



Breathe Easy **Westminster**

**Support group for residents, families and carers of
those with respiratory conditions**

**For this free Westminster support group email
breatheeasywesminster1@gmail.com, or call 020 7548641438
To become a member: www.breatheeasywestminster.com.**

Overview:

KEY CONTACTS:

If you have a question relating to the group, from now on please get in touch with breatheeasywestminster1@gmail.com, or call Meg on 07548641438 now instead of reaching out to Tess directly.

GROUP MEETINGS:

Our face-to-face meetings continue on the 3rd Monday of each month from 11am at the top roof garden floor, Ada Court. Cristy makes sandwiches on demand on the day (£2 each) and beverages and biscuits are free as always.

For those with internet access, we also have a zoom meeting on the 1st Friday of each month at 12:30pm. I will be in touch with an overview of the upcoming talks for the New Year. Please do bring contributions for the raffle which Cathy arranges.

REFRESHED MEMBER CONTACT LIST:

To make sure our member list is up to date and we aren't contacting those who no longer wish to receive our emails, we ask that members who do still wish to remain part of the group to email breatheeasywestminster1@gmail.com. The 34 of you who have already done this do not need to do this again, but a final plea to anyone else who hasn't to please email or call me on 07548641438.

Recent Meetings - Recap:

MARCH ADA COURT MEETING:

Sharon Sridhara, Communications and Involvement and Engagement Manager for Westminster and Kensington and Chelsea for NW London NHS Integrated Care Board gave a talk on efforts to improve elective care waiting lists locally and the different healthcare services available, as well as changing demands on the health system due to changing populations. The ICB welcomes feedback to improve services, and you can read about their efforts here:

https://www.nwlondonicb.nhs.uk/application/files/6017/3920/8800/Improving_planned_care_for_patients_in_North_West_London_-_Public_Issues_Paper.pdf

MARCH ZOOM MEETING:

We were joined by Ann Duggan, Community Engagement Lead at NRS Healthcare on their community equipment service [slides [here](#)]. From crutches to bed raisers, NRS Healthcare provides equipment to help people continue to live independently in their own home. To reach the service please contact your local Adult Social Care team or your current Healthcare Worker. Advice and information can be found here:

<https://www.peoplefirstinfo.org.uk/at-home/staying-in-your-own-home/requesting-an-assessment/>

FEBRUARY'S ADA COURT MEETING

We heard from Dr Katharine Lodge from Imperial College London around the immunology and the biology of the blood system and oxygen - she discussed research into how oxygen changes immune cells and how the emergency life support machine (ECMO) can cause lung damage [slides [here](#)]



FEBRUARY'S ZOOM MEETING

Sandie Roberts, Service Manager for Westminster and Kensington & Chelsea Carers Hubs delivered a talk on the service provided by the Carer's Network for unpaid carers. Read more [here](#).

FEBRUARY'S ZOOM MEETING

Dr Dean Burnett delivered a talk about 'Emotional Ignorance' with some fascinating insights on how emotions work and indeed what they even are! Here's some of the [notes](#) I took.

JANUARY'S ADA COURT MEETING

Dr Sam Bartlett-Pestell, Clinical Research Fellow, Respiratory ST6, Airways Group, NHLI, Imperial College London gave a talk on the group's latest COPD research - read his slides [here](#).



With many thanks to the speaker's who gave their time to share their expertise with the group and Kirsty for photography.

Personal Notes:

INTRODUCING...YOUR NEW MEETING HOSTS



Jane Lowe, Ada Court Meeting Host

Jane has been a member of the group for about 2 years. Alongside her work facilitating our Ada Court meetings, she also volunteers with Age UK, St Mary's hospital and her church. Ask her about how she's getting on with learning Latin, or her upcoming trip to Spain where she used to live!

Stephen Spavin, Zoom Meeting Host

Steve is Community Services Manager for Age UK Westminster. Age UK Westminster exists to promote the well-being of older people in the City of Westminster and help make life a fulfilling and enjoyable experience within our local community. As part of his work with Age UK Westminster, Steve is supporting the Breathe Easy project by hosting our monthly zoom meetings and arranging speaker talks.



A BIG THANK YOU TO...

