



Breathe Easy **Westminster**

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

For this free Westminster support group email

breatheeasywestminster1@gmail.com, or call 07548641438

To become a member: www.breatheeasywestminster.com.



GROUP MEETINGS:

Our in person meetings are on the **3rd Monday of each month from 11am** at the top floor of Ada Court, Maida Vale. Cristy makes sandwiches on the day (£2 each) and tea/coffee/biscuits are complementary. Please bring gifts for the raffle!

We also have virtual meetings via Zoom on the **1st Friday of each month at 12:30pm**. We use the same zoom link each time:

<https://zoom.us/j/92491521273?pwd=CfvbL5SQHLE6BC3EJQ1aGawoeYSVAU.1>

Meeting ID: 924 9152 1273

Passcode: 606531

VOLUNTEER TEAM

As a reminder of roles and responsibilities, the lead volunteers for the group include:

Jane Lowe - Ada Court Meeting Facilitator

Stephen Spavin - Age UK Support & Zoom Meeting Facilitator, Talk Organiser

Meg Greenhalgh - Admin and Publicity; Newsletters, Emails, talk Organiser

Jon Spain - Finance & Accounts

Would anyone in the group be interested in being trained to help with publicity for the group, so we can encourage new members to join? This would involve representing the group at health fairs and community events to help spread the word. Please do get in touch if this would be of interest.

Recent Meetings - Recap:

APRIL ADA COURT MEETING:

BE Member Randa Eid joined us to discuss the impact of a high sugar diet on our health and suggestions for healthy alternatives. Slides [here](#).

What can we do to minimise our exposure?

- Try to avoid pollution hotspots like main roads, junctions, bus stations, and car parks. Try to use quieter back streets as much as possible or go out earlier before pollution levels increase.
 - Research shows if you take a quieter route you can reduce your exposure by 50%.
- Use active travel if you can, or choose the overground/travel by bus. Open window in less polluted areas and shut it before polluted areas.
- Walk on the inside of the pavement furthest from the traffic.
- Limit exercise outdoors
- Stop smoking
- Improve ventilation in the home via an extractor fan or opening the window and avoid burning candles or using a wood burner.
- Consider buying a hypoallergenic Hoover or extraction filter but be mindful these aren't tested in the way you would a medical device.



APRIL ZOOM MEETING:

I (Meg) gave a talk on air pollution and the latest research on its effects on our health, following a two day course at Imperial College. Slides [here](#) and recording of the meeting [here](#). Passcode: =FSRf3e\$

MAY ADA COURT MEETING:

Esther Metting joined us to discuss technology in medicine (e-health), followed by an interactive focus group. Her talk covered how technology can be used meaningfully in the future of healthcare, including videos, virtual reality, robotics, smart phones, and zoom. Slides [here](#).



MAY ZOOM MEETING

Respiratory nurse Maggie from Asthma and Lung UK kindly provided a talk on the latest asthma guidelines. Slides [here](#).

JUNE ADA COURT MEETING:



Kevin Fernandez- Mills from King's College London provided a talk on his research on breathlessness and share his clinical experience in supporting people with respiratory conditions.

Many thanks to Kirsty for the group photos!

Coming Up...

Our face-to-face meetings continue on the **3rd Monday of every month from 11am** at Ada Court. For those with internet access, we also have a zoom meeting on the **1st Friday of each month at 12:30pm**.

| | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------|--|
| Friday 4th July, 12.30pm | Zoom | Xaverine Valentine, Central London Community Healthcare Trust Post Covid MDT Service will be sharing information on what the local long covid support service offers, as well as tips on managing respiratory conditions more broadly. |
| Monday 21st July, 11am | Ada Court | Yuki Machida will be sharing information on indoor air pollution and showcasing samples of indoor air monitors. |
| Friday 1st August, 12.30pm | Zoom | Jennifer Brookland from Sport For Confidence will introduce their new community-based model designed to support residents across Westminster in accessing Occupational Therapy (OT) and physical activity. |
| Monday 18th August, 11am | Ada Court | We will have an open debate on air pollution and tips on reducing air pollution in your home |
| Friday 5th Sep 12.30pm | Zoom | A member of imperial college London's respiratory team will be joining us to discuss 'how they look after us' |
| Monday 15th Sep, 11am | Ada Court | Tessa Jelen will join us to introduce NHS App, PKB and the European Patient Ambassador Program |

