

For Immediate Release

MERSEYSIDE CANCER SURVIVOR FRONTS BOWEL CANCER SCREENING AWARENESS TV AD

You Tube link for TV ad: <https://youtu.be/iGHgG0Ly6pE>

A LITHERLAND grandad is starring in a new Be Clear on Cancer TV advert to raise awareness of bowel cancer screening.

Peter Matthews, 69, is fronting a campaign developed by Public Health England and Cancer Research UK, which highlights the role of bowel cancer screening in helping to save lives.

The TV advert is aimed at men and women aged 60-74 years to encourage them to take part in the NHS Bowel Cancer Screening programme.

People in this age bracket who are registered with a GP will receive an NHS bowel cancer screening kit through the post, every two years. Bowel cancer screening is a simple test that can be done in the privacy of your own home. It is designed to detect early signs of bowel cancer.

Peter, who is married with three children and has seven grandchildren, was diagnosed with early stage bowel cancer last year after taking part in the Bowel Cancer Screening Programme.

He was delighted to feature in the TV advert in the hope that his personal story might inspire others and said: "I know only too well the importance of bowel cancer screening in saving lives.

"I just hope that when men and women of my age group see the advert on telly they realise just how simple the kit is to use and will feel encouraged to complete it and send it back."

Peter, a retired council worker, had not experienced any symptoms prior to completing the screening test, which he had done routinely since first receiving a kit seven years ago.

He said: "I had no problems with the kit and found it easy to use. I sent back the first test straight away, as I always do, but was asked to complete another when they found a tiny trace of blood. Following that, I had a number of small growths removed and tested, and they came back as cancerous.

Peter underwent surgery at Aintree University Hospital. The cancer had not spread and he did not need any further treatment.

Peter added: "I feel very lucky indeed that my cancer was caught early. Friends tell me they can't believe how easy it all was. The whole process only took a few months from diagnosis to completing my treatment. And I will continue to have regular check-ups over the next two years. So please don't ignore the kit when it arrives – take the test."

Every year, 2000 people aged 60 – 74 are diagnosed with bowel cancer in the North West and 600 people of the same age in the region will die from the disease.*

Fiona Osgun, Senior Health Information Officer at Cancer Research UK, said: "Some people don't return the test kit because they don't think they need to take part if they're not feeling ill. But screening is designed to detect bowel cancer before any symptoms develop. The kit comes with clear step-by-step instructions and tips for collecting your poo."

“Even if the kit does show something out of the ordinary, it doesn’t mean it will turn out to be cancer. But if it is cancer, catching it at an early stage means it is easier to treat successfully.”

Bowel cancer screening has been shown to reduce the risk of dying from bowel cancer by 16 per cent.** When bowel cancer is diagnosed at the earliest stage, more than nine in 10 people will survive the disease for more than five years.

Dr Dan Seddon, Screening and Immunisation Lead for Merseyside and Cheshire, said: “As Peter’s story shows only too well, bowel cancer screening is a great way of detecting cancer in the early stages when treatment is easier and more likely to be successful”.

Anne Mackie, Director of Screening, Public Health England explained “It is important that we raise awareness of the Bowel Cancer Screening Programme and highlight that screening is a choice. Screening gives those who participate, and who are unknowingly living with the earliest signs of bowel cancer, the best chance of successful treatment.”

Cancer Research UK believes that no one should be diagnosed too late to have treatment that might save their life. Diagnosing cancer early is one of the most powerful ways to beat it.

For more information visit www.cruk.org.uk/beclearoncancer or ring the NHS Bowel Cancer Screening Helpline on 0800 707 60 60.

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For further press information please contact Jane Bullock at Cancer Research UK on 07810 505535.

NOTES TO EDITORS:

*Based on the average annual number of cases of and deaths from bowel cancer (ICD10 C18-20) in people aged 60-74 in the North West region between 2012-2014. This data was extracted from the Public Health England’s Cancer Analysis System, snapshot CAS1507. Accessed 03/01/2017.

**Hewitson P et al “Screening for colorectal cancer using the faecal occult blood test Hemmoccult. Cochrane Database System Review. 2007. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/17253456>

- Cancer Research UK is working in partnership with Public Health England, the Department of Health and NHS England colleagues to run this Be Clear on Cancer bowel cancer screening awareness campaign across the North West of England in an effort to boost the number of people taking part in the NHS Bowel Cancer Screening Programme, with the aim of detecting more cancers earlier.
- The TV advert will be shown across the whole of the ITV Granada region throughout January, February and March. There will also be posters featuring Peter on bus stops, billboards and buses, and he’ll also appear on Facebook.
- Bowel cancer is the fourth most common cancer in the UK and the second most common cause of cancer deaths.
- Anyone who wants more information can visit www.cruk.org.uk/beclearoncancer or call the free NHS Bowel Cancer Screening Helpline on 0800 707 60 60 to ask any questions confidentially. For example anyone who has had a test kit and lost it can call for another kit to be posted out.

About Cancer Research UK

- Cancer Research UK is the world's leading cancer charity dedicated to saving lives through research.
- Cancer Research UK's pioneering work into the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of cancer has helped save millions of lives.
- Cancer Research UK receives no government funding for its life-saving research. Every step it makes towards beating cancer relies on every pound donated.
- Cancer Research UK has been at the heart of the progress that has already seen survival in the UK double in the last forty years.
- Today, 2 in 4 people will still be alive 10 years or more after a cancer diagnosis. Cancer Research UK's ambition is to accelerate progress so that by 2034, 3 in 4 people will still be alive 10 years or more after a cancer diagnosis.
- Cancer Research UK supports research into all aspects of cancer through the work of over 4,000 scientists, doctors and nurses.
- Together with its partners and supporters, Cancer Research UK's vision is to bring forward the day when all cancers are cured.

For further information about Cancer Research UK's work or to find out how to support the charity, please call 0300 123 1022 or visit www.cancerresearchuk.org. Follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

About Public Health England

- Be Clear on Cancer campaigns are run by Public Health England in partnership with the Department of Health and NHS England.
- Public Health England exists to protect and improve the nation's health and wellbeing, and reduce health inequalities. It does this through world-class science, knowledge and intelligence, advocacy, partnerships and the delivery of specialist public health services. PHE is an operationally autonomous executive agency of the Department of Health.
Website: www.gov.uk/phe. Twitter: @PHE_uk,
Facebook: www.facebook.com/PublicHealthEngland