

2022

SEE THROUGH THE SYMPTOMS

CAMPAIGN REPORT



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PROFILES

EGFR Positive UK, ALK Positive Lung Cancer (UK), and the Ruth Strauss Foundation are three UK registered lung cancer charities dedicated to improving outcomes for lung cancer patients nationwide.

EGFR Positive UK is a registered charity (1189722) established by patients, their families, and friends. Established in 2019 as a patient support group, we became a registered charity in 2020. Our purpose is to provide support and information for patients diagnosed with EGFR mutation positive lung cancer with the aim of improving the overall survival and quality of life of EGFR positive lung cancer patients across the United Kingdom.

ALK Positive Lung Cancer (UK) is a registered charity (1181171) established by patients, their families and friends. We are a community from different backgrounds and walks of life - each with our own individual story and united by a diagnosis of ALK positive lung cancer. Established in 2018, our purposes are to provide support and advocacy and to improve the overall survival and quality of life of ALK positive lung cancer patients across the United Kingdom.

In early 2018, Ruth Strauss was diagnosed with stage IV lung cancer that affects non-smokers. Ruth died on December 29th, 2018. She was 46 years old and mother to two children, then aged 10 and 13. In her memory, Sir Andrew Strauss set up the **Ruth Strauss Foundation** to facilitate collaboration and influence research in the fight against non-smoking related lung cancers, so that together we find the causes sooner and improve outcomes. We also want to ensure that every family with a child facing the death of a parent is offered the professional emotional support they need to prepare the family for the future.

Anyone with lungs can get lung cancer.



BACKGROUND & OBJECTIVE

Lung cancer is the third most common cancer in the UK, and the biggest cause of cancer-related deaths[i]. Every year, around 47,000 new lung cancer cases are diagnosed in the UK[ii]. Lung cancer outcomes in the UK are amongst the worst in developed nations[iii].

Lung cancer in never-smokers is now the UK's 8th most common cause of cancer-related death, causing nearly 6,000 deaths a year[iv].

60% of lung cancer diagnoses are at Stage 3 or 4, with nearly 40% of diagnoses taking place in A&E. The result is that only 14% of men and 19% of women who are diagnosed with lung cancer live for longer than five years. The main reason for this is late diagnoses.

Earlier diagnoses are proven to improve outcomes for patients[v].

"Cancer, when identified early, is more likely to respond to effective treatment, resulting in a greater probability of surviving as well as less morbid and less expensive treatment. The value of detecting cancer early is clear, and significant improvements can be made in the lives of cancer patients." World Health Organisation, 2017[vi]

Lung cancer is associated with smoking – and in 70% of cases this is correct[vii]. Even with declining rates of smoking, the relative proportion of lung cancers in never-smokers is rising. The historical (correct) messaging surrounding smoking and lung cancer has inadvertently reduced the awareness of lung cancer in never-smokers. This is hugely detrimental to the 7,000 new non-smoking lung cancer patients each year.

See Through The Symptoms is a campaign created to raise awareness of lung cancer in non-smokers in the healthcare professional community to encourage early diagnosis and improved outcomes for patients.



The main goal of this campaign was to encourage GPs to refer patients for scans or x-rays when presented with symptoms of lung cancer, even if the patient has never smoked or is young. The crucial role of media was to get this key message in front of GPs, encouraging more x-ray and scan referrals for patients with the aim of diagnosing lung cancer at earlier stages with more positive outcomes.

“Educating people on the potential signs and symptoms of lung cancer and encouraging help-seeking behaviour by tackling a range of barriers are key to reducing late-stage diagnosis.” UKLLC, 2020[viii]

Covid-19 & Lung Cancer

The Covid-19 pandemic of 2020 reinforced the need for an early diagnosis campaign due to the similarity in presenting symptoms of both Covid-19 and lung cancer, as well as changes in patient behaviour and the use of remote consultation.

Around 25,900 fewer people were referred via urgent suspected lung cancer referrals in England during March 2020 to August 2021 compared to the same months in 2019, a reduction of 26%[ix].

Fighting Stigma

Lung cancer is one of the most stigmatised cancers due to its strong association with smoking and, subsequently, personal responsibility. Lack of awareness of symptoms and causes creates a false understanding of the disease and its patients.

“We must challenge people’s perceptions of lung disease – it’s not ‘the smoker’s illness’ as it is often described or portrayed.” Alison Cook, Director of External Affairs at the Asthma UK and British Lung Foundation Partnership, 2018[x].



