



MEDWAY ASTHMA SELF-HELP NEWSLETTER – OCTOBER 2021

WELCOME TO THE MASH NEWSLETTER

We open October's newsletter with the desperately sad news of the death of MASH's former Chair of Trustees, Nick Bowler. He was a great friend of MASH and a formidable advocate of the need to support people with asthma and other lung conditions. He will leave a great void and our thoughts are with his many friends, his family and his partner, Sandra. Our trustee, Judith, pays tribute to Nick in this newsletter.

Also in this newsletter, our specialist asthma nurse, Julie, writes about the impact of autumn on asthma and asthma control. We are also nearing our AGM and we hope to see you there. We have an exciting guest speaker who, I know, you will want to hear from.

Finally, since the first covid lockdown, MASH's asthma nurse advice appointments have been via telephone. Whilst this has been very successful, and we will continue with telephone appointments where appropriate, we are planning to return to face-to-face appointments in November if safe to do so.

Clive Johnson, Chair of MASH Trustees

LOOKING AFTER ASTHMA THIS AUTUMN INTO WINTER

We are now well into the autumn and for many people with asthma this time of the year can bring with it many potential asthma triggers. Whilst, we may think of the summer months being the typical allergy season, the autumn is also a peak allergy season. This is because in the autumn we spend more time indoors and with the heating on and the windows closed – all perfect conditions for mould spores and house dust mites, which may cause allergy symptoms and trigger an exacerbation of asthma. Check out the Asthma UK and Allergy UK websites for further allergy advice:

- <https://www.asthma.org.uk/advice/triggers/indoor-environment/#heatingyourhome>
- <https://www.allergyuk.org/living-with-an-allergy/at-home/>

Here are some useful asthma tips to follow this autumn:

- Make sure you are taking your preventer medicine every day, as prescribed.
- Always keep your reliever inhaler with you.
- Make sure you get any vaccines you're offered (COVID-19, flu, pneumonia).
- Don't delay seeking help if your asthma symptoms are getting worse.
- Use your Personalised Asthma Action Plan – if you don't have one, speak to your GP or the MASH Asthma Nurse.
- Make sure you take up any opportunity for an asthma routine review with your GP surgery or with the MASH Asthma Nurse.
- Keep active – if cold weather sets off your symptoms, try wrapping a scarf round your face and nose if going outside to exercise.

An NHS advertisement featuring a photograph of an elderly man in a black cap and jacket holding a young child in a grey winter coat and blue hat. They are outdoors in a park-like setting. The NHS logo is in the top right corner. The text 'Vaccines are our best protection this winter.' is written in yellow. Below it, in white, is the text: 'It's easy for us to pass on COVID-19 or flu viruses without knowing. This winter there are two essential vaccines you'll need to protect yourself and your loved ones. Find out if you're eligible now at nhs.uk/wintervaccinations'.

LOOKING AFTER ASTHMA THIS AUTUMN INTO WINTER, CONT.

At this time of the year, we also start to see lots of fireworks – whilst lovely to watch the smoke from fireworks and bonfires can irritate the airways. So as well as the usual safety messages for these events, make sure you keep your reliever inhaler handy; that friends and family know what to do if you have symptoms (keep a copy of your personalised asthma action plan on your phone); don't stand too close to the bonfire and check the direction of the wind; wear a scarf over your mouth and nose; and, finally, consider staying indoors if fireworks/bonfires have caused you problems with your asthma in previous years.



Top tips to stay well with your asthma at firework displays:

- Keep your reliever inhaler (usually blue) handy.
- Make sure friends and family know what to do if you have symptoms – keep a copy of your Personalised Asthma Action Plan on your phone.
- Don't stand too close to the bonfire and check the direction of the wind.
- Wear a scarf over your mouth and nose.
- Consider staying indoors if fireworks/bonfires have caused you problems with your asthma in previous years.

www.medwayasthmaselfhelp.co.uk

Julie Millest, MASH's Asthma Nurse

MASH'S AGM – THURSDAY 18TH NOVEMBER, 7PM



MEDWAY ASTHMA SELF-HELP ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

7 pm, Thursday 18th November 2021, via Zoom



AGM Guest Speaker:
Dr Shanthi Paramothayan, Consultant Respiratory Physician at Medway Maritime NHS Foundation Trust and Senior Lecturer at Kent and Medway Medical School, will present on 'Improving Asthma Care'.

Everyone welcome, but please register to receive details on how to attend.

To register, call 01634 855844,
email medwayasthmaselfhelp@btconnect.com or visit:
www.medwayasthmaselfhelp.co.uk/agm.
Facebook: @medway.selfhelp Twitter: @MedwayAsthma

We warmly invite you to our annual general meeting, which will take place online again this year (via Zoom), on Thursday 18th November, 2021, at 7pm.

