Help Us, Help You

Lung Cancer

Campaign Toolkit

February 2021

Extract for BSW CCG GP Practices

**CAMPAIGN OVERVIEW**

On Wednesday 17th February, NHS England and NHS Improvement, together with Public Health England, are launching the lung cancer phase of the ‘Help Us, Help You’ campaign. The aim is to raise awareness of the key symptom of lung cancer, a cough that lasts for three weeks or more. The campaign will be encouraging those who have this symptom and don’t have COVID-19 to contact their GP practice, reminding the public that the NHS is here for them and can see them safely.

When cancer is diagnosed early, treatment is more likely to be successful.[[1]](#endnote-2) An additional impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is that some members of the public are reluctant to use NHS services, citing concerns about being exposed to the virus and not wanting to be a burden on the NHS.[[2]](#endnote-3) In addition, there is a lack of awareness that a persistent cough on its own can be a sign of lung cancer, and a need to remind the audience to act on a persistent cough and not wait to see if it resolves.[[3]](#endnote-4)

The campaign targets men and women over the age of 60, as this age group are more at risk of lung cancer, and particularly those from C2DE socio-economic groups as they are often more reluctant to visit their GP.[[4]](#endnote-5) We will also be targeting friends and family members to ensure they are clear on the symptoms and can encourage loved ones to contact their GP practice if they have had a cough lasting three weeks or more and don’t have COVID-19.

The campaign will run across England across TV, VOD, radio, PR and social media. In addition, there will be activity targeted to Black and South Asian audiences, and accessible materials will be made available to partners.

PR activity will highlight the results from a new survey of over 2,000 adults around their awareness of the key symptom of lung cancer. We will also release new video content starring Sir Andrew Strauss and Gaby Roslin along with case studies who have been affected by lung cancer to help share the messages.

**CAMPAIGN SUPPORT**

This toolkit includes campaign messages, long and short copy and suggested social media posts to help you support the campaign.

A range of branded resources will also be made available for partners to use, including posters, social media assets, the PR film, and alternative formats. These ‘Help Us, Help You’ resources can be downloaded free of charge from the Public Health England [Campaign Resource Centre](https://campaignresources.phe.gov.uk/resources/campaigns/120-help-us-help-you---lung-cancer-symptoms-/resources).

**KEY MESSAGES**

PRIMARY MESSAGES

* If you’ve had a cough for three weeks or more, and it isn’t COVID-19, it could still be a warning sign
* A cough for three weeks or more could be a sign of cancer. Just contact your GP practice
* It’s probably nothing serious, but finding cancer early makes it more treatable1
* Your NHS is here to see you, safely

SECONDARY MESSAGES

* If a friend or family member has been coughing for three weeks or more, and it isn’t COVID-19, encourage them to contact their GP practice
* In addition to the symptom of a cough for three weeks or more, other symptoms of lung cancer include:[[5]](#endnote-6)
* Chest infections that keep coming back
* Coughing up blood
* A long-standing cough that gets worse
* An ache or pain when breathing or coughing
* Persistent breathlessness
* Persistent tiredness or lack of energy
* Loss of appetite or unexplained weight loss
* Early diagnosis and treatment of cancer can save lives1

COVID-19 MESSAGING

* Get tested for COVID-19 if you have a new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or three or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
* NHS staff are working to ensure that, wherever possible, cancer treatment can continue safely. This includes re-establishing COVID-secure cancer hubs and consolidating cancer surgery, prioritising people for surgery centrally based on clinical need and drawing on the independent sector to increase capacity. Between March and December 2020, nearly 1.7 million people were urgently referred by their GP with suspected cancer and over 228,000 people started treatment for cancer - 95% within 31 days. Thanks to the efforts of NHS staff and partners, cancer treatments were maintained at 89% across this period (90% radiotherapy, 89% chemotherapy, 86% surgery).[[6]](#endnote-7)
* In the lead up to Christmas, urgent referrals and treatments were at or above the level they were in the same period in 2019. That means we entered the most recent period of pressure in a strong position6
* Lung cancer GP referrals remain lower than normal and have been the slowest by far out of all cancer types to recover since the start of the pandemic. As of December 2020, lung cancer referrals had reached 73% of pre-COVID levels, while referrals for all cancers were just over 100%.6 This suggests that there are people who may have worrying symptoms who are still not contacting their GP
* Cancer services remain an absolute priority for the NHS. Thanks to the efforts of NHS staff, cancer services have been maintained throughout the pandemic so treatment can continue safely. Any decision to reschedule cancer treatment will be a last resort

**LONG & SHORT COPY**

Below are some examples of long and short copy that should be used when communicating with audiences about the campaign. Please use the copy for any newsletters, emails or other materials, including websites, e-bulletins, press releases and social media.

