



Breathe Easy Westminster



Support Group for British Lung Foundation

the Asthma UK and British Lung Foundation (BLF) Partnership.

breatheasywestminster@talktalk.net call Tess: 020 7834 0894.

[Asthma UK website](#) [Asthma UK Helpline](#): call 0300 222 5800.

[British Lung Foundation website](#) [BLF Helpline](#): or call 0300 003 0555.

Post Covid-19 Symptom Support 0300 222 5942.

or via WhatsApp on 07736 927 716.



Whilst our monthly meetings and outings are still suspended, keeping in touch with our members is a challenge. Although we hold two zoom meetings a month, I feel that many are missing out on the opportunity to meet up with no travelling, and the opportunity to see news, information and friends. We can get you free access to Kew Gardens and London Zoo (if open) and we try to keep in contact by phone or text.

Are you digitally excluded? Our members without equipment or connectivity wishing to get online, do talk to us. We may be able to help. "Vodafone Everyone Connected" have given us SIM cards for 20gb of data and unlimited UK calls and texts completely free to use every 30 days for 6 months.



Register with us if interested or to hear of further ideas to get you connected.

Don't be lonely this Christmas. There are lots of opportunities out there, see the list of local organisation's phone numbers or just touch base with Tess.

And remember to keep safe and wear a suitable mask in crowded places. Face coverings are now compulsory in most settings, as well as and on public transport. Just like the old days! If you have had two vaccinations, you can now take your booster earlier, at 3 months after last one. So do take up the offer. It all helps against Omicron variant.

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Dec
2021

Charity
number
326730



We make beautiful
real
pressed
flower
cards,



Our price:
9 cards
for £10.00
Including
postage.



Do you regularly use Lateral Flow Testing?

You may feel protected by your vaccination, but it still means that you can catch it, (though with nasty but milder symptoms) and still transmit it to the more vulnerable without even knowing it. These test kits are free and can be obtained in pharmacies or by dialing 119 for a posted test kit and further information on testing. If positive, isolate and check with a PCR test ordered through 119 or <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>.

And don't forget, most pharmacies, where you get your prescriptions, can also administer the flu jab or your covid-19 booster.

Another point is to keep a record available of your NHS number, this is shown on the top of your prescription and clinical letters.

"No Internet, Only Phone"

Did you know you can join our Zoom meetings **just by phone**. Text Tess on 0794 651 4380



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

[Benefits](#) 0800 072 0042

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

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

[Open Age](#) (South Westminster) activities and advice 020 4516 9969

[Open Age](#) (North, St Charles) activities and advice 0204 516 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



Holiday check list

- *Keep warm*
- *Avoid catching flu or colds*
- *Drink plenty of fluid*
- *Keep active, even just a little walking*
- *Ensure you have flu and booster vaccination,*
- *Ensure you have your all your medications*
- *Touch base with a friend*

Joining the digital world has many advantages,



such as ordering repeat prescriptions online, having a remote consultation with your doctor or consultant, emailing and linking with friends. Now you can register for our free Breathe Easy membership direct online, which will also enable you to receive over 30 pages of this newsletter digitally with multiple links, deep diving into information and other services.

Our Past and Future zooms



It is exactly a year since we started our twice monthly zoom meetings. As well as having fun seeing and chatting with friends, we have had sessions with talks by Health Share, Age UK, Penfold hub and Citizens Advice services, pollution and Buteyeko breathing. We also had a brilliant asthma nurse, a service for free advice and ideas to cut down your energy costs. And that's only a sample.

In the New Year we plan a discussion about fake news and myth busting, a virtual talk and tour of the Wallace Collection, Dr Kemp on anxiety and introduction on the importance of understanding microbotic resistance (AMR) and that's just a start.



Derek's International Breathe Easy

His zoom meetings are every Wednesday with members from all over the world.



They also will be having a continuation of Monday singing for lung health from 10th January through to 14th Feb inclusive. **Smiling is mandatory.** If you would like to join, please send him your email address and name so he can keep you informed of developments. cummingsderek1@sky.com

This is followed by "Harmonica Monday's", from February 21 as this is shown scientifically to dramatically improve respiratory muscles, and therefore your ability to breathe. Joining this course will provide you with tons of reasons to smile with a great group. The teacher, Chris, will give a talk about the course at their January 5th zoom meeting. All meetings are 7pm UK time.





Have you got self-monitoring equipment at home? Thermometers and oximeters are suggested. Did you know it is recommended to use a spacer with your *pressurised* "puffer" medication (requires a long slow intake of breath and some 'sing' if you breathe in too fast!)



Most pressurised puffers are not eco-friendly, but *powder* medications are more environmentally friendly, (requiring a short hard breathe in.)

If your GP moves you to an eco-friendlier medication, do try it out, he will help you to find the one that works for you. *And remember preventers, unlike relievers, should be used every day.* Please take back all used inhalers to your pharmacy, they are *required* to accept them for incineration, even if they cannot yet re-cycle.

Again, we are asking you or family to save your printer cartridges which we can recycle for you through our collection box with Recycle4Charity asap.

Don't put print cartridges or your used puffers in the bin.



What are antimicrobials?

Antimicrobials – including antibiotics, antivirals, antifungals and antiparasitics – are medicines used to prevent and treat infections in humans, animals, and plants.

