

# BLF Bulletin

The latest news from the British Lung Foundation

winter 2017



## Making your voices heard

**Our incredible patient representatives are helping to influence local respiratory services across England – and they're getting real results!**

It's so important that your respiratory service knows what you need. Patient representatives are people affected by a lung condition who work to improve respiratory services by sharing their experience with those who plan and deliver services.

We work with 100 patient representatives across England, and they've had some great successes.

One area that's benefited is the Wessex region. A group of patients from the area have met four times

to learn how to influence decision makers, write press releases and use social media. This is already producing results – some local areas have expanded their PR and follow-on exercise programmes and others have created new singing groups.

We know that there are some areas of the country where more could be done to make patients' voices heard. That's why our service development managers have been delivering regional training events.

If you'd like to be a patient representative and help influence your local respiratory service, we'd love you to get involved! Contact your group support officer for more information.



The Wessex patient representative network

## Living Well Alliance

We've launched our Living Well Alliance! We've brought together companies who offer treatments, equipment or products which support people to manage their lung conditions. Our aim is to help you make informed choices when you need to access specialist support. The alliance's founding members are Actegy, Fisher & Paykel Healthcare, MyClinicalCoach and Totally Health, Philips and Pond Healthcare Innovation. Find out more at [blf.org.uk/living-well-alliance](http://blf.org.uk/living-well-alliance)



## Fighting for clean air

**Harriet, our policy and public affairs officer, gives an update on our air pollution campaign.**

On 6 December, we handed our air pollution petition to Downing Street. An incredible 20,365 of us told the UK government that we need more action.

Your support has been overwhelming. Thank you – they'll hear us loud and clear now!

There are unsafe levels of pollution in cities across the UK. Every day, people breathe air that stunts lung development and exacerbates lung conditions.

We're urging the government to monitor air quality around schools, develop clean air zones and create a new clean air act to make sure we can all breathe air that's safe.

And you can help! Breathe Easy week 2017 begins on Monday 12 June. As well as celebrating Breathe Easy, we'd love you to raise awareness about air quality and its impact on lung health. We'll send more information soon, so watch this space! Find out more at [blf.org.uk/campaigns](http://blf.org.uk/campaigns)



Harriet with our CEO, Penny Woods, and local children handing in the air pollution petition to Number 10 Downing Street

# Focus on... Breathe Easy Neath Valley

**Doug Barnard has been involved with BE Neath Valley for 10 years.**

**66** I got involved with Breathe Easy when my wife Margaret was diagnosed with COPD, just when BLF was launching a local group. I came along to move tables and make tea. After Margaret died in spring 2016 I stayed involved – I wanted to help and see the group continue.

We've done so much in ten years: interviews, outings, fundraising – our annual abseil has raised over £45,000! We've done work for the National Institute for Clinical Excellence and held health awareness days. Margaret was even in a training video for Cardiff

Medical School's physio department.

Breathe Easy is important because it gets people out, doing things. It gives them the information they need about their condition. The more you know the easier it is to cope.

The social side is also important. We're a close group and keep in touch, outside meetings as well as in. We've become friends.

Going forward, I think we need to focus on making sure groups are inclusive – for patients but also for carers, families and friends. And making sure that they're not only health talks, but also give people a chance to escape from their condition.



Doug and Margaret taking part in the *Your Personal Best* programme with Arlene Phillips and Len Goodman



## Take Steps

**Keep your eyes peeled for news of Take Steps coming soon!**

Holding a Take Steps walk is a great way to look after your lungs, soak up some summer sunshine and raise money for us, too. Freda Robson and BE Teignmouth have such a great time at their walks they held their sixth last year! Eight walkers took on the 1.25 mile route around Decoy Country Park. Everyone had a great time and they raised a brilliant £200 to boot.

More info is on its way but you can always get in touch with our friendly events team in the meantime. Call **0207 078 7912** or email [events@blf.org.uk](mailto:events@blf.org.uk)

# World COPD Day



**In November loads of you joined forces with respiratory teams to raise awareness for World COPD Day. As ever, Breathe Easy groups rose to the occasion!**

Across the nations, in hospitals, shopping centres and public spaces, you held over 50 local events! Some of you had information stands and screening sessions to raise awareness of lung health. Others put on craft or cake sales to raise money so we can continue to help people with lung conditions. A few singing groups even recorded songs for YouTube!

**As always, thank you so much for all your hard work.**