**LONG COPY – 257 words**

Today, NHS England and NHS Improvement, together with Public Health England, are launching the ‘Help Us, Help You’ lung cancer campaign to encourage people with a cough lasting three weeks or more and who don’t have COVID-19, to contact their GP practice.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, some members of the public are reluctant to use NHS services, citing concerns about being exposed to the virus and not wanting to be a burden on the NHS 2 In addition, there is a lack of awareness that a cough for three weeks or more on its own can be a sign of lung cancer, and a need to remind the audience to act on a persistent cough and not wait to see if it resolves.3 While a cough for three weeks or more is probably nothing serious, it could be a sign of something that needs treatment. If it is cancer, finding it early makes it more treatable1 and can save lives.

The ‘Help Us, Help You’ lung cancer campaign has released a powerful video, featuring Sir Andrew Strauss, Gaby Roslin and members of the public who have first-hand experience of how lung cancer can affect you, your friends and your family. The video urges people to contact their GP practice if they’ve had a cough for three weeks or more and don’t have COVID-19. It also encourages friends and family to support a loved one if they are concerned for their health.

Your NHS is here to see you, safely. Help Us, Help You.

Visit nhs.uk/cancersymptoms for more information.

**SHORT COPY – 187 words**

Today, NHS England and NHS Improvement, together with Public Health England, are launching the ‘Help Us, Help You’ lung cancer campaign.

The campaign highlights that a cough for three weeks or more that isn’t COVID-19 could be a sign of lung cancer and encourages anyone with this symptom to contact their GP practice. While a cough for three weeks or more is probably nothing serious, it could be a sign of something that needs treatment. If it is cancer, finding it early makes it more treatable1 and can save lives.

Famous faces, including Sir Andrew Strauss and Gaby Roslin, along with members of the public who have first-hand experience of how lung cancer can affect you, your friends and your family, are supporting the campaign in a powerful video. The video urges people to contact their GP practice if they’ve had a cough for over three weeks and don’t have COVID-19. It also encourages friends and family to support a loved one if they are concerned for their health.

Your NHS is here to see you, safely. Help Us, Help You.

Visit nhs.uk/cancersymptoms for more information.

**SOCIAL MEDIA**

We will amplify the reach of the campaign by posting content across NHS and PHE social media channels including Twitter and Instagram.

Suggested copy, imagery and video assets will be made available via the Public Health England [Campaign Resource Centre.](https://campaignresources.phe.gov.uk/resources/campaigns/120-help-us-help-you---lung-cancer-symptoms-/resources)

Please help us get the message out there by using your social media channels from the 17th February to support the campaign. Please find suggested social posts to be used in support of the campaign below:

Twitter posts

* *If you’ve had a cough for three weeks or more and it isn’t COVID-19, it could be a sign of cancer. It’s probably nothing serious, but if it is cancer, finding it early makes it more treatable. Your NHS is here to see you, safely. Contact your GP practice. [link to video] #HelpUsHelpYou*
* *A cough for three weeks or more that isn’t COVID-19 could be a sign of cancer. Contact your GP practice. However, if you’ve got a new, continuous cough contact Test & Trace. [link to video] #HelpUsHelpYou*
* *If you’ve had a cough for three weeks or more and it isn’t COVID-19 it could be a sign of cancer, so make sure you contact your GP practice. Finding cancer early makes it more treatable and can save lives. The NHS is here to see you, safely. [link to video] #HelpUsHelpYou*
* *If you’ve noticed a loved one coughing for three weeks or more, it could be a sign of cancer. It’s probably nothing serious but if it is cancer, finding it early makes it more treatable. Urge them to contact their GP practice. Your NHS is here to see you, safely. #HelpUsHelpYou*

Facebook/Instagram posts

* *If you’ve had a cough for three weeks or more and it isn’t COVID-19 just contact your GP practice. It’s probably nothing serious, but it could be a sign of cancer. If it is cancer, finding it early makes it more treatable and can save lives. [link to video] #HelpUsHelpYou*
* *A cough for three weeks or more could be a sign of cancer. In light of COVID-19, the NHS has put measures in place to make sure that patients are able to access services safely, so contact your GP practice. Your NHS is here to see you, safely. [link to video] #HelpUsHelpYou*
* *If you’ve noticed a family member or a friend coughing for three weeks or more and it isn’t COVID-19, encourage them to contact their GP practice. It's probably nothing serious, but if it is cancer, finding it early makes it more treatable and can save lives. [link to video] #HelpUsHelpYou*
* *If you’ve had a cough for three weeks and it isn’t COVID-19 it could be a sign of cancer. It’s probably nothing serious, but if it is cancer, finding it early makes it more treatable. Your NHS is here to see you, safely. Contact your GP practice. [link to video] #HelpUsHelpYou*