What is antimicrobial resistance?

Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) occurs when bacteria, viruses, fungi and parasites change over time and no longer respond to medicines making infections harder to treat and increasing the risk of disease spread, severe illness and even death.

Why is antimicrobial resistance a global concern?

The emergence and spread of drug-resistant pathogens that have acquired new resistance mechanisms, leading to antimicrobial resistance, continues to threaten our ability to treat common infections.

Antibiotics do not work against viruses only against bacteria. The current ***unnecessary*** use on animals, in our food chain and for medical treatment needs an urgent attention to change. The development of new antibiotics is long waited for.

Meanwhile calling out to you all. We need active members, hopefully experienced with administration or linking with others, to help me in running our group? We are patient run and patient funded. Full mentoring provided.

t.jelen@btinternet.com 0207 834 0894



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 highlit field*) It is **AMAZING** how much there is to do. There should be something to suit everyone.



Some of it is easy and some clinical. Be selective, choose to explore what appeals, search by the magnifying glass and then save looking at some links for another day.

There is lots to look at.

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Patient Involvement, Research

Called co-production by some...

In recent years, patient and public involvement (PPI) has moved to the forefront of research, as its potential to strengthen and ensure the focus is relevant has become far more realised. With a focus on performing research “with” or “by” patients and members of the public, guidelines and tools have been created across the board. [READ MORE.](#)



The ZOE COVID Study app is a not-for-profit initiative that was launched at the end of March 2020 to support vital COVID-19 research, the Kings study is the world’s largest ongoing study of COVID-19 and is led by ZOE Co-Founder, Tim Spector. You can [register to report](#) on your symptoms, watch the amazing informative videos they produce, such as his talk [HERE](#) , about why one if five won’t get antibodies or watch his summary talk to the Royal Society of Medicine [HERE](#).

In the meantime, head back to their [registration page](#) to find out more about our speakers or click below to [watch our last webinar](#) on vaccines and the immunosuppressants. And information on Omicron [HERE](#) and [AGAIN](#).

Tim looks at a brand new COVID treatment called Molnupiravir. This is a pill with a real potential to help reduce deaths and hospitalisations in patients with COVID, with initial results from the trial looking very promising. He discusses the mechanism behind how it works, as well as what the limitations are for a treatment like this. To be noted is that there is not enough supply to treat enough people widely, and not thought to replace vaccination. [Tim’s video discussing molnupiravir on YouTube.](#)



This newsletter, highlights many inspirational stories of involvement and participation from around the UK. This year the research community has continued its efforts to address the impact of COVID-19.

[Be a part of research](#)



European Patient Ambassador Programme 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. It is made up of eight different modules so you can choose those that interest you most and is available in English, Dutch, French, Italian, German and Spanish.

Personalised Care: Peer Leadership Foundation –

As the NHS moves towards a more personalised health and care system, it's important for people to have a clear idea of what this new, more targeted approach to health and care means for them. [Register HERE](#)



The Taskforce for Lung Health is a **unique collaboration between experts in lung health**, including patients, health care professionals and

academics. This is our call for action to decision makers to take steps now, without delay, to improve lung health in England by implementing the Taskforce's recommendations.

Sign up for BLF Task Force for Lung Health [HERE](#)

COPD and Physical Activity – Research Opportunity

Improving your physical activity is one of the best things you can do for your health, and it is never too late to start!

At the National Heart and Lung Institute (NHLI) we are currently investigating new ways of measuring and improving physical activity and mobility in people with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD). **No matter what level your current activity is, we would appreciate your help in our research.**



**Royal Brompton
& Harefield**
NHS Foundation Trust

If you are interested in participating, or for further information about these studies at the **NHLI and Royal Brompton Hospital**, please contact Alexis Perkins at A.Perkins@rbht.nhs.uk, or call 0330 128 8121 Ext 84152/84151.

You can also follow our NHLI Respiratory Research Facebook page @NHLIRespRes for the latest research updates.

Mobilise-D Clinical Validation Study – Research Opportunity

We are looking for adults with COPD to participate in this study which is developing a new way of measuring mobility. Please follow the link below to download more information: https://www.icloud.com/icloudrive/0IypXyA_SjCoC2Z3DzxF1N5Dg

How to become a member of RB&H and receive their newsletter [HERE](#)

LOCAL INFORMATION

BELOW are links to the main local organisation support groups and some of their current offerings. Do join their mailing list to keep in the loop. They all have an amazing multitude of offers for Westminster residents.

- [Age UK events](#)
- [Open Age Christmas events](#)
- [Abbey Centre bulletin](#)
- [Westminster Libraries](#)
- [My Westminster Updates](#)



For those of you that are musicians or singers, do have a look at [Gisella' newsletter](#) and invitations. She is a professional and interesting musician with a lovely sense of being.



Book a free collection of your unwanted clothes. with traid.org.uk/collections <https://traid.org.uk/clothes-donations/book-a-collection/> or call: 0208 733 2595.



City of
Westminster

Report it is an online tool that also allows you to report a number different types of issue directly to the Council ranging from planning breaches to food safety as well as waste management. Report an issue [HERE](#).

