and climate friendly practices.

### **Looking forward – 2023/24**

The network's work priorities for 2023/24 include:

- Identify and engage with stakeholders to determine future communication and engagement needs to inform the design and delivery of an updated Communication Strategy, that:
  - engages with parents and families through a variety of methods to ensure that what matters to them continues to guide the work of CYANS
  - continues to refresh and review approach to stakeholder communications through a variety of formats including web and social media
  - supports collaboration across NHSScotland to provide recognised and trusted information for families
- Identify and engage with stakeholders to determine future education needs to inform the design and delivery of an updated Education Strategy, including:
  - In collaboration with National Education Scotland (NES), finalise the Health Visitor Allergy Management Resource training resources and deliver online session.
  - Identify the level of allergy knowledge General Practitioners (GP) are required to know and develop training resources based on identified learning needs.
  - Deliver Primary Care allergy education training as appropriate, with a particular drive to reach a large audience, and include Emergency Department staff.
- Implement and monitor the impact of the updated Diagnosis and Management of Food Allergy Guidelines and 2021 Resuscitation Council UK 'Emergency treatment of anaphylactic reactions: Guidelines for healthcare providers.
- Identify priorities for data collection and review Quality Indicators to identify areas for improvement.
- Collaborate with stakeholders (inc. BSACI) to progress the development of UK resources to support transition to independent self-management and/or adult services, and promote any resources for professionals and CYP, adapting as necessary for a Scottish context

## **Finance**

The network has spent £1255.80 of its £5000 budget during 2022/23. This was to correct an administration error during 2021/22 when payment to accredit the Primary Care Allergy Training course by the Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) was made to the wrong account. This initial money was refunded in October 2021, but not re-paid until July 2022.

## **Risks & Issues**

There is a risk that CYANS may not be able to perform its full role and function due to difficulty recruiting volunteers to support specific pieces of work.