

Asthma + Lung UK's Westminster Support Group



<https://www.asthmaandlung.org.uk/>

Helpline 0300 222 5800

helpline@asthmaandlung.org.uk

0737 8606728 for questions on asthma.

Westminster Breathe Easy support group.

Contact t.jelen@btinternet.com, or text: **0794 6514380**

We support people with respiratory conditions, their friends, family and carers, helping with information and companionship.



This 4-page printed newsletter is for our non-digital members. But if you use email, why not receive the full multi-page newsletter direct to your in-box by registering with www.breatheasywestminster.com to become a free member with regular updates and information.

The **Westminster Breathe Easy monthly meetings** are at 11 am on the third Monday of every month at the top floor, Ada Court, 16 Maida Vale, W9 1TD, (text 0794 651 4380 for updates) The building, including the residents lounge meeting space, is due for a massive revamp, so some chaos to come, but good to be back there.

Our monthly **ZOOM** meetings are on the first Friday every month, login at 12.30, through [THIS](#) link. We have clinicians and others with relevant support information talk to us.

QR code to register
for free membership.



If you would like to find out about Breathe Easy support groups *in other areas*, contact supportgroups@asthmaandlung.org.uk or call the Asthma and Lung UK Support & Development Officers on 0300 3030 253. To receive the National Asthma & Lung UK information direct, register [HERE](#).

**Issue 54
March
2024**

**Charity
number
326730**

Contact us
for real
pressed
flower
cards



8 cards with
envelopes
for £10.00
plus postage.



Please
return your
inhalers
and blister
packs
to your
pharmacy

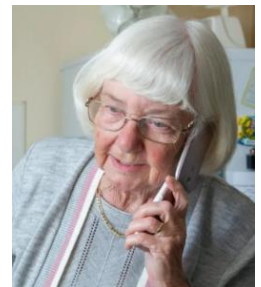
"Up and Coming" events with Breathe Easy Westminster.

Our live meetings are the 3rd Monday, and our Zooms are on the 1st Friday of every month.

- 18 March Ada Court meeting. Talking Therapies, amazing help and hints.
- 5 April Zoom talk on services of NHS app and PKB (Care Information Exchange)
- 15 April Ada Court meeting with talk about cybercrime by the Met Police.
- 3 May Zoom talk by Air Liquide nurse about oxygen prescription.
- 15 May Jessica at [Atkinsrealis](#) funds us a trip to Kenwood House and gardens.
- 20 May Ada Court meeting with a talk on "Preserving Eyesight" by NHS optician.
- 7 June Zoom on "Asthma & Lung UK" and "European Lung Foundation" web info
- 17 June Ada Court meeting with discussion with Royal Brompton on research trials
- 28 June Visit to the Royal Mews.

"Good to Know "Groups?" are free national telephone events, offering social and learning opportunities to people who may not be online or who may struggle to get out and about in their communities. The groups connect people aged 65+ with their peers and useful organisations, to hear and talk about issues that matter to them. Think of these groups like a cup of tea and a chat at a community centre, **but over the phone in the comfort of your home.**

Sign up to their mailing list and choose which groups you're interested in that month and give their Helpline team a call for free on 0800 319 6789 to book your place.



The **Community Health and Wellbeing Worker** (CHWW) is a collaborative project and is working with GP's, Imperial College, managers and co-ordinators, to create a dedicated team of 14 VSC's from the **Abbey Centre**, to reach 1200 homes. Churchill Gardens is part of an initial local target to tackle health inequalities amongst its residents. Our Westminster Asthma & Lung UK Support Group lead has been asked to assist in training the VSC's to understand respiratory self-management and support pathways.



The Royal Brompton Hospital and researchers at Imperial College are looking for people with COPD, who use oxygen therapy, to take a popular health supplement (nitrate-rich beetroot juice) to see if it improves your walking and how you feel when you are physically active. The treatment is also thought to help your blood vessels and your muscles work more efficiently. The ON-PACE study involves three appointments and taking the nutritional drink at home for 12 weeks. Transport for appointments can be provided and time is reimbursed. If you are interested, you can email onpace@imperial.ac.uk or call [07894973824](tel:07894973824).