The Council is also offering advice links to help with rising energy costs [HERE](#) which includes the great free support offered by [Green Doctors](#) (0300 365 3005) And [HERE](#) for their December recycling news

And even more help like [handy person" support](#). Westminster residents aged over 60, or in receipt of disability benefit, can request free help from a handy person. The service covers minor works to a home. It does not cover gardening, plumbing or decorating. It is not an emergency service,. Handyperson Service. 020 7641 8959 or email: hia@westminster.gov.uk

There are ways to be involved in climate emergency [HERE](#) and Winter advice [HERE](#)

Their "[Cash First Referral leaflet](#)", is to be used by residents and colleagues as a resource across Westminster. The idea is that it's about income first, above emergency food aid, helping someone to maximise their income before the person ends up at a food bank – to keep food banks as a last resort.

This cash first referral leaflet is [now available online](#) in English and Arabic..



Here is [Westminster Labour's website](#) where you can find out what they are doing with the Council. There's also news about your area and the issues your local Labour Councillors are taking up on behalf of residents.

[Nickie Aitkin and team](#) are always available to support people living and working in the Two Cities who need help and support. The latest Government advice is available [here](#). Please do not hesitate to call **020 7139 5125** or [email her](#) if you think she can help in any way. She hopefully will be continuing to hold both in-person and virtual surgery appointments for more complex matters.



OPPORTUNITIES

Have your say... **about online GP services**, Online GP consultation services make accessing your GP and surgery easier. **Health Watch** want to improve these services across NW London and to do this they need to know how they've been working for you so far. Which parts of the service are important to you, what doesn't work well and how can they make things better? Complete and share our survey now: bit.ly/nwlsurvey the closing date is **Wednesday 5 January 2022**.



Pharmaceutical companies MUST fund medicine packet recycling programmes." Can you help by signing this petition? Our goal is to reach 150,000 signatures and we need more support. You can read more and sign the petition here: <https://chnq.it/pYcGwrw9pR>



The Fire Brigade do incredible work to keep us safe all year round, and a smoke alarm in your property can save lives. If you don't have one, I would urge you to get one as soon as possible. Haven't checked to see if yours is working recently? Now's the perfect time!

Get a Home Fire Safety

Listening Books provides a postal and internet based audiobook service to over 100,000 UK residents who have a disability or illness that impacts their ability to read the printed word. See their latest newsletter [HERE](#).



I love their CD stories of my favourite authors read by brilliant voices, especially on long car journeys!

Read [Age UK's report](#) on the digital gap for older Londoners and the need to ensure there is the opportunity for them to join the internet services. There is demand among older people to get online, with a quarter of older Londoners wanting to use the internet more. The most frequently cited reason for not using the internet more was a lack of digital skills, highlighting the importance of services such as those delivered by local Age UKs to provide training and support using the internet. Age UK has training offers to help you, so keep in touch with them.



BLF are delighted with a new partnership with **ClickSilver Connections**.

Getting on-line can be quite challenging and very frustrating sometimes! This could be the solution you are looking for! ClickSilver are offering 4 support sessions to help you get connected to the digital world. This could be on any device, mobile phone, tablet or laptop.

This is a self-referral service, so just follow these easy steps:

Step 1 – Contact BLF on call 03000 3030 253 or

BLF.supportgroups@BLF.org.uk

Step 2 - Complete a form with our support

Step 3 - We will pass your form to ClickSilver who will allocate a mentor and you will receive four telephone consultations to suit your needs

Step 4 – Digitally connected! It's as straightforward as that!

As ClickSilver is a partnership, we will need consent to share your details with them. Be assured we are following strict GDPR guidelines and will only share the details you have consented to on the referral form. This is a great service and is completely free! If you would like to know more about the

service before you sign up, then give us a call and we'll explain.



Thanks to The Pimlico Million, The Abbey Centre will be running our FREE 6-week online healthy baking course for kids and families starting on Friday 14 January 2022 for 6 weeks. If you live in the **Churchill Ward** and are interested to take part, please email sharon.mcdonald@theabbeycentre.org.uk to register your interest.



HAVE YOUR SAY ON COUNCIL COMMUNICATIONS



City of Westminster

Westminster City Council is currently asking how residents of the borough like to stay informed about local news and council information and inviting them to join a Residents' Panel. By **becoming a member of the new Residents' Panel**, you will be invited to take part in surveys and participate in paid discussion groups over the coming year, looking at a variety of different topics.

For now, these will be held online, but some may be in-person sessions and the council will be inviting a cross-section of Westminster's residents to take part. As a thank you, for each discussion group that you participate in, you will receive a £35 Love2Shop gift voucher. Please follow the link below to sign up. <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/ResidentsPanel/>



Their services include befriending, SW1 baked potato Wednesday lunch delivery, manicures/pedicures and pilates on-line.

If you are interested any of their services, please contact Emma on 07761263105 or email emma.chapman@in-deep.org.uk

Meanwhile congratulations to Emma on her recent MBE award!

ELECTRONIC DEVICES REPAIRED FOR FREE

Rather than simply chucking your old devices, why not get them repaired for free. Alex Horn [West Central London Fixers](#) In Partnership with the [Restart Project](#) is a small company that has regular free repair events. Their next event is Feb 2022.

Interestingly a new law says that all new white goods are to have spares available for at least 10 years. ***Our throwaway society is slowly changing!!***



advice and support for older age
**Independent
Age**

gives free, impartial advice over the telephone for older people, their families and carers on issues such as care and support, money and benefits, health and mobility.