We are delighted to announce that our guest speaker at this year's AGM is Dr Shanthi Paramothayan, Consultant Respiratory Physician at Medway Maritime NHS Foundation Trust and Senior Lecturer at Kent and Medway Medical School. Shanthi will give a presentation entitled: 'Improving Asthma Care'.

Everyone is welcome to attend to find out more about MASH's work and hear about what we have been up to over the last year. To register and for details on how to join the event, please call 01634 855844, email

medwayasthmaselfhelp@btconnect.com, or visit: www.medwayasthmaselfhelp.co.uk/agm.

You can find our official AGM notice and agenda here: www.medwayasthmaselfhelp.co.uk/agm.

SUPPORTED BY: MASH is very grateful to have been supported by many amazing grant-making and fundraising organisations, including:



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IN MEMORY OF NICK BOWLER



Nick Bowler, former MASH
Chair of Trustees

It is with great sadness that we learnt of the death of our long-time supporter, Cllr Nick Bowler. Nick first supported MASH in 2003–4 when he chose us as one of his Mayors' Charities during his time as Mayor of Medway. Subsequently, he attended our AGM and became Chairman of trustees, a post that he held for over ten years. In Nick's words, when he stood down as chair due to health reasons:

'Who can believe 14 years have passed since I came to a meeting of this excellent charity while I was Mayor. Within a few months, I became Chair, thought maybe I'd do a couple of years. ... I'm sure MASH will continue for many years and I will always be a supporter.'

Nick always enthusiastically supported our efforts to help people with asthma, and their families and carers. He always kept order at our regular quiz nights and enjoyed our online events in 2020. He will be missed and remembered by the trustees, past and present employees, and all his friends at MASH:

Asha Saroy, former MASH Chair of Trustees wrote: 'A great guy who supported [MASH], who supported me like anything to take over as Chair of MASH after him. A man who spoke his mind, with a great voice on Planning at [Medway Council]. Sending sincere condolences to his friends and family.'

Bridget Nightingale, former MASH Chair of Trustees wrote: 'Very grateful for all the support and encouragement Nick gave to MASH for some years and to me personally. He will be greatly missed.'

Clive Johnson, MASH's current Chair of Trustees said: 'Nick was a great friend and a passionate advocate... His death is a tragedy because he had so much more to give.'

Thank you for everything you did for MASH, Nick. Your commitment and infectious enthusiasm for the charity and its work have ensured that we continue to support people and families affected by asthma in Medway. You will be missed.

Judith Pender, MASH Trustee

ASTHMA OUTREACH – MEDWAY FUN PALACE

This summer, MASH's outreach stand has been out and about in the community raising awareness of asthma and asthma-related issues once again, for the first time since the first covid lockdown. One of the events we attended was the Medway Fun Palace (organised by Nucleus Arts and Medway Council) at the beginning of October, where we tried out our asthma-themed chatterboxes for the first time. If you missed out on all the fun of this science and arts festival, then you can see the Fun Palace exhibition in the Halpern Gallery at Nucleus Arts in Chatham from the 21st October. Don't forget to pick up one of MASH's chatterbox sheets and comics while you are there!



DO YOU NEED SUPPORT WITH ASTHMA?

MASH supports people and families affected by asthma in Medway. We aim to improve awareness and understanding of asthma, its triggers and treatment, and to empower people with asthma to self-manage their condition. **All of our services are free and open to all.**

Our asthma nurse can provide advice and support with asthma – discuss medications, asthma reviews and personalised asthma action plans. Letters containing the advice given and any recommendations are given to clients to forward to their GPs. When face-to-face appointments are able to safely resume, we will again be able to offer spirometry and FeNO testing for asthma diagnoses and monitoring, and airborne allergy testing.



KEEP IN TOUCH...

Telephone: 01634 855844

Email: medwayasthmaselfhelp@btconnect.com

Facebook: @medway.selfhelp

Twitter: @MedwayAsthma

Website: www.medwayasthmaselfhelp.co.uk

MASH'S KIDS CORNER

Have you seen us on our outreach stand making asthma-themed chatterboxes recently? Well, if not don't worry, here is your very own to cut out and make.



Making your asthma chatterbox:

1. Cut out the square. With the printed side down, fold in half and then in half again.
2. Unfold and lay flat. Bring each corner into the centre and fold. Do not overlap the flaps.
3. Flip it over and then bring the four new corners into the centre and fold.
4. Flip over again and place thumb and finger of each hand into the folds and bring all the points together. You now have a chatterbox.



If you need support with your child's asthma, then MASH can help. Get in touch to book an appointment with our asthma nurse.