**KEY FACTS AND STATISTICS**

LUNG CANCER SPECIFIC

* Lung cancer GP referrals remain lower than normal and have been the slowest by far out of all cancer types to recover since the start of the pandemic. As of December 2020, lung cancer referrals had reached 73% of pre-COVID levels, while referrals for all cancers were just over 100%.6 This suggests that there are people who may have worrying symptoms who are still not contacting their GP
* Lung cancer is the third most common cancer in England with around 39,300 cases diagnosed each year. Around 89% of those are aged 60 and over[[7]](#endnote-8)
* Lung cancer is England’s biggest cause of cancer death. Around 28,100 people die from lung cancer in England each year8
* In 2018 lung cancer accounted for 12% of all cancer diagnoses in England7and 20% of all cancer deaths[[8]](#endnote-9)
* Five-year survival for persons diagnosed with stage 1 lung cancer is 57% compared with just 3% for those diagnosed with late stage (stage 4) lung cancer[[9]](#endnote-10)
* Between 1995 and 2018, age-standardised incidence rates of lung cancer have increased from 51.4 per 100,000 to 67.0 per 100,000 for females. In males age-standardised incidence rates of lung cancer have decreased from 127.9 per 100,000 to 85.5 per 100,0007
* Between 2001 and 2018, age-standardised mortality rates of lung cancer have remained relatively stable between 44.8 per 100,000 and 44.5 per 100,000 for females. In males age-standardised mortality rates of lung cancer have decreased from 96.2 per 100,000 to 63.6 per 100,0008

Lung cancers diagnosed in England in 2018 by age group7

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Age group** | **Count** |
| Under 1 | 3 |
| 5 to 9 | 1 |
| 1 to 4 | 0 |
| 10 to 14 | 2 |
| 15 to 19 | 1 |
| 20 to 24 | 10 |
| 25 to 29 | 28 |
| 30 to 34 | 47 |
| 35 to 39 | 106 |
| 40 to 44 | 204 |
| 45 to 49 | 595 |
| 50 to 54 | 1184 |
| 55 to 59 | 2309 |
| 60 to 64 | 3692 |
| 65 to 69 | 5622 |
| 70 to 74 | 7963 |
| 75 to 79 | 7178 |
| 80 to 84 | 5438 |
| 85 to 89 | 3299 |
| 90 and over | 1608 |

AGE -RELATED RISK

* The incidence of lung cancer increases with age: 89% of cases are diagnosed in those aged 60 and older7

LUNG CANCER DIAGNOSIS

* In2018, 33.6% of all cancers in England were diagnosed via an emergency presentation.[[10]](#endnote-11) Those diagnosed through emergency presentations are often at an advanced stage, resulting in poorer survival
* In the UK it is estimated that nearly 6,000 people who have never smoked die of lung cancer every year[[11]](#endnote-12)

OTHER

* More than four in 10 cases of cancer could be prevented, largely through lifestyle changes such as not smoking, keeping a healthy bodyweight, eating a healthy balanced diet and cutting down on alcohol[[12]](#endnote-13)

1. *Cancer Research UK: Why is early diagnosis important? Available: https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/cancer-symptoms/why-is-early-diagnosis-important. Last accessed January 2021.* [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
2. Kantar data – *A representative sample of 2,178 adults were asked about their attitudes to seeking medical help at the current time (September 2020), compared to what they would have done before the coronavirus outbreak in March 2020* [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
3. *Respondents were interviewed on the Kantar omnibus 12th-18th January 2021. The omnibus surveys a representative sample of the population aged 16+. The questions were asked in England among a total sample of 2,196. Barriers to making a GP appointment were asked of the 1,349 respondents who would not make an appointment with their GP* [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
4. *National Center for Biotechnology Information / BMJ (2001). No man's land: men, illness, and the NHS. Available here:* [*https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1121551/*](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1121551/) [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
5. *NHS. (2019). Lung Cancer. Available: https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/lung-cancer/symptoms/. Last accessed January 2021.* [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
6. *NHS England (2020) Cancer Waiting Times. Available: https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/cancer-waiting-times/. Last accessed: January 2021.* [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
7. *Data for 2016-2018 average. Public Health England;* [*https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/cancer-registration-statistics-england-2018-final-release*](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/cancer-registration-statistics-england-2018-final-release)*. Last accessed: January 2021.* [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
8. *Public Health England.* [*https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/cancer-registration-statistics-cancer-mortality-in-england-2018*](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/cancer-registration-statistics-cancer-mortality-in-england-2018)*. Last accessed January 2021.* [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
9. *Public Health England; Cancer survival in England for patients diagnosed between 2014 and 2018, and followed up until 2019 - GOV.UK (*[*www.gov.uk*](http://www.gov.uk)*). Last accessed: January 2021.* [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
10. *National Cancer Registration and Analysis Service, Cancer Outcomes: Emergency Presentation by Cancer site November 2020*[*http://www.ncin.org.uk/cancer\_type\_and\_topic\_specific\_work/topic\_specific\_work/cancer\_outcome\_metrics*](http://www.ncin.org.uk/cancer_type_and_topic_specific_work/topic_specific_work/cancer_outcome_metrics)*. Last accessed: January 2021.* [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
11. *Bhopal, A et al. Lung cancer in never-smokers: a hidden disease. Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine, 2019 Vol 112(7) 269-271* [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
12. *Cancer Research UK. (2018). New calculations confirm lifestyle changes could prevent 4 in 10 cancer cases. Available: https://scienceblog.cancerresearchuk.org/2018/03/23/new-calculations-confirm-lifestyle-changes-could-prevent-4-in-10-cancer-cases/. Last accessed: January 2021.*  [↑](#endnote-ref-13)