

Newsletter of the Cardiac & Respiratory Support Service



CHSS physical activity fund



Flu jag



The GCRA+ story

## World COPD Day comes around again!

Each year World COPD Day takes place as a means of raising awareness of this condition. In Scotland there are over 129,000 people who are diagnosed as having Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease.

It is estimated that only 1/3 of people know that they have COPD and so many more may be living with the symptoms but are unaware of the condition and are not getting the support & treatment they need.

Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland is here to help support people in Scotland who are living with COPD to learn about the services and treatments available as well as supporting people to come together to learn from each other.

Here one of our groups share what helps them to live well with COPD. This includes “taking medication on a regular basis”, “exercising”, “stopping smoking” and “managing medication”. What helps you to live well with COPD?

As well as supporting local events, this year CHSS was also at the Scottish Parliament, bringing MSPs’ attention to the impact of COPD. They heard personal stories about living with COPD, and experienced an insight to what it’s like to breathe with COPD as well as the opportunity to



join in with one of our singing support groups. All of this is to highlight the need for improved support & services for people living with COPD in Scotland.

## Idiopathic Pulmonary Fibrosis (IPF) Week

In September we also used IPF week to highlight some of the issues faced by people living with some of the less common lung conditions. As well as raising awareness through social media, we were able to support discussions at the Cross Party Group for Lung Health. These covered IPF and bronchiectasis among others. Mostyn Tuckwell from the Edinburgh based CHSS support group ‘Breath-takers Action for Bronchiectasis’ gave an excellent talk on what it’s like to live with Bronchiectasis. He also spoke about the Breath-takers group, highlighting the benefits people got

from attending their meetings where there is a mix of health information and time for socialising and offering support. We also heard about the very effective ‘clinic table’. This is where members of the group take it in turns to be available at Bronchiectasis clinics at the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh. The group members are able to provide information, advice and support to people who have just received their diagnosis, and invite them along to the group. It was felt that this type of group could work well across different parts of the country, and for different health conditions. Well done Mostyn!

## CHSS physical activity fund



Being active can help you to live a healthier, longer life. There are lots of different ways you can be more active, even if you find it difficult to move around. Physical activity is any movement of the body that uses energy and can be as simple as walking, housework or gardening. You can benefit from being more active whatever your age, size or physical condition. You may feel that being active is difficult because of an existing health condition, but some activity is better than none.

### Why is physical activity important?

Regular physical activity can help to:

- Strengthen your heart and improve your breathing
- Increase your energy levels
- Improve concentration, mood and self esteem
- Improve balance and coordination
- Maintain your independence.

## New Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland Chief Executive

There have been a few changes here at CHSS over the past year. The aim of these being to ensure sustainable and high quality services, while identifying our 'New Ambitions' for the future. We want the charity to be able to meet the needs of the Scottish population more effectively, offering greater support to those living with chest, heart and stroke illness at different stages of their condition journey.

Since this time we have experienced several changes including the appointment of our new Chief Executive, Ms Jane-Claire Judson. Ms Judson took up post in November. Before coming to work with CHSS, Ms Judson was the National Director for Diabetes Scotland. She brings a wealth of experience from that role in providing services for people coping with long term conditions.

## WHAT'S NEW AT CHSS?

This year CHSS created a 'physical activity innovation fund' with the aim of supporting people living with chest, heart and stroke conditions, to be physically active and benefit from improved health and wellbeing. It will provide development grants (money!) that CHSS teams can use to trial (pilot) physical activity programmes. The goal of the Physical Activity Initiative is that people living with these long-term conditions can access and join in with physical activity. The main aims are to ensure local support services are in place, they are easy to access and join in with, and more people are using them. The pilot programmes can either test new ideas, or support existing services.

To ensure programmes are person-centred, can support people diagnosed with multiple conditions, and focus on supporting people in their communities, we are seeking patient/ public involvement. If this is something you are interested in and would like further information, please contact Katherine Byrne, Policy Manager, Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland by emailing [katherine.byrne@chss.org.uk](mailto:katherine.byrne@chss.org.uk) or telephoning 0131 225 6963 during working hours (09.00 – 16.30, Monday to Friday).

## Have Your Say!

Do you have any new information about services in your area, an interesting story or a helpful hint to

share with people affected by chronic lung disease? Then please let us know so that we can share it with others.

We'd love to hear from you:

Contact us by e-mail on [respiratoryservices@chss.org.uk](mailto:respiratoryservices@chss.org.uk)  
Or call us on 0131 225 6963

We look forward to hearing your news!