Call their [Helpline](#) on freephone 0800 319 6789, Monday to Friday, 8:30am-6:30pm, closed weekends and bank holidays or email to advice@independentage.org. They have some good factsheets on technology to help you at home [HERE](#)

JOIN our Breathe Easy [Westminster Friday BE Zoom on 7th January at 12.30](#)



for a workshop where participants are encouraged to question and **critically engage on the topic of fake news, conspiracy theories and extremism on and offline**, and how perception may be manipulated . Or contact me to hear about our future sessions. Understand how life experiences, thoughts and emotions impact how we understand and interpret media and other information sources. Be up to date on local information related to the circulation of conspiracy, hateful content and violent extremist activity and who to speak to should they spot it.



**COMMUNITY ZOOMS
FROM ROYAL COLLECTION TRUST**

Join December Community Zooms and enjoy a series of engaging sessions that look forward to next year's Platinum Jubilee of H.M Queen Elizabeth II and then ease us in to the festive season with some Christmas themed talks.

To join the Meetings: CLICK [HERE](#) Meeting ID: 904 476 9010 Passcode: 624813

Wednesday 15 December 2pm, Pantomimes at Windsor Castle – hear from Curator Caroline de Guitaut about the special Pantomime display at Windsor Castle.

Wednesday 22 December 2pm, Sandringham House – we finish our year, and Christmas celebrations, just like the Royal Family with a trip to Sandringham House in Norfolk.

[The Middle Eastern Women & Society Organisation](#)

Need to know your rights? Distressed? Isolated? In an abusive relationship?



Last week **Age UK** launched a new campaign '[Out and About](#)', dedicated to tackling social isolation, campaigning together on a range of issues From campaigning on transport issues to public toilets, They hope you'll join them.

Better journeys A recent study found that 64% of older people are less confident using public transport than they were before the pandemic. We are starting by focussing [on changes to help people travel with confidence](#)

21st December - 2.00pm Carol Singing on ZOOM

Wonderful Carol singing on ZOOM provided by students at the Southbank This will be a **virtual tour**. The link will be forwarded to you on the day of the event.

To book contact 07903 255384 or souad.abdellaoui@ageukwestminster.org.uk

Exercise



Keeping active

[Keeping active and doing exercise](#) can make a big difference to both your physical and mental health.

Finding an activity that works for you and your condition is key.

Discover something you enjoy that helps ease your symptoms and you'll find it easier to keep going!

Their Zoom exercise continues with the last Motivational Monday session this year on 13th December and the last Feel-Good Friday is on 17th December.

They will restart on 20th January and Feel-Good Fridays on 14th January 2022.

BLF have secured funding to extend the sessions until March 2022.



Have you been thinking about getting more active?

BLF's "Stay active, Stay well" exercise videos give you everything you need to start exercising. They include step-by-step aerobic and strength exercises as well as

how to warm up before you start, and cool down and stretch at the end.

The programme has been designed for people living with a long-term lung condition, and includes exercises at 3 levels:

See further details [HERE](#)



Please see the [link for relevant posters](#) on the [Jogging Buddy platform](#) which is a great tool for buddying up with fellow walkers, joggers, and runners to either

help you feel a bit safer when out jogging, provide a competitive element to your weekly 10k, or just to help give you a nudge when you're lacking motivation.

07951 430 266 mgoodchild@westminster.gov.uk, www.active.westminster.gov.uk

Read their December newsletter [HERE](#)

Walks in Westminster

A whole list of ideas and contacts for walks. Just wrap up warm and enjoy good company. Download the "Walks for Health" opportunities in Westminster [HERE](#)



One You Westminster is a healthy lifestyle service offering free nutrition, physical **ONE YOU** activity, wellness and weight management services in the borough. They also provide a stop smoking service which offers 6 weeks of 1:1 behavioural support and 12 weeks of free Stop Smoking medication. Link to join their services: <https://bit.ly/SignUptoONEYOU>

Digital Weight Loss Programme – Gloji



Introducing One You Westminster's brand-new digital weight loss programme - a 12-week, fully funded programme you can do anywhere, anytime.

You get support, simple and healthy recipes, an easy way to log and track your weight, as well as tips, guides and articles picked just for you. The most impressive thing they offer however, is the interactive videos where you learn the psychology behind your habits and unravelling the reasons why you became overweight in the first place. They want to get you to a place where you never need to diet again! Find out more info or sign up [HERE](#)

BREATHING SUPPORT, BLF & CLINICAL



I was looking to have an article here about how to register with Amazon Smile, to allocate a % of your spending to BLF, but the % is SO small. So, [a rethink](#).



Our group has been substantially supported by the BLF team and without them we would not even have our zoom meetings. So please do continue to help them to help us by a small donation. <https://www.blf.org.uk/donate>

[HERE](#) is BLF's advice on handling the colder weather

Our Breathe Easy Westminster meetings are still suspended at Ada Court, and now the prevalence of Omicron put a big question mark on making future plans. But our zoom meetings are going from strength to strength. If you are not receiving invitations with the links, do register to be a member on <http://breatheasywestminster.com> or email me on t.jelen@btinternet.com



Inhaler technique.

This is an important part of taking your medication, you would be surprised how many of us get this wrong.

