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Materials are available in: Urdu | Arabic
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Dummy QR code

This is an NIHR funded study, sponsored
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Birmingham Community Healthcare
NHS Foundation Trust.



Improving COPD Care at Home

Evaluating an enhanced virtual ward service for people with COPD



This leaflet includes Information about a study using
NHS data to improve care for people with COPD

A new and improved virtual ward service is being introduced across Birmingham and Solihull.

This leaflet explains how the service works, how your data may be used in research, and how you can opt out if you choose.

What is COPD?

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) is a long-term lung condition that makes it hard to breathe. It includes conditions such as chronic bronchitis and emphysema.

COPD causes symptoms like:

- Coughing
- Wheezing
- Shortness of breath
- Frequent chest infections

COPD flare-ups (also called exacerbations) can be serious and sometimes need hospital care. The virtual ward service offers an alternative to hospital, providing support at home during these times.

What is a virtual ward?

A virtual ward allows people with COPD to receive hospital-level care at home during a flare-up. Instead of being admitted to hospital, you can be safely monitored and supported by a specialist NHS team at home.

This care may include treatment such as oxygen, nebulisers, or antibiotics. The team will contact you by phone, text, video call, or home visits. If your condition gets worse, they can help you get the care you need quickly.

What is the BRIDGE Study?

The BRIDGE Study is evaluating how well the improved virtual ward service works. We want to know:

- If it helps reduce hospital admissions and readmissions
- If it improves recovery and patient experience
- How well it supports care across the local NHS

You do not need to sign up — the study uses



How will my data be used?

To understand how the service is working, we will use data already collected during your NHS care. This includes information from your GP, hospital, and community care teams.

The data used for research is anonymised — it cannot identify you personally. Researchers will not see your name or contact details.

The study has ethical approval and follows NHS and UK GDPR data protection rules.

Want to opt out?

You have the right to opt out of your confidential patient information being used for research. If you do not want your data to be used in the BRIDGE study, you can contact us at any time. If you choose to opt out, your information will not be included in any future analysis for this project. To ensure your data remains excluded, we will maintain a list of anonymised study IDs for those who have opted out — this list cannot be linked back to you by anyone outside of the NHS. Details on how to opt out are on the back of this leaflet.