Cost of Postage

Nearly 100 non-digital Breathe Easy Westminster members ask for the newsletter to be posted, and although we purchase the wonderful and cheaper commemorative stamps costing 60p rather than 75p, (see picture), posting for this and our birthday cards to you all (240 members!) is one of the main expenses for us to find. Donations gratefully accepted! In April second class post will increase by 10p!



Cathy, (07730 813410), keeps in touch with our non-digital members, she says "I always enjoy hearing from the members and keeping them updated on Breathe Easy events".

Please help her by ensuring that she has your emergency contact's name and phone number.

Also, our thanks to Samuel, who continues to regularly send out cards for your birthdays and helps me maintain your membership data. Please let us know if you move or have a new email.

There is lots going on to help you to move into the digital world.



Join Age UK's [Free digital learning session](#) in a friendly, social group setting. Bring along your own digital device if you have one and be supported by our dedicated volunteers to learn to use it and get online.

enquiries@ageukwestminster.org.uk

020 3004 5610 (Monday to Friday - 10.00am to 2.00pm).

Or borrow a device from their digital library. No need to book, just drop-in.

Marylebone Library 9-11 New Cavendish Street W1G 9UQ .

All sessions are held on Thursdays from 1.30 to 3.30pm. The next date is 4th April.

Church Street Library 67 Church Street NW8 8EU. All sessions are held on Wednesdays from 2.00pm to 4.00pm. The next date is 10th April.

Paddington Library Porchester Hall, 45 Porchester Road W2 5DU All sessions are held on Tuesdays from 11.00am to 1.00pm. The next date is 16th April.

Mayfair Library 25 South Audley Street W1K 2PB. All sessions are held on Fridays from 2.00pm to 3:30pm. The next date is 26th April.

[Pharmacy First Service](#) will be available in April. Patients will be able to get treatment



for seven common conditions without the need for a GP appointment or prescription. See webinar link [HERE](#).

Conditions community pharmacists will be able to treat include sinusitis, sore throat, earache, infected insect bite, the skin infection impetigo, shingles, and uncomplicated urinary tract infections in women aged 65 and under.

Different inhalers require different techniques. Check with your Health Care Professional (HCP), pharmacist or [RightBreathe](#). *PLEASE DO NOT BIN THEM!*
Take your used inhalers back to your pharmacist.



Our recent talk from the Westminster Council recycling team explained how normal bin refuse was now incinerated. (no more landfill). This means that single use vapes end up in an incinerator if you put them in your rubbish bin WHERE THEY CAN EXPLODE. Please collect them and take to your local recycling yard.

Again, a lovely visit by our members to **the Queens Gallery** for a session on the artist Holbein. And now the news that the Gallery will be closed for a bit whilst changing its name to the [Kings Gallery](#). When it opens there will be the opportunity for benefit recipients to visit for a £1 each. Marvellous, an opportunity to visit this fantastic building.



NHS CARE

Volunteer Responders

Volunteer Responders is open for self-referrals so people can request support, from friendly chats over the phone to food shopping and prescription deliveries. The service is free and you don't need to be referred by a doctor. Call them on 0808 196 3646 ([HERE](#)) for the weblink **Check In and Chat:** Provides a friendly phone call and a listening ear.

Check In and Chat Plus: The same volunteer provides listening for up to 6 weeks.

Community Response: Help by collecting and delivering shopping, medication and other essential supplies. This service is available as a one-off or for a maximum of 6 weeks.

**but what about those who cannot use a phone?*

"No Internet, Only Phone?"

[Westminster Contact Centre](#) may be able to help 020 7641 1444.

[Benefits](#) 0800 072 0042 .

[Age UK Westminster](#) 020 3004 5610 (10.00 – 14.00) offers advice and assistance.

[Abbey Community Centre](#) 020 7222 0303 has lots of local support and fun.

[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.

[Nickie Aiken MP](#) City of London and Westminster 020 139 5125.

[POhWER's Independent Health Complaints Advocates](#) making an NHS complaint 0300 456 2370

[Carers Network](#) 020 8960 3033 (see [HERE](#) for their amazing full contact help list).

[Independent Age](#) 0800 319 6789.

[The Patient Association](#) 0800 345 7115



This following digital part of the newsletter is full, with a multitude of links to open up to further information. (*cntrl + click when hovering over a blue highlighted field*). There should be something to suit everyone.