[HERE](#) are some videos from Asthma UK



Our mission is to improve the lives of every pulmonary fibrosis, bronchiectasis and respiratory/lung infection sufferer through ground-breaking medical research, carried out at UCLH and UCL Respiratory, one of the world's leading research centres for respiratory diseases. <https://www.breathingmatters.co.uk/>

Severe asthma has been neglected for too long and it's time it was made a priority.



Tell us your story of living with asthma so we can make the case for asthma to be taken more seriously, we will be collecting all your stories and using them to make sure politicians and policy makers are prioritising people with asthma and the care they receive.

Register [HERE](#)

The Health and Care Bill could lead to major changes in how health care in England is organised. But what is the Bill ultimately trying to achieve? Will it make a difference to the care we receive?



In this new podcast episode, Siva Anandaciva sits down with Richard Murray, Chief Executive of The King's Fund, and Dame Ruth Carnall, former Chief Executive of the NHS in London, to make sense of it all and discuss the challenges that lie ahead. [What is the Health and Care Bill and why does it matter?](#)

Should we be worried about Omicron?

This week, ZOE's Tim looks beyond the media hype and discusses what we know about the new COVID variant of concern, Omicron. He explores what variants are, how they arise, and how serious this one is. Watch his [Omicron update on Youtube](#), or [read the blog](#).



In his [weekly video](#), Tim discusses if the new variant has had an impact on the UK rates, and shares how important your daily contributions are in helping us to track the spread and symptoms of Omicron, so we can continue to make decisions based on data, not fear.

Not sleeping properly for a longer period of time can be bad for your mental wellbeing, as it can lead to mood disorders like **anxiety** and **depression**. It can also affect your ability to concentrate and make decisions, which could put you in danger when doing certain things, such as driving. Read BLF's campaign blog [HERE](#)



But if you have sleep apnoea there is some startling news if you are using a Phillips machine at night, as some of their machines are subject to a recall. Read more about it [HERE](#). The USA seems more on the case than Europe, possibly because of their stronger legal framework.

[This Diabetologia paper](#), is new ZOE research, the most extensive sleep study of its kind, suggesting that having a later bedtime and deviating from your usual nighttime routine are linked to poorer blood sugar responses the next morning.

You can learn what these discoveries mean for your health in [their latest podcast episode](#) with one of the lead authors on the paper Prof. Paul Franks, ZOE's lead nutritional scientist Dr. Sarah Berry, and ZOE Co-Founder and CEO Jonathan Wolf

Failing on the fundamentals: BLF COPD report



The new BLF report based on a survey of more than 8000 people, offers unparalleled insight into the lived experience of people with COPD.

It exposes unacceptable levels of delayed diagnosis and absent care, while showing the challenges COPD patients live with.

There are thought to be at least 1.3 million people who live with COPD in the UK but don't know it. Without treatment, their condition is certain to deteriorate. So far an estimated 46,000 people have missed out on a diagnosis of COPD because of the pandemic. Read the report [HERE](#).

If you want to know if you are getting the care you need for your COPD, [complete the BLF Patient Passport](#). It produces a report that you can discuss with your doctor or nurse. To find your local support group click [HERE](#)



If you are interested, it is really worth joining the Royal Society of Medicine to watch RSM's COVID-19 Series webinars and other helpful resources at their COVID-19 Learning Hub: <https://rsm.ac/learning-hub>. They have shown some of the best information in these strange times. Respiratory Medicine Section monthly enews. The RSM has produced a number of podcasts focusing on the latest topics in healthcare. [Listen online or download](#) and listen on the go. And click [HERE](#) for their digital news.

Care Information Exchange Plan is the personal health record for patients and service users in North-West London through Imperial. The Care Information Exchange provides secure online access to medical records for you and health and care professionals who are involved in your care. It is known nationally as **Patient Knows Best** (PKB) and becoming more widely used. Click the link to know more about the NHS carbon emissions and PKB's impact on helping reduce these



the

Anyone with ISB should definitely [watch this video](#) on **how your gut shapes your health**



Clear the Air Improving air quality to protect future generations and level up our communities. Read their report [HERE](#) or to share your experience with the team through their site <https://cleartheair.org.uk/>

Planning to go for a walk?

Do you want to know what your local air quality is? Here are two networks giving you the monitoring results of London streets: [London Air Quality Network](#) and [Breathe London](#)



FeNO stands for **fractional exhaled nitric oxide**. When you breathe out, your breath can show if you have inflamed airways. The South London FeNO programme aims to improve local access to FeNO devices, to support the diagnosis and management of asthma. Explore more [HERE](#)



Have your say... **about online GP services**, Online GP consultation services make accessing your GP and surgery easier. **Health Watch** want to improve these services across NW London and to do this we need to know how they've been working for you so far. Which parts of the service are important to you, what doesn't work well and how can we make things better? Complete and share our survey now: bit.ly/nwlsurvey the closing date is **Wednesday 5 January 2022**

Financial Times article [HERE](#)

“COPD: the biggest killer disease you’ve never heard of”
This debilitating lung condition is still under the radar compared to more commonly recognised health issues, with experts calling for public awareness campaigns



MASKS

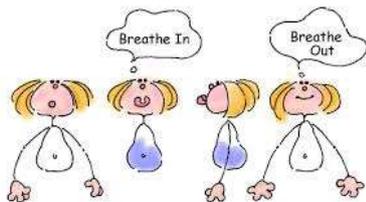
[BLF's masks](#) have a slot to use a protective insert (pm2.5) in them. I like that they have a matching umbrella and shopping bag!



