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## **Minister to invest over £5million to improve services for respiratory disease**

Health Minister, Michael McGimpsey has set new standards for the treatment and care of people suffering and at risk from respiratory disease.

The 'Service Framework for Respiratory Health and Well-being' will be supported with an investment of at least £2.5million for the implementation of the framework as well as £3.2million to support people suffering from asthma bronchitis and emphysema. This will include improving access to drugs and services as well as the development of community services to allow people to manage their condition at home.

Speaking as he visited a rehabilitation programme for people suffering from lung disease at Ards Leisure Centre Michael McGimpsey said: **“Diseases such as asthma, bronchitis and emphysema are very common in Northern Ireland. Each year there are over 1,900 deaths due to respiratory disease and there are many people living with chronic respiratory conditions each and every day.**

**“This framework includes 56 standards in relation to the prevention, treatment and care of people suffering from a range of respiratory diseases. It aims to improve services by supporting people in their own homes, avoiding the need for admission to hospital – just one way in which our service is changing to meet the needs of those we serve.**

**“To support the framework I am allocating at least £5.7million. Almost half of this money will be used by our Health and Social Care Trusts and GPs to implement the framework and ensure that people at risk and suffering from respiratory illness are given appropriate assistance to understand their condition and how it will be treated. £3.2million will specifically be used to give assistance to people suffering from bronchitis, emphysema and asthma.”**

Commenting on the rehabilitation programme in Ards the Minister continued: **“I am very impressed with this programme which has been developed by the South Eastern Trust and Ards Borough Council, to help people suffering from lung disease such as bronchitis and emphysema to cope with their illness. It is an excellent example of how people can live a better quality of life and help decrease their dependence on health services.”**