Buckingham Palace State Rooms with Royal Collections Trust

With thanks to Claire/Cathy for organisation, we have filled 17 spaces for a visit to Buckingham Palace on 17th September 2025 (1-2:30pm). We will reconfirm availability closer to the date to check if any spaces open up, but currently all places are filled.

We will be sharing this visit with 5 members of St Johns Wood NeighbourCare.

OTHER USEFUL CONTACTS:

- **Asthma and Lung UK** - 24 hours a day helpline on 0300 222 5800, helpline@asthmaandlung.org.uk or Whatsapp on 07999 377 775.
- **Westminster Contact Centre** - 020 7641 1444.
- **Age UK Westminster** 020 3004 5610 (10.00 – 14.00)
- **Abbey Community Centre** 020 7222 0303 has lots of local support and fun opportunities to get involved with.
- **Open Age** for venues, activities and advice 020 4516 9978.
- **Penfold Hub** guide to support pathways 020 3815 0033.
- **Westminster Citizens Advice Bureau** 0808 278 7834.
- **Westminster Libraries at Home Service** 020 7641 5405.
- **NHS Complaints Advocacy P0hWER** 0300 456 2370
- **Carers Network** 020 8960 3033
- **Independent Age** 0800 319 6789
- **The Patient Association** 0800 345 7115

Asthma and Lung UK, Key Info & Updates

Asthma and Lung's Senior Media Officer Sophia joined us at our last meeting and asked if any of you would be interested in sharing your stories. They are always in need of stories on social media/in media stories. Do let me know if you'd be interested in this.



LONG COVID WEBINAR

Asthma and Lung UK hosted their first ever long covid webinar where Professor Rachel Evans discussed the latest treatments available & her study involving over 8,000 long covid patients which found:

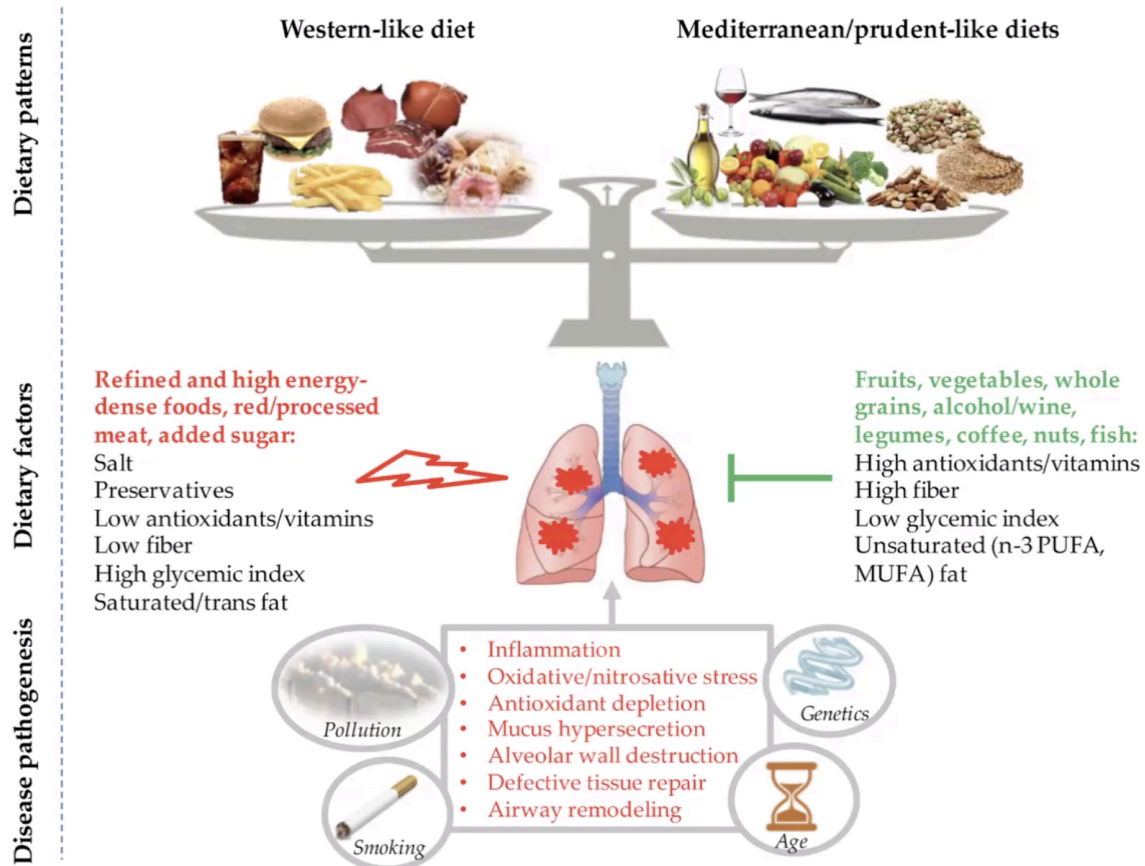
- only 1 in 4 reported that they felt fully recovered 5 months on from Covid.
- Long covid patients have an average of 9 different symptoms, with some patients experiencing 20 different symptoms
- 1 in 5 people we're no longer able to work because of their symptoms
- There was no association between the severity of acute Covid symptoms and the likelihood of developing long covid. Risk factors included long term conditions, obesity and gender (females more likely).