## WORD SEARCH

Can you find the following shows and pantomines?

S	T	O	R	Y	P	Q	T	N	W
A	S	P	E	C	T	S	H	E	E
A	T	I	V	E	L	T	G	V	A
S	N	O	W	K	M	O	I	O	C
C	I	N	D	E	R	E	L	L	A
G	W	H	I	T	E	Y	R	P	T
S	S	E	R	P	X	E	A	W	S
I	O	S	B	E	C	A	T	E	X
D	F	S	O	U	T	H	S	S	A
E	P	A	C	I	F	I	C	T	E

EVITA

ASPECTS OF LOVE

CATS

WEST SIDE STORY

CINDERELLA

SNOW WHITE

SOUTH PACIFIC

STARLIGHT EXPRESS

Extract from *The Activity Year Book: A Week by Week Guide for Use in Elderly Day and Residential Care* by Anni Bowden and Nancy Lewthwaite, published by Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

## CHEST-A-MINUTE



I've forgotten to get my flu jag. Do you think it's still worth it?

Yes! Although 'flu season' often begins in October, there is often an increase in cases between December and February. In fact, Flu can still be about as late as May! It's not too late, you can still get your flu jag from your GP surgery.

But some people have told me they feel worse afterwards. And I got the jag last year so that should cover me shouldn't it?

No! Last year's vaccine might not work against this year's bug. You need to get it every year to be sure you are protected. I know some people worry that having the flu jag can end up giving them the flu. This is not true. The flu vaccine is called 'an inactivated injection', this means there is no live virus in the injection. Although you can have some side effects, but they are usually mild and only last a day or two.

Is there anything I can do to avoid the side effects?

- ✓ Sore or red areas on your arm can be soothed with a cold cloth.
- ✓ A headache or slight fever is helped by drinking plenty of fluids and taking regular doses of paracetamol (but do not exceed the recommended dose).
- ✓ These symptoms usually disappear within one to two days without any treatment, however if you have increased breathlessness, swelling or a rash in the few days after vaccination contact your doctor or nurse

## Call the CHSS Adviceline



**FREE** calls to Advice Line  
**0808 801 0899**  
or text Nurse to **66777**



# The GCRA+ Story



**Robert Paton, Chairman of the Grampian Cardiac Rehabilitation Association (GCRA) tells us about how a group of people with a heart condition took back control of their health, and developed a service that has been benefitting others for the past 15 years!**

In June 2001 NHS Grampian stopped delivering Phase IV Cardiac Rehabilitation Exercise Classes. These are the classes that people can go to help maintain the benefits they have gained through NHS cardiac rehabilitation. The plan was to train up exercise instructors to British Association of Cardiac Rehabilitation (BACR) levels and let the local authorities run the classes. The training happened but the local authorities did not take up the challenge.

Three members of the previous exercise classes (later dubbed the three old fogies in a debate in the Scottish Parliament!) decided that they would take up the challenge. They got a local MSP and the Chair of the Local Health Council on board and were given the go ahead to run the classes. The inaugural meeting of the association took place in June 2002 one year after the closure of the original classes.

GCRA started with two classes in Turriff and Inverurie, expanding as we could over the following years, into as many communities as possible throughout the region. We also:

- Designed our own GP referral protocol
- Became a charity and a Company Limited by Guarantee
- Built a relationship with Robert Gordon University
- Funded three BACPR courses to increase the number of qualified instructors available to us, and

- Affiliated GCRA with CHSS.

In 2015 we trialled two multi-condition classes as part of the Active for Life project set up by NHS Grampian. This, and the fact that a high number of our members were living with more than one long term lung condition, led us to open our classes up to patients with other long term health conditions such as asthma and COPD. We also decided to allow people to self-referral to the classes using a questionnaire to inform the instructor about the health of the applicant. We changed our logo to GCRA+ to make us more inclusive.

GCRA+ has now just under 800 members, runs 41 classes throughout the region, had an estimated 2000 members over the 15 years we have existed, not bad for a small charity started by three old fogies.

**Robert Paton,**  
Chairman GCRA

For more information about GCRA+ classes in your area contact/go to [www.gcra.org.uk](http://www.gcra.org.uk)

For information on other exercise and support groups across Scotland please call our Advice Line Nurses.

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We won't pass your details on to anybody else and we'll only get in touch to let you know about the Take a Breath newsletter.