The best masks are FFP2 or FFP3, which one can buy online or maybe your Pharmacist may be able to obtain them for you. They are disposable and cost about £3 or £4 each, so if you can afford some of these, save them for the most dangerous situations, such as perhaps in a crowded place where many other people are not wearing masks.

However, the blue masks you get given if you have a hospital appointment are quite good and are widely available to buy cheaply. Cloth masks with gauze or other material behind them are very acceptable too, but don't forget to wash the masks and inserts after use. Visors are very good IF ALSO USING A MASK UNDERNEATH THEM! A Visor on its own is not very protective at all

[Your Guide to Masks | CDC](#). More information from Kings Zoe



Our Westminster group had an excellent zoom talk [on Buteyeko](#) with some interesting different hints on looking at the way we breathe and changing it for the better. See the book “Breathe Well and Live Well with COPD” available at Amazon [HERE](#). Also, produced some really useful “Just Buteyeko” videos which you can find through this [LINK](#).

You’d be surprised how many get this wrong and how important it is to use your meds properly

1. Link [for Accuhaler](#) (which I use) - a Dry Powder inhaler
2. Link for [Ventolin](#) aerosol (MDI)
3. Link for video [on using a spacer](#)

[How to use your inhaler | Asthma UK](#)

<https://www.blf.org.uk/technology-for-lung-health/how-to-use-inhalers-for-ipad>

[HERE](#) is a link to a factsheet explaining about **technology to help you live independently at home.**

It provides a convenient, discreet way to get help when you need it or to monitor your health. This factsheet looks at a range of technology that can be used to support you at home. It includes information on telecare and telehealth, as well as smart and assistive technology



Progress on lowering cholesterol

Hundreds of thousands of [NHS patients are set to receive a new drug to lower cholesterol](#) following a world-leading deal between the NHS and Novartis which could save 30,000 lives within the next decade. Patients will receive twice-yearly injections of the revolutionary treatment, Inclisiran, which can be used alongside statins, adding to the options available to help them control their cholesterol levels. Find out about [getting tested and lowering your cholesterol levels](#)



Expert panellists discussed the value of rehabilitation as a treatment for breathlessness and the benefits for patients, the pros and cons of virtual consultations, and future needs. See [HERE](#) Prevention of COPD exacerbations was also addressed, looking at opportunities for better patient management, adherence to treatment, and the effects of COVID-19. Also, looking into the future of covid-19 [HERE](#)

Improving asthma care NHS launched the first phase of the [National bundle of care for children and young people with asthma](#) during [#AskAboutAsthma](#) week (20 to 26 September). Developed with clinical experts, asthma patients and their families to improve asthma care across England, the bundle of care is backed up with funding to put in place a named asthma lead in every integrated care system. Find out about the [symptoms of asthma](#) and the things you can do to help keep these under control.

Support for respiratory patients in Primary Care is moving towards respiratory nurses in your Primary Care Network (PCN' local groups of GPS's) to conduct basic tests, including FeNo to check asthma. They will also submit your details to secondary care for approval if they feel you need more support. Under discussion is also the opportunity for patients to move to a "PIFU" pathway, meaning they wouldn't have a set respiratory appointment booked e.g. every 6 months. Instead, they would be able to contact the service and book an appointment when they feel they need it. Not suitable for all patients, but do feedback to me how you feel about this [HERE](#).

COVID and VACCINES

Don't forget our flu jab

Flu health advice in other languages

See translated information on [flu vaccinations](#) and [colds and flu pages](#) into several languages. These languages are Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, Gujarati, Punjabi, Urdu, Polish and Welsh.

[Where to get Covid-19 vaccinated?](#) This website provides you with the information of where you can get your Covid-19 vaccinations across the boroughs North West London, from pop-up venues to pharmacists and the larger centres.

Simple ways to protect yourself from COVID-19:

Take a rapid lateral flow test (LFTs) if you will be in a high-risk situation that day, or before you visit people who are at higher risk of severe illness. More information about where to get LFTs can be found here- [Tests for people without symptoms.](#)

If you are symptomatic, please [book a PCR test](#) immediately. You can also attend our [Community PCR Testing sites](#) seven days a week with prior booking. Self-isolate if positive and, if eligible, access the available [financial support](#) to help. Stay at home if unwell, to reduce the risk of transmission to others. Meet in well-ventilated areas, such as outdoors or indoors with windows open. Download the NHS COVID-19 App, and keep your Bluetooth on, in case you are contacted by the NHS Test and Trace. Get fully vaccinated with both doses and book your booster jab.



Do you have Long COVID? BLF are developing a tool that aims to identify and prioritise your needs while living with longer-term symptoms of COVID-19. To use the tool, all people need to do is answer some questions and they'll get a list with suggestions of what to do next. Having this report means people only need to record their concerns once. It's a work in progress, so let us know how we could

improve it and what you love about it. We want those affected by Long COVID to help us create a tool that works for them. We've worked with a group of other charities and organisations to create this tool. We'd like to thank to them all for their help in getting this tool up and running, ready for you to test. Take a look and let us know what you think: <https://mylongcovid.org.uk/>

We're also offering £25 in Amazon vouchers to take part in testing our new tool.