[BBC](#) also recently reported that almost one in 10 people in England think they could have long Covid, according to analysis of national data.

PRESENTATION FOR ASTHMA AND LUNG UK'S COPD GROUP

Dr Peter Collins from Newcastle University gave a presentation on nutrition and COPD who has been researching the relationship between nutrition and COPD.

- When you have a chest infection, it increases your energy requirements by 20-30%.
- Everyone with COPD has unique nutritional needs, but eating healthy can help to manage the condition.



What's Happening in Westminster

Keen Gardener?

The Beethoven Community Centre (Third Avenue, W10 4JL) are looking for gardening volunteers to help maintain their wooden planters. If you are interested, please submit via the [linked form](#), or get in touch with me via phone/email to pass on your details.



Join Westminster City Council's [FREE Home Library Service](#) for housebound people.

This service is for local residents who find it difficult to visit their own local library, where you can borrow free books, music and more. You can apply on a temporary basis if you are recovering from an accident, or temporary immobility, caring for someone which makes leaving the house difficult or finding it difficult getting out and about. Get in touch: homelibraryservice@westminster.gov.uk or call 0207 641 5405

Join Sport for Confidence's Community Day

On 24th July at Little Venice Everyone Active Leisure Centre 10am-12:30am, the community day aims to foster active lives and engagement in meaningful physical activity. You can find out more about local services and inclusive physical activity sessions in Westminster. There will be physical activity demonstrations and health professionals who can talk to you about what support is on offer.



Support - Disabled Facilities Grant & Telecare

If you find your home is becoming unsuitable for your needs, there may be grants available to support you to adapt your home e.g. by adding wheelchair ramps or installing chair lifts. To find out more information, including the eligibility and whether you may be entitled to the support contact Westminster council on 020 7641 2500 to find out more information on the Disabled Facilities Grant. If this line is busy, the call centre staff can take calls and messages on 0207 641 1175. Out of hours: 0207 641 6000 Email: adultsocialcare@westminster.gov.uk

[Foundations](#), the national body for HIAs, provides a [Disabled Facilities Grant eligibility self-assessment tool](#), including a calculator to work out how much you may need to contribute to a Disabled Facilities Grant.

