



Ann Long, lung cancer survivor

Lung cancer campaign: How you can raise awareness in your community

10 March – 30 April 2014

We need your support to reach out to local communities and tell people that when cancer is picked up earlier, treatment is more likely to be successful.

What is *Be Clear on Cancer*?

Be Clear on Cancer campaigns aim to get more cancers diagnosed at an early stage by raising awareness of key symptoms and encouraging people to discuss them with their doctor earlier.

The first national lung cancer campaign was in 2012 and was followed by a 'reminder' campaign in July – August 2013.

What is the main message of this campaign?
Been coughing for three weeks? Tell your doctor.

What activities will be taking place and when?

We want to keep the main campaign message at the front of people's minds so the advert will run again on TV, radio and in the press for just over seven weeks from 10 March to the end of April.

Who is the campaign aimed at?

Lung cancer is more common as people get older – **97%** of those diagnosed in England are over 50, so the campaign is aimed at men and women in this age group. It is also aimed at friends and family who can pass on information and encourage loved ones to make an appointment with their doctor if they're worried.

We need your help to reach people who might not see the campaign or understand the message.

Why does this campaign focus on lung cancer?

Lung cancer is England's biggest cancer killer. It has one of the lowest survival rates of any cancer because over two-thirds of patients are diagnosed at a late stage when treatment that could cure it is not possible. More lives could be saved if people were diagnosed at an earlier stage.

Do these campaigns work?

Results to date for lung cancer activity indicate that *Be Clear on Cancer* is successfully changing levels of public awareness. There are also early indications that clinical outcomes are improving too. Following the 2012 national lung cancer campaign, 700 additional cancers were diagnosed when compared with the same period in the previous year and around 300 additional patients had surgery as a first treatment of diagnosed lung cancer which is vital for better survival.

Why is there no mention of smoking in the advertising?

Smoking causes more than 8 in 10 lung cancers in the UK. But we know that including a smoking-related message can put people off – smokers may feel that they're being nagged, and non- or ex-smokers might not see it as relevant to them.

How can you help people in your community?

You have a vital role to play. People can put off getting symptoms checked out for lots of different reasons. They might worry about wasting the doctor's time. Or, if they think it could be cancer, may be frightened of finding out or scared of treatment.

We know that people often take advice from friends, family, and people they trust when deciding if symptoms are serious enough to see their doctor. By talking to people in your community you can help them understand the main messages and overcome any concerns.

'I would urge anybody with symptoms, like a persistent cough, to go and see their doctor straight away. I'm glad I did.'

Ann Long, aged 77, lung cancer survivor

Lung cancer is England's biggest cancer killer

97% of people diagnosed with lung cancer are aged over 50

Around 70% of lung cancer patients are diagnosed at a late stage when curative treatment is not possible

Key lung cancer facts

- **Around 34,900 people are diagnosed with lung cancer in England every year.**
- **In England, around 28,100 people die from lung cancer every year.**
- **It has been estimated that 1,300 deaths from lung cancer could be avoided in England each year if survival rates matched the best in Europe.**

You don't need a medical background or to give medical advice. You can:

- Explain that it's best to get symptoms checked out – the chances are it's nothing serious, but it may still need treating. But if it is cancer, finding out sooner and getting treated can make a real difference.
- Reassure them that the doctor or nurse wants to hear about their concerns. They're not wasting anyone's time.
- Some people might need help to make an appointment or like someone to go with them if it's appropriate.
- Help people feel more confident about speaking to their doctor by offering to run through what they will say during the appointment. Suggest they underline their symptoms on the *Be Clear on Cancer* leaflet and take it with them to see the doctor. They may find it useful to make a note of how often the symptoms have occurred and how they feel, so they can clearly explain why they are worried.
- Reassure people that their doctor will want to know if their symptoms haven't gone away, have changed, or got worse, even if they have seen the doctor already. Explain that it's important they go back and see their doctor again.
- Ask people to come back and tell you how they got on. This gives you the chance to give them a nudge if they haven't done anything about their symptoms the next time you see them.

Remember, this campaign isn't about changing lifestyle but to encourage people to see their GP if they have symptoms.

Talking about cancer can be difficult. Do you have any tips?

A Cancer Research UK nurse, who specialises in talking about cancer, advises: 'It is important to feel confident and to try to make cancer a normal part of conversation – you don't need the answers, talking about it is the most important part. Find phrases that you are comfortable with and practise using them.'

'You could start by talking about the campaign and ask if they have seen the TV ad. Someone might have stopped noticing their cough, especially if they've had it for a few weeks, or think it's not worth getting it checked out. If you are concerned about someone or they mention a symptom that they're worried about, why not ask them: "Do you think it might be a good idea to see your doctor?"'

Three things you can do:

1 Promote the campaign. Put up posters. Try your local shops, hairdressers or barbers and other places you visit. Have leaflets handy to give to people and help you explain the campaign. **You can get free posters and leaflets** from www.orderline.dh.gov.uk or call **0300 123 1002**. You can also download an [EasyRead leaflet](#) and [dual language symptom cards](#).

And don't forget, if you have meetings in your community, use those opportunities to spread the campaign messages too.

2 Make it part of your day-to-day conversations. Talking about the campaign may prompt someone to make an appointment or open up about a symptom they've been hiding or didn't think was serious. We need to encourage people to talk openly about cancer.

3 Encourage people to see their doctor. If people are worried about possible symptoms, we know that they often just need a nudge from family, friends or those around them to persuade them to go to their doctor.

Find out more

- **Direct members of the public to the NHS Choices website to find out more about lung cancer symptoms: nhs.uk/lungcancer**
- **If you work for a community or voluntary sector organisation, visit naedi.org/beclearoncancer/lung for more information about the campaign and additional materials.**

'I've supported local and national *Be Clear on Cancer* lung campaigns, so I know we can make a difference by simply talking to people in our local areas about it. They often feel more at ease talking to us and open up about what is on their mind. Sometimes people say they don't want to bother their GP, especially about a cough. We can explain why it's important they go and reassure them that their doctor really does want to know.'

Peter Allonby, Cancer Champion, Middleton