



OFFICIAL



To:

Clinical Commissioning Group Clinical Leads
Clinical Commissioning Group Accountable Officers
Strategic Clinical Network Associate Directors
Local Authority Chief Executives
Foundation Trust Chief Executives & Medical Directors
Trust Chief Executives & Medical Directors
NHS England Regional Medical Directors
NHS England Regional Directors
Directors of Nursing

26th April 2017

Dear Colleagues

Respiratory symptoms campaign: 18 May – 31 August 2017

Public Health England will launch the next Be Clear on Cancer campaign on Thursday 18 May. It will be a re-run of the respiratory symptoms activity which first ran across England in summer 2016. We need your help and support to make the most of this new opportunity. We would encourage you to:

- Cascade this information amongst relevant teams, so where possible, they can plan for any changes in the demand for services.
- To be aware of the key messages of the campaign and champion the importance of supporting this activity.

More than 70% of all premature deaths in England are attributed to cardiovascular disease (CVD), respiratory disease and cancer – that's over 100,000 people a year.¹ Late diagnosis and late treatment are common in each of these conditions. And, as National Clinical Directors we are once again working together to support the Be Clear on Cancer campaign.

The key messages for the campaign are:

- If you've had a cough for three weeks or more, it could be a sign of lung disease, including cancer. Finding it early makes it more treatable. So don't ignore it, tell your doctor.
- If you get out of breath doing things you used to be able to do, it could be a sign of lung or heart disease, or even cancer. Finding it early makes it more treatable. So don't ignore it, tell your doctor.

The appendix provides more detail on the campaign and how you can register to get further

¹ [Public Health Outcomes Framework](#)

information in the coming weeks.

The pre and post campaign survey² for the summer 2016 respiratory symptoms activity was conducted amongst almost 2,500 people. It found levels of awareness increased for both symptoms following the campaign. These results included:

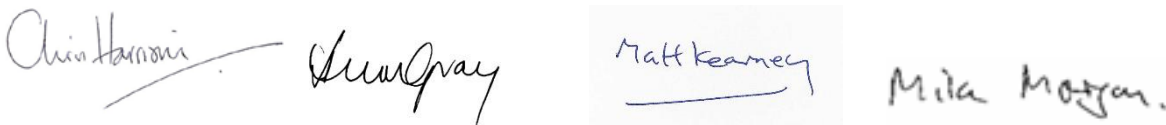
- Awareness that breathlessness could be a sign of heart disease increased from 30% pre-campaign to 36% post-campaign.⁺
- Knowledge that a persistent cough could be a sign of lung disease increased from 34% pre-campaign to 39% post-campaign.⁺

One of the challenges when promoting respiratory symptom awareness is ensuring that smokers don't feel they are being nagged about their lifestyle choices. Results from the 2016 activity show an increase in the 'relevance' of the campaign to people, including a sample of smokers².

We would encourage you to prepare, as much as possible, for the forthcoming campaign. There is likely to be a change in the demand for services. More patients may present to their GP with relevant symptoms; there may be an increase in diagnostic tests such as chest x-ray, CT and echocardiography; potentially more referrals to secondary care; and more treatment requirements including surgical interventions. You may find it useful to look back at last year's campaign (14 July – 16 October 2016) to assess what impact it had on the demand for services in your area and use this information to help you plan for this year's activity.

With the promising results of the 2016 awareness raising activity and the increasing numbers of premature deaths caused by these diseases, we need to take action. We are delighted that Public Health England is running this campaign again and would welcome your support.

Yours sincerely



Professor Chris Harrison, National Clinical Director for Cancer

Professor Huon Gray, National Clinical Director for Heart Disease

Dr. Matt Kearney, National Clinical Director for Cardiovascular Disease Prevention

Professor Mike Morgan, National Clinical Director for Respiratory Services

² The survey was conducted by an independent organisation amongst 2,496 people over three waves in England

⁺ statistically significant result

Appendix 1: Further details on campaign activity

The details are still being finalised for the 2017 Be Clear on Cancer respiratory symptoms activity, but we can confirm:

- The Be Clear on Cancer respiratory symptoms campaign will run from Thursday 18 May to Thursday 31 August 2017
- The campaign will target men and women over the age of 50 years and primarily from lower socioeconomic groups
- The intensity of the advertising will be similar to last year's campaign. There will be more activity in the early weeks and then it will gradually reduce over the 15 weeks
- The pre and post campaign survey for the 2016 respiratory symptoms campaign showed that the materials were effective at communicating the key messages. Therefore, the advertising will be the same as last year with one TV advert for inappropriate breathlessness and another for persistent cough
- Supporting materials such as the public facing leaflet and posters are available free of charge via the [Campaign Resource Centre](#) or via the orderline on 0300 123 1002
- The leaflet has been produced in alternative formats including large print, easy read, audio and BSL. These formats are available on the [Campaign Resource Centre](#)
- Events in shopping centres will take place around the country and once dates and locations have been confirmed, a schedule will be placed on the [Campaign Resource Centre](#) website
- Briefing sheets are being prepared for a lay audience, NHS colleagues and pharmacy teams. They will be hosted on [Campaign Resource Centre](#) website when finalised
- To receive more information about the campaign, please register via the [Campaign Resource Centre](#) or email partnerships@phe.gov.uk
- Campaign details for health care professionals and other key stakeholders will be available on the [Campaign Resource Centre](#) and www.cruk.org/respiratory-campaign
- The public-facing website for Be Clear on Cancer is nhs.uk/beclearoncancer. To directly access pages on the respiratory symptoms campaign the following links can be used:
nhs.uk/outofbreath
nhs.uk/cough

This information can be made available in alternative formats, such as easy read or large print, and may be available in alternative languages, upon request. Please contact 0300 311 22 33 or email england.contactus@nhs.net stating that this document is owned by the Cancer Transformation Team in the Medical Directorate.