Register to take part: www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/2TLX8KT

And [HERE](#) is the helpful ZOE video discussion on **Living with Long Covid**

[This page](#) has been created to support people who have been diagnosed with Post Covid Syndrome (also known as **Long Covid**). If you are experiencing, or have been diagnosed with Post Covid symptoms, then this site is here to help you manage your condition. It features information on symptoms, support available, answers to questions you may have, as well as advice and shared experiences from other people.

If you're a patient in NorthWest London and you think you may have symptoms of Post Covid Syndrome, please make an appointment to see a clinician at your GP practice in the first instance. For urgent problems, please call NHS 111.

NorthWest London CCG has created [this page](#) to support people who have been diagnosed with Post Covid Syndrome (also known as **Long Covid**). If you are experiencing, or have been diagnosed with Post Covid symptoms, then this site is here to help you manage your condition. Their newsletter is [HERE](#).

[This National COPD action plan](#) was developed in partnership with the Primary Care Respiratory Society, the British Lung Foundation, the Association of Respiratory Nurse Specialists, the Association of Chartered Physiotherapists in Respiratory Care and the National Pharmacy Association, supported by ACT on COPD secretariat, MHP Communications. The ACT on COPD secretariat was initiated and funded by AstraZeneca

A third dose vaccination is a top up for those who may not have had a full immune response from the first two doses. The aim is to give you a similar level of protection as someone without a weakened immune system who has had two doses. The follow up time is often shorter



A booster vaccination is an extra dose to help people who have had two doses retain their immunity, maximising their protection against COVID-19 ahead of the tricky winter months. [Go to this page to find out more about our booster programme.](#)



National Voices is the leading coalition of health and social care charities in England. We have more than 180 members covering a diverse range of health conditions and communities, connecting us with the experiences of millions of people. We work together to strengthen the voice of patients, service users, carers, their families and the voluntary organisations that work for them. See their community-focused response on a [Long Covid Webinar Event](#)

[A Report](#) from the NIHR saying “that over a third of Covid-19 patients diagnosed with at least one long covid symptom.



And [HERE](#) is their December news and research update

[Here is a video](#) about the difficulty of treatment for long-term conditions during the Covid-19 pandemic. And below are the NHS plans to help resolve this **My Planned Care** platform should be going live on 20th December.

It's aim is to:

- inform patients where they are on the waiting list
- how long they are likely to need to wait
- offer support on how to 'wait well' for their particular condition.

NHS England and NHS Improvement

OUR PLANET and RANDOM THINGS



Please do ask you friends and family to save their printer ink cartridges for recycling. We have a collection box and can sometimes earn a few pence for our BLF charity. Hopefully to collect when we can meet up again! And again, please don't put them or your puffers in the bin!

If you have a Post Office card account for your benefits, tax credits or state pension payments then this will be closing in November 2021. You will still get your payment but will have to use a different bank account to draw out your money See more [HERE](#)



Age UK are raising awareness about [The Great British Public Toilet Map](#), a fantastic website you can use to search for your nearest public toilet. It is the UK's largest database of publicly-accessible toilets, with detailed information about toilet locations, their features and opening hours, across London and the UK. The information is added by volunteers and throughout the campaign they will be raising awareness about how you can become a toilet map volunteer. Also vote for paper maps for the digitally excluded Show your support [HERE](#). Find out more [here](#).

It is an ongoing frustration that the news on the far more dangerous topic of **antibiotic resistance** is



takes a back seat to that of “who sat where at a non-existent party?” Read Helen's story [HERE](#) And Fact Sheets from the World Health Organisation [HERE](#)



This interactive tool aims to help clinicians work with patients to identify a greener approach to delivering high quality, patient centred respiratory care. Read more about it [HERE](#)



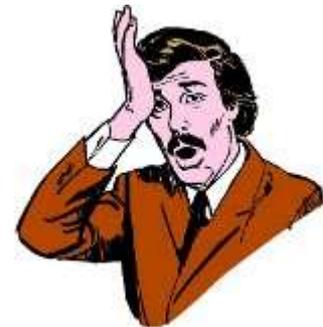
And the NHS is also working towards a Delivering a 'Net Zero' National Health Service and you can read their report [HERE](#)



the NHS and Climate change

[Their publications](#) and long reads present knowledge and ideas gained from their research, improvement programmes and other areas of work. And [HERE](#) is their report on what the public think about

You may be aware that Philip Morris International (PMI), the world's largest cigarette manufacturer, is in the process of taking over Vectura ([More information](#)). Vectura is a British pharmaceutical company specialising in the delivery mechanism for inhaled medication, and receives income from inhalers used to treat COPD and asthma. This includes 13 out of 120 devices licensed for the treatment of these conditions, so for most individuals an alternative that is likely to be



equally effective is available. In taking over Vectura **Philip Morris International will profit from treating the very illnesses that its tobacco products cause.**

It is also thought that one aspect of them taking over the mechanisms that delivery respiratory medicines, may be used in the future to deliver nicotine.

See [HERE](#) a petition for **Pharmaceutical companies to fund their medicine packet recycling programmes.**

TerraCycle have just announced the closure of their medicine packet recycling scheme sponsored by Sanofi. **We need other pharmaceutical companies to join forces with them to re-start this scheme.** They all have a corporate responsibility to recycle the waste they produce - for the environment's sake.