Some is easy and some clinical. **Be selective**, choose to explore what appeals, search by the magnifying glass or save looking into some links for another day.

	Page
Asthma & Lung UK (ALUK)	6
Breathe Easy Westminster	7
Breathing, Clinical & Support	9
NHS, Patient Involvement, Research	10
Local Information	13
Our Planet & Random Things	16

Asthma & Lung UK (A+LUK)

Why not call A+LUK helpline. 0300 222 5800, Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm if you need advice.

For more information on their **online groups**, have a look at their webpage: They have a wide range of online and face to face groups. Joining ALUK online group sessions or just to find your local support group. **See [HERE](#)**.



There are nine different online group sessions advertised, including subjects like support for COPD, [bronchiectasis*](#) and long covid; zumba, singing and harmonica especially suited for people with respiratory conditions.



and finally the parents and carer support network. A space for parents and carers of children with asthma or suspected asthma to come together.

[Join our online Parent Carer Support Network sessions for 2024 \(mailchi.mp\)](#)

*Bronchiectasis online support group

ALUK volunteer Patricia founded the online bronchiectasis group with ALUK's support. More information [HERE](#). She is approachable and helpful, leading you to further available support pathways for this condition. See some links below.

<https://bronchiectasis.azurewebsites.net/> Living your life with bronchiectasis.

<https://europeanlung.org/en/information-hub/lung-conditions/bronchiectasis/>

<https://europeanlunginfo.org/bronchiectasis>

Breathe Easy International

To join the International Meetings, register [HERE](#). It is a useful meeting for people who cannot make respiratory meetings in the daytime. Terry told us of the sad passing of Barbara Moore, who ran "Cath Your Breath". You can catch up with some of her podcasts [HERE](#). We will miss her wise and helpful contribution to the meetings.

Beverly Menheniott beverlydaily@gmail.com, the daughter of Derek, who started this group said "My dad will be smiling down at us all, sorry i havent been in touch, its been hard going without dad, my emotions are more stable now so been looking on dads page etc . Ive got my dads computer up and running now so will b able to retrieve pictures, he will be so proud of u guys ."

Asthma & Lung UK's [Our Future Health](#) is the UK's largest **research program**, bringing together 5 million people to develop new ways to prevent, detect and treat health conditions. Little improvement has been made in the way that lung conditions are diagnosed, treated and managed over the last 20 years. Using people's health data for research can change... [You can be part of it](#). See [HERE](#)



As you might know, Client Earth handed over the healthy Air Coalition to Asthma + Lung UK (ALUK) but are still working with the coalition on proposals for a new Clean Air Act.

They also launched a legal complaint against the UK government last year over the legacy of Dieselgate but there are no public actions planned for that just yet. You can read about it here [https://www.clientearth.org/latest/news/we-re-sending-legal-complaints-on-excessively-polluting-vehicles/](https://www.clientearth.org/latest/news/we-re-sending-legal-complaints-to-three-governments-on-excessively-polluting-vehicles/)

They know that partners are preparing work ahead of the mayoral elections in May and also trying to prepare for the General Elections so might be worth getting in touch with ALUK to ask them about that – Tim Dexter tdexter@asthmaandlung.org.uk

Client Earth are challenging the UK government's net zero plans.

Breathe Easy Westminster

Our Westminster Breathe Easy is an Asthma & Lung UK Support Group, we are one of over 200 groups nationally that are patient led and patient run.

All are made welcome. Find information on your condition, hear specialist talks, eat sandwiches made to order and enjoy our raffles and networking with others.

Our monthly Meetings, both live and zoom are going well, and our membership is increasing and now stands at 230 members. Average attendance to meetings and zooms is about 20 members a time, so there's room for more. Keep bringing nice prizes for our raffles, biscuits and ideas for sharing. In some cases, slides presented at meetings or zoom sessions, or recordings are available, so do check with [me](#) if interested in following up on a talk or presentation.



Our member Fran is giving a talk about NHS App and PKB on our 5th April zoom session. This allows you to order your medication and see your test results.

My GP has started to send me a text with the results of a recent test, and with links explaining what it means. This is brilliant. Sometimes it is suggested that you book an appointment. It's a great system, but the problem has been that I cannot get through to the surgery now to book, or told that the GP appointments are already full up for the next month of available bookings.