Telecare is a range of gadgets that are designed to prompt and assist you with your everyday activities. They can remind you to take your medication or to alert you if you have left your bathroom taps running, amongst other things. You can buy these devices from a variety of places, such as [Age UK](#). People First have a list of different places you can buy these from [here](#).

UK Health News

DO YOU USE TELECARE?

The Government is encouraging anyone who uses Telecare to get in touch with their landline providers so companies can provide free support for them during the switch to digital landlines. During the switchover, telecoms companies will send engineers to help customers and test connections of telecare alarms used by 2 million nationwide. This is because analogue landlines are being phased out in the UK, as copper networks become increasingly unreliable and spare parts are no longer available.

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.

DISPOSABLE VAPES BAN

As of 1st June 2025, disposable vapes have been banned in the UK, in a bid to tackle waste and the impact of vapes on the environment. It only applies to disposable vapes, also known as single-use vapes, while reusable vapes can still be sold. The government has also said it hopes the ban will make vaping less accessible to children, as statistics show a growing popularity among those aged 11 to 15. You can return any remaining disposable vapes to shops who sold them and now have a responsibility to recycle them.

New Research & Reports

UK AIR POLLUTION KILLING OVER 500 PER WEEK, DOCTORS SAY

A [new report](#) from the Royal College of Physicians (RCP) has highlighted growing evidence about the health impacts linked to toxic air even at low levels, urging the government to act on air pollution as a serious public health threat. Air pollution affects almost every organ in the body, estimated to contribute to the equivalent of 30,000 deaths in the UK in 2025 and costs over £27 billion annually.



Next month a cross-party group of MPs will reintroduce a bill, named after a nine-year-old schoolgirl who died from an asthma attack linked to air pollution, which aims to make clean air a human right under UK law. Called “**Ella’s Law**”, the proposed legislation is named after Ella Adoo-Kissi-Debrah, who lived 82ft from the busy South Circular Road in Lewisham and suffered a fatal asthma attack in 2013. She became the first person to have air pollution listed as a cause of death after an inquest in 2020.

New Asthma Guidelines

New asthma guidelines recommend a shift towards using combination medicines (AIR inhalers) containing an inhaled steroid and a medicine called formoterol which can help lower your risk of an asthma attack. It's safer than using only a blue reliever inhaler as it contains a steroid to treat underlying inflammation.

Your GP may prescribe an AIR treatment plan if you have just been diagnosed with asthma and only have symptoms less than twice a month; only need help managing your asthma at certain times of the year, e.g. pollen season; only need help for symptoms triggered by occasional allergens; only need help managing your symptoms when you exercise. If your asthma is not well controlled using your AIR inhaler, your GP may suggest you move to a MART (maintenance and reliever therapy) treatment plan. On a MART treatment plan you take your inhaler every day as prescribed, as well as when you get symptoms.

Read more from Asthma and Lung UK [here](#).

Share Your Experiences

The European Lung Foundation's Global Voices 2025 campaign aims to showcase the real experiences of people living with lung conditions and those who support them. Visit [Global Voices 2025 - European Lung Foundation](#) to share a photo or paragraph that reflects your experience. Your submission will be part of a global visual display launching at the European Respiratory Society Congress 2025.



Staying Well in the Heat

Here are 5 simple things you can do to keep your home and yourself cool:

1. Let in cool air and encourage air flow when it is cooler (night & early morning) - open windows at the opposite sides of your home/upstairs and opening doors/using a fan can help this.
2. Keep windows, blinds and curtains closed in the heat of the day, particularly where the sun hits your home.
3. Put a fan in front of the window to enhance the breeze & put a bowl of ice in front of it.
4. Limit use of the oven/cooking and even washing machines and other energy intensive appliances which release heat in the home and stick to cold foods.
5. Visit one of London's cool spaces which have air conditioning - find out where they are in Westminster [here](#).



Hot weather may also affect lung health, so staying well can help avoid flare ups. A recent Asthma and Lung UK survey found that 1 in 3 people felt hot weather made their symptoms worse. This may be due to hot/humid air affecting breathing, increased ozone (polluting gas) in the air or higher pollen levels.

THANK YOU