Medicine blister packets have previously been unable to be recycled but TerraCycle found a solution, but the scheme has been closed as they were overwhelmed with **billions of medicine packets that people wanted to recycle** and they are having to re-think the infrastructure and the funding. **People are trying desperately to reduce their plastic usage and waste but when living with long term medical conditions this is not easy.**



Did you know that [Foundations](#) is the National Body for Home Improvement Agencies in England? This means that they are contracted by the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government to oversee a national network of nearly 200 home improvement agencies (HIAs) and handyperson providers across the country.

[HERE](#) is a really harsh, shocking but true cartoon by Steve Cutts on humanity on earth. Because we don't see things, doesn't always mean they aren't there.



[Steve Cutts](#) is an illustrator and animator based in London, England. His artwork satirises the excesses of modern society. His style is inspired by 1920s cartoons, as well as modern comic books and graphic novels.

Thames Water has some handy hints on how to prepare your home for winter [HERE](#).



Do you need help at home perhaps after a hospital stay or because you are not as mobile as you used to be? Look on the NHS website to find suitable home care near you - click on this [LINK](#):



[Love Food, Hate Waste](#) has lots of handy hints, recipes and other ideas to stop the current wasting of food.

Though the imminent changes with the current Omicron virus mutation may mean the closing of restaurants. I am hoping that there will be some way in which their food can go to good causes and not be wasted. Though perhaps [OLIOEX](#) or "[Too Good to Go](#)" may be able to help.

The latter helps bridge the delicious, fresh food goes to waste at cafes, restaurants, hotels, shops and manufacturers - just because it hasn't sold in time. The Too Good To Go app lets you buy and collect this food - at a great price - so it gets eaten instead of wasted. You won't know exactly what's in your order until you pick it up - it's all part of the surprise. Download the app to get started.

Whilst OLIO connects neighbours with each other and with local businesses so surplus food can be shared, not thrown away. This could be food nearing its sell-by date in local stores, spare home-grown vegetables, bread from your baker, or the groceries in your fridge when you go away.

Cities cover just 2% of the world's surface but consume 75% of the world's resources'.



The relationship between food and cities is fundamental to our everyday lives. Food shapes cities and through them it moulds us - along with the countryside that feeds us. Yet few of us are conscious of the process and we rarely stop to wonder how food reaches our plates. [Carolyn Steel](#) examines the way in which modern food production has damaged the balance of human existence and reveals that we have yet to resolve a centuries-old dilemma - one which holds the key to a host of current problems, from obesity and the inexorable rise of the supermarkets to the destruction of the natural world.



Research suggests that people who eat a healthy diet rich in plant-based foods are less likely to get COVID-19. Eating this way can also help you recover if you have the virus. Scientists from the [ZOE COVID Study](#), the largest of its kind, have found that people who ate a high-quality diet, rich in plant-based foods, were 10% less likely to get COVID-19 and 40% less likely to get severe COVID-19 requiring treatment in the hospital. In this article [LINK](#), you can discover what the latest research says about the link between food and COVID-19, find out what foods to eat and to avoid, and what to eat if you do have COVID-19.



WWF is worth joining and [HERE](#) see 10 tips of their to help you eat more sustainably, amongst other great information.

A.I.S.E & Charter Forum became live 8 December. If you want to see it, they have uploaded all [conference material](#) and a [video](#) of the whole forum on our event website [A.I.S.E. 2021 Forum & Charter Symposium. Cleaning and Circularity: working together to meet the Green Deal's Objectives - A.I.S.E. \(idloom.com\)](#)



A New **[Climate Emergency Action Plan](#)** creates a framework for collective action across Westminster, setting out how we will reduce the council's own emissions as well as enable and influence others to act. **[Watch Councillor Rachael Robathan, Leader of Westminster Council, explain the purpose behind the plan.](#)**

Read their special news edition [HERE](#) and find out more about **[Climate Action in Westminster](#)** and resources that can help you be more sustainable. But sadly, no mention of the airmiles on supermarket food or halt of non-recyclable packaging.

CREATING ENERGY FROM FALLEN LEAVES: Our autumn leaf sweeping service will **[collect around 1,000 tonnes of leaves](#)** from the streets of central London this



autumn, with the collected leaves being used to generate heat and energy for local homes. Every autumn, we expand our street cleaning service for several weeks to account for the significant quantity of leaves shed from the city's 19,000 trees. The leaves are sent to the South East London Combined Heat and Power (SELCHP) Energy Recovery facility. 1,000 tonnes of leaves can generate

around 530,000 kilowatt hours of electricity, enough energy to power an estimated five million hours of television or boil 5.3 million kettles. **[Read more about this.](#)**

And finally, From the Arts Council

Every day in January, doing a gentle little creative activity for 5 or 10 minutes. You don't have to do it every day, you don't have to do it any day. But I'd like you to know they're **[HERE](#)**. And they've got your back if you need a bit of space to just be. Be yourself, be someone else, be somewhere else, be resting, be creating, be staring into space. They have no expectations of you. You're just welcome."

<https://64millionartists.com/download/the-january-challenge-pack-2022/>

[Tess Jelen](#)
Xmas 2021