Meanwhile a new system in NWLondon for "Same Day Appointments" is being strongly discussed, with the basic idea that appointments are triaged to relevant support pathways by a dedicated hub and to relieve the pressure of getting an appointment.

Digital



Are you one of millions out of contract and overpaying on your mobile? Whether you are looking for a new iPhone or Samsung, or just want to save with a cheap SIM only deal, mobile comparison can help you save money.

Slash £100s off your mobile bill with "Look After My Bills"

If you need help and wish to learn more how to join the digital world, do let us know. There are lots of new support opportunities and we will send you their information. **Digital by Age UK** takes you from the very beginning of understanding the digital world. See further in under Local Information section.

HERE is a link to an EU video about **how digital data** is used. It is very interesting and worth having a look.

Rambling

Our member, Simon Lloyd, a highly experienced, kind, and supportive leader, conducts small groups of up to 12 participants for **gentle rambles**. The walks are paced according to the ability and weather. The Tuesday health walk for the Breathe Easy group happens every week at 11.55, beginning at St James's Park. He also leads a circular health walk in W2 on Wednesdays.

Contact Simon to book: simontlloyd65@gmail.com 07949 316279.



Exercise



Kapil is a specialised trainer who runs **Open Age's Healthy Lungs** exercise program in Westminster and RBKC and who aims to improve chronic respiratory health, helping to manage COPD, Asthma and other respiratory conditions. It is an excellent course, .

He currently has spaces available on Mondays, 11:15 am - 12:15 pm on Zoom and Wednesdays, 11:30 am – 12:30 pm at Victoria Medical centre in Pimlico.

Contact ktyagi@openage.org.uk or you can call: 020 4516 9973.

Pneumonia

When you have COPD, you are more likely to get an infection in your lungs known as pneumonia, which is caused by viral infections like the common cold, the flu or even COVID-19, but can also be caused by bacteria, fungi or other microorganisms. It causes inflammation in the tiny air sacs in your lungs. Treatment for pneumonia depends on what type you have and how severe it is, Find out how it is diagnosed and treated **HERE**.

Flying & Oxygen

nb. *Breathe Easy Westminster* has a Zoom talk on by Air Liquide, the London Oxygen suppliers, on 3rd May.



It should be noted that flying considerably lowers your oxygen levels so you should find out more about it. There is a test called "Fit to Fly"

<https://www.asthmaandlung.org.uk/living-with/travel/oxygen>

<https://europeanlung.org/en/information-hub/living-with-a-lung-condition/air-travel/>

<https://uk.healthcare.airliquide.com/home-oxygen-equipment>

For techies, the BMJ guidelines on oxygen use [HERE](#) (it is 6 years old)

Breathing, Clinical & Support

[myCOPD](#) is the **complete app for patients living with COPD.**

Perfect your inhaler technique with our easy-to-follow inhaler videos and learn how to manage your COPD from world experts.

Complete online pulmonary rehabilitation classes from the comfort of your home and get the very best in COPD care.



'Get your blood pressure checked campaign launches 11th March 2024

The only way to know if you have high blood pressure is to get a blood pressure test to lower your risk of a fatal heart attack, stroke, kidney disease or vascular dementia. The campaign encourages all adults aged 40 and over to get a blood pressure check. It's a free, simple and a non-invasive procedure conducted in privacy at your local pharmacy, and you don't need to book in advance. See [HERE](#).

What is Westminster Talking Therapies?

They gave a talk at our Ada Court meeting on the 18th March and their slides are available

It is a **free** and **confidential** NHS service that supports those with common mental health difficulties including stress, low mood, anxiety, and more. They provide short-term individual or group Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) and individual Counselling.



Therapy is provided over the phone, online via video call, or face-to-face at one of our offices. You will be asked at assessment which you prefer.

You can self-refer by filling out the form on our website [HERE](#). Alternatively, you can give us a call on **030 3333 0000** or send us an [email](#). You can also get a referral through your GP.

Why not join one of our bi-weekly webinars to find out more about our service. Register by following this link: <https://talkingtherapies.cnwl.nhs.uk/westminster/webform>

*Westminster Talking Therapies is not a crisis service. If you require urgent support please contact the Single Point of Access team on **0800 0234 650**.*

Are you suffering from symptoms relating to your mental health, poor sleep, respiratory health or female hormonal health?