Paula at One Westminster for the donation of a laptop for the group and Steve for organising collection.

A FOND FAREWELL TO...

Felix Pring who died peacefully in his sleep on January 23rd after some months of illness. Felix was a man of many talents, an actor in stage plays, helping the local elderly with shopping, taking tours at the Tate Britain and driving our members to outings and to his favourite haunt at Isabella Plantation. We will miss him greatly.



HUGE CONGRATULATIONS TO...

Our beloved Tessa Jelen who has received an incredibly well deserved Lifetime Achievement Award for her long standing contribution to the group.

Upcoming Sessions

Friday 4th April, 12.30pm	Zoom	I (Meg) will be giving a talk about air pollution following my participation in Imperial College London's Introduction to Air Quality Course this March. Though by no means an expert, I will relay the highlights from the course and info that is of interest for the group.
Monday 28th April from 11am	Ada Court	<p>*Please note, this is a replacement for the usual 3rd Monday of the month slot for April as this falls on the Easter bank holiday.</p> <p>BE member Randa Eid will be giving a talk on healing food, including the benefits of unrefined sugars in sweets made from dates.</p>
Friday 2nd May,	Zoom	Maggie Harris, Asthma and Lung UK Respiratory Nurse Specialist will be giving a talk on asthma and COPD.

12.30pm		
Monday 20th May, 11am	Ada Court	Esther Mettling, Assistant Professor and epidemiologist will be sharing the findings of her research into COPD and run a brainstorming session with the group. She will also be presenting on an eHealth topic.

As always, I will send an email with more info on the talk, timings and the zoom link ahead of the session.

If you have a specific topic you would like us to arrange a talk on, please do let us know - we are currently looking for speakers on bronchiectasis, for example.

Asthma and Lung UK, Key Info & Updates

KEY CONTACTS:

Get in touch with their 24 hours a day helpline on 0300 222 5800, email them on helpline@asthmaandlung.org.uk or text them via Whatsapp on 07999 377 775.



Asthma and Lung UK are encouraging those with respiratory conditions to write to your MP to ask them to prioritise lung health in the Government's new 10 Year Plan which will be published this Spring. If you'd like to do so, you can do so [here](#).

What's Happening in Westminster...

One You Kensington, Chelsea & Westminster:

A free local healthy lifestyle service to support residents in Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster to lead healthier lifestyles and reduce instances of lifestyle-related cancers and cardiovascular disease. Our support includes help to lose weight, exercise more, stop smoking, drink less, eat more healthily and address psychological challenges. Our programmes are delivered in a variety of ways to suit your individual needs. Whether that's face-to-face, remote, one-to-one or group sessions. Start the journey to a healthier you with our free support: <https://oneyoukcw.co.uk/sign-up/> or call us at 0808 175 6385.



Clean Air Bayswater

Come and join Clean Air Bayswater's 3rd year anniversary on Thursday 27th March 2025 from 6:30pm to celebrate the launch of the first phase of the green corridor between Westbourne Green Canalside and Hyde Park. Enjoy a free raffle and snacks from local suppliers. Venue: Westbourne Park Baptist Church, on the corner of Porchester Road & Westbourne Park Villas, W2 5DX



Free Wifi in Westminster:

Westminster Council are rolling out free Wifi Networks in select locations in the borough, including markets, housing blocks and some streets. The full list and how to access this can be found in the link above. Increasing access to free WI-FI helps address digital poverty and is beneficial to both residents and visitors. The platform is secure with an easy sign-on process and allows for easy movement between networks.



Royal Collections Trust

Join the Trust's April zoom on 2nd April at 2pm to hear about photographs in the Royal Collection:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4407732986?omn=82633284269>



UK Health News



IN LONDON...

A new report from City Hall has revealed that nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) levels across the capital are estimated to have fallen by record levels, and London's air quality is improving at a faster rate than the rest of the UK, after ULEZ was expanded to outer London. Read more in this article from [My London](#).

NEW GP CONTRACT

The government have announced a new deal with GPs that is intended to help to fix the front door of the NHS which will free up doctors from red tape and box-ticking targets to concentrate on what they do best - treating patients. It will

require GP surgeries to allow patients to request appointments online throughout working hours from October 2025, freeing up the phones for those who need them most and making it easier for practices to triage patients based on medical need. It is aimed to support GPs in taking the first steps to end the 8am scramble for appointments.

