



A lifetime of specialist care

PRESS RELEASE

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New 'Singing for Breathing' course for Uxbridge residents

Uxbridge residents who suffer the misery of breathing problems are invited to discover a tuneful way to tackle their health issues – singing.

This unorthodox approach to conditions such as asthma and COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease) is part of the Singing for Breathing initiative, pioneered by Royal Brompton & Harefield NHS Foundation Trust.

In 2008, the Trust's Singing for Breathing project was one of only two nationwide – today, thanks to an innovative British Lung Foundation training programme, there are now over 70 Singing for Lung Health classes nationwide.

Singing as a therapy has been shown to alleviate social isolation, as well as reducing breathlessness and strengthening the voice.

The new group, which is held at Bailey Hall, Christ Church, Uxbridge, marks ten years of using singing work as a therapy and follows the local success of a similar workshop in Harefield.

Elisa Jeffery, the professional singer who leads the Uxbridge group said: "We begin sessions with exercises that you can use to help you manage your breathing. We then sing songs that are great fun, but they will also challenge your breathing.

"Participants tell me they have reduced their use of asthma pumps and found mobility easier as they have better breath control due to attending the sessions."

Research has shown that 95 per cent of attendees feel happier after a workshop, 88 per cent feel physically better and 92 per cent feel the workshops teach them something useful about breathing.”

One Singing for Breathing regular Valerie Mellor said:

“As I have breathing problems, I take every opportunity I can to sing. Singing is really the only thing that helps me - much better than inhalers, although I do use them as directed. Singing for Breathing is particularly useful as we do so much work on strengthening muscles, posture, breathing techniques, and vocalising”.

Dr Nicholas Hopkinson, consultant respiratory physician at Royal Brompton Hospital and Reader at Imperial College London, commented: “We are always looking for ways to improve the care we give to our patients, which is why we started the singing classes for patients with respiratory problems. As well as working on posture, singing is a way for people to learn to control their breathing in a positive way.”

The initiative is charitably-funded by **the Royal Brompton & Harefield Hospitals Charity** and run by the hospitals’ arts team. Karen Taylor, head of arts, said: “Over the last 10 years, the programme has helped people live better with their conditions. It’s been an incredible journey. Some attendees have been attending since we started and wouldn’t miss a session for the world.”

The Uxbridge workshop is held at Bailey Hall, Christ Church, Redford Way, Belmont Road, Uxbridge, UB8 1SZ from 2 to 3pm every Monday (except Bank Holidays).

The arts team are actively seeking more people to take part. The workshops can be attended by anyone living with cardiothoracic diseases and/or experiencing breathlessness. Simply turn up to take part and reap the benefits!

Classes are run on a donation basis: a minimum payment of £5 per session will help the team continue the workshops.

Find the Royal Brompton & Harefield NHS Foundation Trust arts team on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/rbharts/>), Twitter (@rbh_Arts) or visit www.rbht.nhs.uk/arts, or email arts@rbht.nhs.uk for more information.

To find out more about Singing for Lung Health or to find your nearest class, see the British Lung Foundation website: www.blf.org.uk/support-for-you/singing-for-lung-health

Ends

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Royal Brompton & Harefield NHS Foundation Trust is the UK's largest specialist centre for the treatment of heart and lung disease. Working from two sites, Royal Brompton Hospital in Chelsea, West London, and Harefield Hospital, near Uxbridge, the Trust has an international reputation for the expertise of its staff, high standard of care and research success. Experts at the Trust help patients from all age groups who have heart and lung problems and provide some of the most complex surgery and sophisticated treatments available anywhere in the world.

The Trust is the UK's largest centre for the treatment of adult congenital heart disease and is the country's leading provider of specialist respiratory care. Over the years the Trust has been responsible for major medical breakthroughs, such as the UK's first combined heart and lung transplant. It established the UK's first adult service for cystic fibrosis, which is now one of Europe's biggest treatment centres for the condition, and has pioneered the use of primary angioplasty for the treatment of heart attacks. Today the Heart Attack Centre at Harefield has one of the fastest arrival-to-treatment times in the UK, a crucial factor in patients' survival.

As a member of the Academic Health Science Centre (AHSC), in collaboration with Imperial College London, Imperial College Healthcare Trust and The Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust, the Trust helps to drive innovation and improved care for over 1.1 million patients each year in North West London, by aligning the research, education and clinical services of the partner organisations. For further information, visit www.rbht.nhs.uk