The Breathing Clinic has techniques to help.

Did you know that any of these symptoms could be linked to the way in which you breathe? Dysfunctional breathing patterns and poor breathing habits are intrinsically linked to our overall health and wellbeing, and by addressing these significant improvements to be made through changing the way in which you breathe.

Antibiotic resistance



NIHR Evidence produces plain language research summaries.

Their aim is to provide clinicians with actionable findings to improve health care and provide the public with accessible health information. The webinars are designed to bring professionals and the public together to learn about recent evidence that could inform practice. **This webinar recording focuses on reducing antibiotic use in primary care.** clips of the presentations and a synthesis of some of the major discussion points.

NHS, Patient Involvement, Research

Finding cancer earlier can hugely increase chances of survival. [A new blood test, called Galleri, could help to do just that.](#) It correctly found two thirds of cancers in more than 5,000 people who visited their GP with non-specific symptoms. It also pinpointed the original cancer site in 85% of those cases.

Did you know the **National Aspergillosis Centre** hosts bi-weekly virtual meetings, open to everyone with [Aspergillosis](#) and not just NAC patients? They welcome patients from across the UK and beyond. These informal meetings offer participants a safe and supportive space to share their experiences and challenges with others who have the lived experience and understanding. **How do I join?** Joining our meetings couldn't be easier. Choose the day you want to join us and follow the registration links. <https://aspergillosis.org/support-meetings/> A study for people with COPD and their uptake on Pulmonary Rehabilitation [HERE.](#)



[Opportunities](#) for you to get involved, updated daily.

Read Maria's Imperial College Healthcare's [article](#) 'explaining how "local communities are key to successful research"

The NIHR Expert webinar: "**long-term conditions associated with ageing**"

[A recording is now available](#) to watch on the NIHR's YouTube channel

To find out more about NIHR research and how to take part, visit these links:

- **Take part in research:** visit the [Be Part of Research website](#) to learn more about research and to search for and sign up to be notified about studies by condition and location
- **Join Dementia Research:** register to be informed of dementia studies that you can take part in, if you have dementia or not, at [Join Dementia Research](#)
- **Learn more about research:** at [the NIHR website](#) and the [website of your local NIHR Clinical Research Network](#) (England only)
- **Promote research:** [become a Research Champion](#) to promote and support research, such as through giving talks and giving a patient perspective on studies to researchers (England only) **Watch videos about research:** on the [NIHR YouTube page](#)
- **Sign up to the NIHR newsletter:** sign up to this [monthly e-newsletter](#) to hear the latest news about research in England
- **Follow the NIHR on social media:** follow the NIHR on [X/Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) to keep up to date with the latest research news (England only)
- [HERE](#) is their Spring news

NHS England's [February Intouch](#) includes information on how patients can now get



treatment for 7 common conditions at their high street pharmacy without needing to see a GP, as part of a major transformation in the way the NHS delivers care.

The ambition for NW London is that by 2026, our health and care system will enable 50,000 residents to spend 180,000 more days at home with the right support for



them and their families. Residents will only spend days in a hospital, community, or mental health care bed when it is the best place to meet their health and care needs. Staff in all settings will feel they have the right resources to provide the best possible care.

Read more [HERE](#).

The Royal Brompton & Harefield is a centre of excellence for respiratory and heart care. It also does research and [HERE](#) is their latest newsletter. It includes details of the below interesting research on the benefits of drinking beetroot juice.



[Beetroot juice lowers blood pressure for people with COPD](#) New research finds beetroot juice supplement lowers blood pressure and improves exercise capacity in people with COPD. Undertaken in patients from Royal Brompton and Harefield hospitals, the study found taking a daily beetroot juice supplement lowered blood pressure and improved how far COPD patients could walk in six minutes.

Long Covid research

Although the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic may be behind us, research into the virus continues. There's still a lot to learn about this infectious disease - with more information on its long-term health impact discovered over the last year. An NIHR-funded study found that [tens of thousands of people in England were still experiencing symptoms a year after being infected](#). While most people recovered from infection within 2 weeks, many reported symptoms lasting 12 weeks or more.

Long COVID can cause a range of symptoms, such as shortness of breath, difficulty thinking or concentrating and joint pains. But a study published in the summer found that [fatigue was the most debilitating](#). Understanding the biological causes of long COVID is important to finding possible treatments.