ASTHMA AND LUNG UK

Asthma and Lung UK have published [new analysis](#) from NHS figures that shows the number of people making five or more emergency visits to hospital a year with breathing difficulties has almost tripled in some parts of the country.



45% of people needing emergency treatment for asthma and 58% for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) are repeat attenders, yet only a half of people surveyed with lung conditions are getting appropriate follow-up care.

New Research

GLOBAL WARMING RISKS DEHYDRATING AND INFLAMING AIRWAYS

A new study published in [Communications Earth & Environment](#) has identified the way in which human airways are affected by very dry atmospheres, which are set to increase due to climate change. The study found that breathing dry air triggers the body's inflammatory and immune responses, with implications for respiratory conditions like asthma, chronic bronchitis and chronic cough. Imperial College London have published a good explainer [here](#).

Pollen Season Begins

As the nights are continuing to draw out, you might have started to feel the first signs of seasonal allergies. If you've noticed symptoms like sneezing, a runny nose, or itchy eyes around this time, it could be due to tree pollen, which is prevalent in early spring.

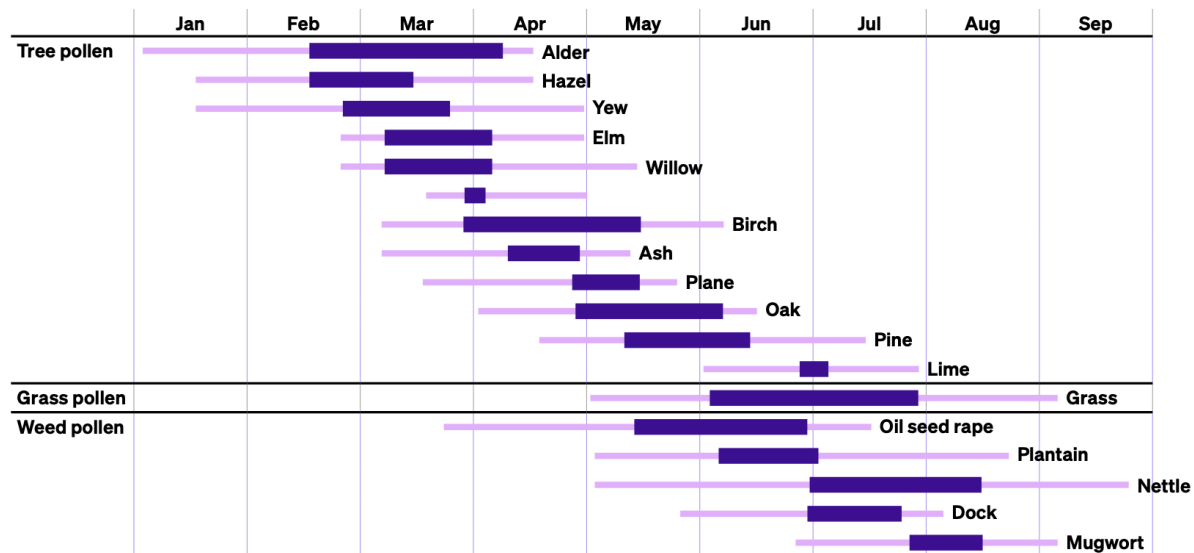
The main types are tree, grass and weed pollen and these are higher at different points of the year. Some people are allergic to just one, while others are allergic to several kinds. Keeping a diary of when you get symptoms and what you were

doing at the time might help you spot patterns so you can take steps to reduce your risk of your lung condition being affected. Asthma and Lung UK's pollen calendar might be helpful to look at...

Pollen calendar



— Pollen season ■ Pollen peak



1 Take your preventer medicine every day, as prescribed

2 Take hay fever medicines

3 Keep your reliever inhaler with you

For more information about staying well during pollen season, visit [AsthmaAndLung.org.uk/pollen](https://www.asthmaandlung.org.uk/pollen). Information supplied by the National Pollen and Aerobiology Research Unit

THANK YOU

If you have any questions or want to find out more about anything included in this newsletter, please contact breatheeasywesminster1@gmail.com or call 07548641438.