



Dr Nick Davies

Lung cancer awareness campaign: How communities can support the national campaign

11 July – 11 August 2016

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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 aims to achieve earlier diagnosis of cancer by raising awareness of the signs and symptoms. The campaign will encourage people with relevant symptoms to see their GP without delay. A Wales wide lung cancer campaign will run from 11 July to 11 August 2016.

What is the campaign's key message?

The message for the public is: **Been coughing for three weeks? Tell your doctor.**

Why does this campaign focus on lung cancer?

Wales has a very low lung cancer survival rate compared to other European countries. In Wales, lung cancer is the third most common cancer in men and the second most common in women. Each year it is responsible for more deaths than from bowel and breast cancer combined¹.

The campaign aims to raise awareness of a persistent three week cough as one of the key symptoms of lung cancer and encourage people with this symptom to tell their doctor.

Who is the campaign aimed at?

Lung cancer is more common as people get older – 98% of those diagnosed in Wales are over 50¹, 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.

Smoking causes more than 8 in 10 lung cancers in the UK. People who smoke, used to smoke, or have been exposed to second-hand smoke have an increased risk of developing the disease.

Although smoking is by far the biggest cause of lung cancer, the adverts don't lead with a smoking message; 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.

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

What activities are taking place and when?

Adverts will appear on ITV Wales and S4C, on Wales' radio stations, in local papers and online, and on buses. Community awareness raising campaigns are also taking place and pharmacies across Wales are promoting the campaign with posters and leaflets.

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 GP'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.

Key lung cancer facts:¹

- There are around 2,400 new cases of lung cancer in Wales every year
- Around 80% of lung cancer patients are diagnosed at a late stage when curative treatment is not possible
- 98% of people diagnosed with lung cancer in Wales are aged over 50

“In February 2014, my life and plans dramatically changed. I suffered a bout of pneumonia where, amongst other symptoms, I had a cough and feelings of breathlessness. Following treatment to clear the pneumonia the doctors discovered I had developed lung cancer. It was quite a kick in the teeth. Fortunately, because of the tests I had for my pneumonia the lung cancer was discovered and I was able to undergo treatment. I’d had a persistent cough, if you experience similar symptoms don’t ignore them, report them to your doctor as soon as possible.”

Graham Thomas

You don’t need a medical background to give 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 it 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 lung cancer leaflet and take it with them to see their doctor.
- 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.

1 Lung Cancer in Wales, Wales Cancer Intelligence and Surveillance Unit

Talking about cancer can be difficult. Here are some tips:

A 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 advert. 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 tell your doctor?”

Things you can do:

- 1 Download the campaign poster from go.nhs.wales/lungcancer and put up in your local shops, hairdressers or other places you visit.**
- 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 they often just need a nudge from family, friends or those around them to persuade them to tell their doctor.

