



Dr Ian Watson

**Coughing for 3 weeks?**

**Get out of breath easily?**

# Respiratory symptoms campaign: Overview briefing

18 May – 31 August 2017

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**We need your support to make the national awareness campaign a success and improve the lives of patients.**

### Why run a respiratory symptoms awareness campaign?

More than 70% of all premature deaths in England are attributed to cardiovascular disease, respiratory disease or cancer – that’s over 100,000 people a year. Earlier diagnosis for each of these conditions is likely to lead to better patient outcomes.

### Where will the adverts appear and what are the main messages?

The advertising will include outdoor posters, TV, radio, online and press adverts. Community-based events will be held later in the campaign period. The key messages for the public are:

- 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.
- 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.

**“Last year’s campaign saw an increase in awareness of the significance of breathlessness and cough. When these diseases are diagnosed at an earlier stage there are better treatment options and better patient outcomes.”**

Dr Richard Roope  
GP and RCGP/CRUK Cancer Champion

### Who is the campaign aimed at?

Men and women aged 50 and over, and the key people that influence them, such as family and friends. People over 50 are most at risk of having undiagnosed respiratory illness and make up 97% of lung cancer diagnoses.

### What is the potential impact of the campaign on the NHS?

There is likely to be a change in the demand for services during and after the campaign period. 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.

### What can local teams do to support the campaign?

- Spread the word. Tell your colleagues that the campaign is running and share this briefing sheet with them.
- Promote the campaign. Display public-facing respiratory symptoms materials such as leaflets, posters and symptom cards. These are available free of charge via the [PHE Campaign Resource Centre](#) or via the orderline on 0300 123 1002.
- Think about areas that may experience an increase in demand for services, for example GP appointments, diagnostic tests and surgery. Make sure colleagues in the relevant teams are aware of the campaign.

**28,700**  
Around 28,700 people die from lung cancer each year

**115,000**  
COPD causes around 115,000 emergency admissions each year

**1.8 million**  
Around 1.8 million people have been diagnosed with coronary heart disease

Further details for health care professionals and references for statistics featured in this briefing can be found at [www.cruk.org/respiratory-campaign](http://www.cruk.org/respiratory-campaign)

**Search PHE Campaign Resource Centre for further information**

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