In October 2023, NIHR researchers showed for the first time that [shortness of breath is linked to an abnormal immune response](#). Another NIHR-funded study found that [blood clots may be the cause of cognitive problems in patients after COVID-19](#)

The research suggests that symptoms like brain fog could be caused by lack of oxygen in the brain. In Wales, researchers are [testing a new support programme for people with long COVID](#). LISTEN was co-designed by 30 people in the UK living with long COVID and aims to provide personalised support to those managing the condition.

A (confirmed?) report from Nature.com on "Blood-brain barrier disruption and sustained systemic inflammation in individuals with long COVID-associated cognitive impairment". See [HERE](#).

Vaccines

A [Statement HERE](#) setting out advice from the [Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation](#) (JCVI) on the COVID-19 vaccination programme for **spring 2024** and beyond. It advises that people at greatest risk of serious illness from COVID-19 are eligible for a vaccine.

You will find the most up to date information on winter health and seasonal vaccinations for children and adults [on this NHS webpage](#)

A study funded by the NIHR has found that vaccination against COVID-19 consistently reduced the risk of long COVID symptoms. Meanwhile, researchers in Cambridge are testing a [needle-free coronavirus vaccine](#) - Manufactured as a powder, it doesn't need to be kept in the fridge. This could help increase access to vaccines in low and middle-income countries, where access to cold storage is unreliable.



There is excellent research information on ERS Vision live. This [LINK](#) leads to a recording of "Respiratory infections: which vaccines, when and for whom?" and other research recordings. Become a free member to access.

Professor Cecilia Johansson, (Professor of Mucosal Immunology in the Section of Respiratory Infections, at the National Heart and Lung Institute, Imperial College London) webinar yesterday confirmed **there is an RSV vaccine for the over 70**. It will be interesting to find out more about the appropriateness of this vaccine for people living with long term respiratory diseases. [How much do you know about RSV?](#)



The International Scientific Forum on Home Hygiene, is a leading source of Scientific, Professional & Consumer Information. See their [January](#) news on hygiene.



European Lung Foundation's website contains information on lung conditions and 'keeping lungs healthy' available in many languages: <https://ow.ly/J31C50QynZM>

You can also visit their events page and watch their latest webinars, including the "Breathe Clean Air" Patient Conference <https://lnkd.in/eYfwbTSX>

European Patient Ambassadors Program, EPAP, is a free, online, self-learning programme that introduces patients and carers to some of the basic skills and knowledge needed to represent yourself and others successfully. See introduction [HERE](#).

People can now self-refer in for [Check In and Chat support](#).

NHS CARE **Volunteer Responders**

Check In and Chat volunteers provide **short-term telephone support** to people who need a chat and some encouragement to improve their mental health and wellbeing. Through friendly conversation and where appropriate, volunteers can help people feel better and explore positive changes they could make. [The service](#) is open for self-referrals so people can refer themselves or someone they know (with that person's permission). They can do this by calling the team on 0808 196 3646.

Local Information

Are you with the Priority Services Register

Check if you can sign up to the [Priority Services Register](#) to get extra help if you are:

- of State Pension age
- disabled or have a long-term health condition
- considered 'vulnerable'

[Social tariffs](#) are cheaper broadband and phone packages for people claiming Universal Credit, Pension Credit and some other benefits. Some providers call them 'essential' or 'basic' broadband.

South Westminster Legal Advice Centre are a charity set up to provide free legal advice for people on low incomes. They do so independently, fearlessly, efficiently and with integrity, but always in a friendly and courteous manner. We cover various areas of law, including housing, employment, family, wills and succession, consumer and contracts, personal injury claims, and basic criminal law. We do not offer debt, immigration or benefits advice.



They run two clinics a week, between 6.30 - 8.00 on Tuesday and Thursday at the Abbey Centre, Great Smith Street. Appointments can be made online at: <https://swlac.org/get-help/book-an-appointment/>. If you do not have access to the internet, they can make a booking for you in person.

Defending and protecting women from violence in the home and in the wider community. And do save and use [THIS](#) link for MEWSO's latest March newsletter.



Have you been waiting for the NHS respiratory rehabilitation program? Well here is an important opportunity from the recognised [Open Age's Healthy Lungs exercise program](#).

