

***Embargoed until 00:01 10 October 2011***

### **New lung cancer awareness campaign launched in the East Midlands**

A new lung cancer campaign is being piloted in the East Midlands from today (10 October) as the latest figures\* reveal that over 2,800 people aged 50 or over in the region were diagnosed with the disease in 2009. The figures also show that in the same year lung cancer claimed over 2,300 lives of people aged 50+ in the region – some of which may have been saved if diagnosed earlier.

Lung cancer is the biggest cancer killer in England. The Department of Health's new *Be Clear On Cancer* campaign is aimed at helping people recognise the symptoms of lung cancer. TV, radio and press advertisements will feature real GPs encouraging patients to talk to them if they have had a cough for more than three weeks.

If England's survival rates for lung cancer matched the best in Europe then an extra 1,300 lives could be saved each year. The latest figures\*\* reveal that in the East Midlands only around 30 per cent of people aged 50+ survive lung cancer one year on from diagnosis.

Dr Elspeth Macdonald, Network Director of East Midlands Cancer Network, said:

“The East Midlands Cancer Network is supporting this regional campaign because if we are to improve survival in the East Midlands then lung cancer needs to be diagnosed as early as possible. The campaign will tell people that if they have a cough that lasts more than three weeks they need to visit their GP and tell them as soon as possible.”

The *Be Clear on Cancer* campaign will pilot in the Midlands for five weeks from 10 October – 13 November, leading into National Lung Cancer Awareness month in

November. As well as regional TV, radio and press advertisements, activity will include branded pharmacy bags and information on GP TV screens. There will also be face-to-face community events run by the British Lung Foundation.

Jeremy Bacon, Support and Development Manager, British Lung Foundation Midlands, said:

"Lung cancer is the most common cancer in the world and claims over 28,000 lives\*\*\* in England each year. Many lives could be saved if people were aware of the signs and symptoms of lung cancer as finding it early improves the chances of successful treatment. We believe that this campaign will play a key role in saving lives by encouraging people to see their GP if they experience any symptoms of lung cancer."

Dr Jesme Fox, Medical Director of the Roy Castle Lung Cancer Foundation, said:

"Early diagnosis of lung cancer saves lives, which is why this campaign is so vitally important. We hope it will encourage more people in the Midlands to go to their GP if they have a persistent cough which just won't go away. In the majority of cases it will be nothing serious. However, if it is lung cancer then early diagnosis and treatment could save your life."

The campaign builds upon the success of the recent *Be Clear On Cancer – Bowel Cancer* pilot campaign which helped achieve a 48 per cent increase in the number of people who visited their GP with the key symptoms and a 32 per cent increase in urgent referrals to hospital. Following these successes, the bowel cancer campaign will be rolled out across the country from the end of January 2012.

For further information on lung cancer visit [nhs.uk/lungcancer](http://nhs.uk/lungcancer).

ENDS

Notes to editors

The key symptom of lung cancer is a cough that has lasted for three weeks or more. Other lung cancer symptoms include:

- A cough that has got worse or changes
- Repeated chest infections
- Coughing up blood
- Breathlessness
- Feeling more tired than usual for some time
- Losing weight for no obvious reason
- An ache or pain in the chest or shoulder that has lasted some time

The pilot *Be Clear On Cancer* Campaign will run in the Midlands and some of the bordering areas. The cost of the campaign is £1.5m.

\*Figures provided by Trent Cancer Registry – 2009 statistics. This is the latest publishable data on lung cancer registrations: New cases (incidence) of lung cancer and mortality rates in the 50 or over age group for the East Midlands in 2009:

Local authority area	Total number of cancers diagnosed			Total number of deaths registered		
	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons
Derby	111	61	172	73	55	128
Derbyshire	288	208	496	229	168	397
Leicester	100	68	168	63	54	117
Leicestershire	201	148	349	186	111	297
Rutland	12	9	21	6	9	15
Nottingham	116	80	196	98	71	169
Nottinghamshire	303	232	535	242	211	453
Lincolnshire	298	195	493	246	170	416
Northamptonshire	232	187	419	184	153	337
<b>East Midlands</b>	<b>1,661</b>	<b>1,188</b>	<b>2,849</b>	<b>1,327</b>	<b>1,002</b>	<b>2,329</b>

\*\* The latest survival rates from Trent Cancer registry are based on patients diagnosed in the three years 2007 to 2009 – annual average.

\*\*\*Figures provided by the Department of Health. Lung cancer incidence in England 2009 (deaths in 2009 in brackets). Men 18,492 (15,939). Women 14,622 (12,102). Total 33,114 (28,041)

**For further information, interviews, copies of the television/press advertisements, case studies or imagery please contact Jo Sheppard or Helen Clarke at COI News & PR on 0115 852 4333/4358 or [jo.sheppardo@coi.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:jo.sheppardo@coi.gsi.gov.uk)**