It currently has spaces available on Mondays, 11:15 am - 12:15 pm on Zoom and Wednesdays, 11:30 am – 12:30 pm at Victoria Medical centre (29 Upper Tachbrook St, London SW1V 1SN). Importantly, you can self refer or ask your GP for referral. Contact ktyagi@openage.org.uk or you can call: 020 4516 9973.



Open Age ACL Courses [Spring Programme April - July 2024 0.pdf](#)

Listening Books, a charity which provides audiobooks to people who find that an illness makes it difficult for them to read or hold a book are currently offering FREE memberships to individuals located in Westminster. They don't ask for any proof of benefits. You can join our service at <https://www.listening-books.org.uk/> or by calling 020 7407 9417

They are suspending their CD service and stories will be live streaming. Our Breathe Easy group have been promised a large give-away bundle of their CD stories when this happens! Meanwhile your local library has great things happening too, including CD stories



There are a multitude of events happening at libraries, including IT training, yoga, knitting and concerts! see [HERE](#).

Do you know about [LIBBY](#), the free e-lending library? Libby is a free app where you can enjoy ebooks, digital audiobooks, and magazines from your public library. You can stream titles with Wi-Fi or mobile data, or download them for offline use and read anytime, anywhere. All you need to get started is a library card.

Note that their magazine lending has moved to a different app called ["Borrowbox"](#)

In-Deep Community Taskforce are a charity aiming to combat loneliness and isolation by promoting friendship. They offer a range of opportunities for the over 50's to connect with others in their local community, including a weekly lunch club, a community choir and a dance fitness class. <http://in-deep.org.uk/>



The amazing Carers Network is still around to offer support to carers and to help unpaid carers. See the self-referral form [HERE](#) for help and advice. And [HERE](#) for their March news and support links

Lots of us will care for someone at some point in our lives. You might not see yourself as a carer, but you could get extra money if you regularly spend at least 35 hours a week looking after someone who is ill or has a disability.



The magnificent [Age UK Westminster](#) goes from strength to strength with their services, which go from help with [digital inclusion](#) to a [visual impairment advocacy service](#), amongst much else.

The Penfold Hub for Westminster residents over 50, is near Church Street, they have an activity program, see [HERE](#). Contact denis.kane@housing21.org.uk for more information.

Penfold Community Hub

All sessions are open to Westminster residents over 50 years old and carers.

ACTIVITY PROGRAMME

ABBEY CENTRE ACTIVITIES



Visit the Abbey Centre website to learn more about all of their activities [HERE](#) and how to join in, and read their latest March Bulletin [HERE](#). Also worth visiting is [their café](#), which is becoming very popular.

[Abbey Centre's Community Pantry.](#)

For a small weekly subscription of £4.50, members of the Community Pantry can choose a number of food items and other household essentials each week, with a typical retail value totalling over £40! See [HERE](#) to read more about it and how to join up.



Westminster Councils' March newsletter [HERE](#) [HERE](#) the link for Westminster food support. And [HERE](#) for their Spring environmental news.



Do explore [People First](#) in case I have missed something, they support independent living and health in K&C and Westminster, including about our Breathe Easy Group!



[Groundwork](#) has released the results of their annual survey of Green Doctors – energy efficiency advisers working for the charity – which paints a troubling picture of the realities for people trapped in fuel poverty across the UK. See [HERE](#)



<https://mailchi.mp/independentage.org/information-on-debt-home-adaptations-and-planning-ahead?e=4b19699b37>

Their April Community Zoom from 2pm on Wednesday 3 April.

Please join to hear Curator Kathryn Jones talk about Queen Mary's Dolls' House, as they celebrate the 100th anniversary of this country house in miniature. Meeting zoom [LINK](#), ID: 440 773 2986.



Our Planet & Random Things



Yes, most of us realise that **water** is going to be rationed in the future. The sewage in our rivers and the drought in Spain are just a samples of the problems we face.

Some of the biggest financial hikes this year could be from your water company, meaning your water bills may rise by an eye-watering 70% over the next five years.

There are simple and meaningful steps you can take – even as governments would have to work to reuse **water** and secure supplies. If individual actions like turning off taps while brushing your teeth seem small, there are big shifts that make a crucial difference if enough people do them. Swapping baths for showers or washing for only as long as it takes to sing your favourite song – depending on your music taste and the tolerance of your neighbours – is one powerful way the Catalans I met save water.

But your diet, perhaps surprisingly, is one of the biggest drains on water. Eating foods that need large amounts of water to produce – particularly meat from animals that have been fed on grain – massively increases your hidden water footprint.

Startling information – See the difference in **cost of food** in the same stores in different areas, by this [WHICH](#) report. Our member, Felix, has understood this for years and takes Pimlico residents in the local church bus to the far cheaper Asda and Lidl every fortnight.





Wellcome is a global charitable foundation who want everyone to benefit from science's potential to improve health and save lives.

Their current free exhibition, **Being Human** explores what it means to be human in the 21st century. It reflects our hopes and fears about new forms of medical knowledge, and our changing relationships with ourselves, each other and the world. See [HERE](#).

Indoor solar power: These cells can harvest energy from any light source for battery-free devices. California-based company Ambient Photonics has been working on indoor solar cells since 2019, improving the performance and price of this emerging technology. The cells can be 'printed' in almost any size and shape for use on everyday devices such as remote controls and wireless keyboards, potentially removing the need for batteries and decreasing the size and weight of electronics. See more [HERE](#)



The platform [Zoe](#) and [Tim Spector's](#) website are well worth following, they helped us all through the covid pandemic by recording our symptoms and showing where the virus was heading and now see the progress on researching the microbiome. The large community of microbes that live in our gut, skin and body.

- [10 healthy food swaps from ZOE's community](#)
- [11 top tips from ZOE's nutritionists](#)
- [4 foods our scientists recommend you try](#)
- [The truth about organic food, according to science](#)
- [5 foods I got wrong, with Prof. Tim Spector](#)
- [What healthy meals can you make with what's in your cupboard?](#)
- [Fermentation 101: A beginner's guide](#)
- [Your comprehensive guide to food additives](#)

The link between toxic air and food is well established.

In countries that have cut other sources of pollution, like industrial emissions in the UK, the proportion of particles coming from farms rises to 60%.

Air pollution [doesn't just damage health](#). – Food has enormous cultural importance and longstanding traditions, meaning changing diets in rich nations away from meat and dairy and towards plants is challenging. The fightback from vested interests in industry is still ongoing!

We know we can't [beat the climate crisis](#) without cutting meat consumption, we know cattle production is a big factor in [destroying biodiversity](#), and we know many already [eat more red meat](#) than is healthy for them. We also know the meat industry [is heavily subsidised](#).



In Good Taste

Notes on food, flavour, lacto-fermentation and other forms of cultural fun. Have a look and see how to subscribe [HERE](#)

Oat, almond and soy milks are getting more popular. But is there a benefit to switching from cow's milk? BHF's Senior Dietitian Victoria Taylor explores [HERE](#).



The pulmonary circulation is the short loop from the heart to the lungs and back again. See information [HERE](#) from the British Heart Foundation.

[Sitting all day is terrible for you, but there's an easy way to counteract it](#)

A simple hack can help people avoid the negative health implications of sitting down all day. I personally became involved in a research study that analysed the results of improved activity levels for frail adults. Because I spend so much time on a laptop, we raised the laptop so I that I worked standing up. The result was a recorded increase in my general strength.



[Six ways to head towards a zero-waste home kitchen](#)

Reaching zero-waste in a home kitchen can feel an impossible ambition. Here are six ways to begin.

This monumental 200 year old tree grows in the centre of an old park. Its majestic appearance impresses us with its unusually shaped and thick trunk, widely spread branches, and purple-coloured leaves that shine beautifully in the sun.



The link [HERE](#) for this and other beautiful trees which were part of "the tree of the year" vote



[Recycling alone won't solve the plastic pollution crisis, says ISB Global](#)

Recycling plays a vital role in waste management, but it's nowhere near enough to solve the current global problem with plastic pollution, we need to improve current recycling efforts, but also reduce our production and consumption of single-use plastic: and encourage far greater plastic reuse.

Most of what you need to know about soft plastic recycling is in this link [HERE](#) Regarding supermarket recycling of plastic bags, since these schemes are voluntary and privately run there is very little information on their outlets and performance.

*Finally, as always, my best wishes to all
Tess Jelen, March 2024*