PLANNING

EGFR Positive UK established the requirements of the campaign with the support of ALK Positive UK. Together, they approached The Ruth Strauss Foundation for further collaboration and to commence planning. The charities then teamed up with leading communications agency The Engine Group, research organisation, Syneos Health, production company, Smoke and Mirrors, photographer Rankin, and media agency, Wavemaker, to develop and execute the campaign.

Essentially, the campaign needed to deliver key messaging around the symptoms of lung cancer and its occurrence in never smokers. This needed to be directed at GPs, pharmacists and other primary healthcare workers who are most likely to come into contact with symptom-presenting patients. The end-goal here is for lung cancer to be a considered diagnosis, with a referral to the lung cancer pathway taking place, and a chest x-ray or equivalent scan being requested.

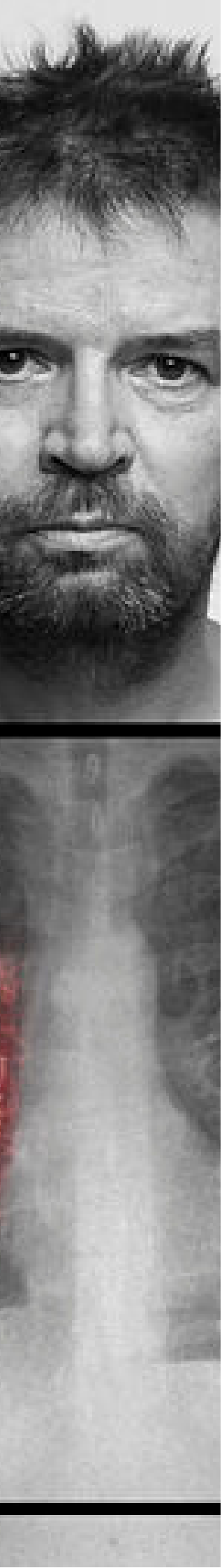
Through primary research obtained by the charities themselves, as well as existing data of other cancer research organisations, the symptoms that needed to be highlighted as potential signs of lung cancer, regardless of age or smoking status, were persistent cough (with or without pain), breathlessness, wheezing, shoulder and back pain, chest pain, hoarse voice, weight loss and other bone pain.

EGFR Positive UK and ALK Positive UK approached their patient communities and asked for volunteers to be the faces of the campaign. It was important that the campaign was as authentic, relatable and impactful as possible; real patients were imperative.

Everyone involved in the campaign worked pro bono.

The media campaign was funded through a combination of charity funding, crowd funding and a charity grant.

"It remains crucial to remain vigilant to the possibility of lung cancer in non & never-smokers, particularly adenocarcinoma which can occur due to genetic mutations. Early diagnosis with imaging such as CXR and low dose CT is pivotal to good outcomes and cure." Dr Sam Hare, Consultant Chest Radiologist & lung cancer expert for British Society of Thoracic Imaging (BSTI), 2021.



EXECUTION

The campaign revolves around targeted, impactful imagery and messaging that prompts GPs, nurses, and other healthcare practitioners to consider lung cancer as a potential diagnosis when presented with certain unexplained symptoms - regardless of age, medical history or smoking status.

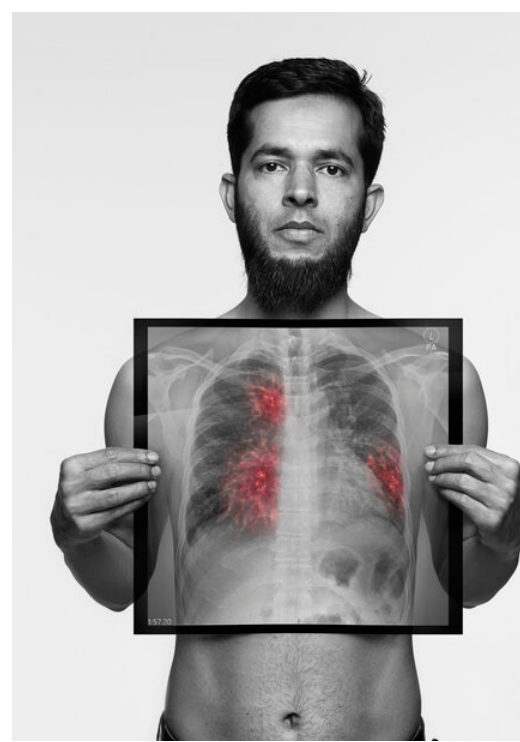
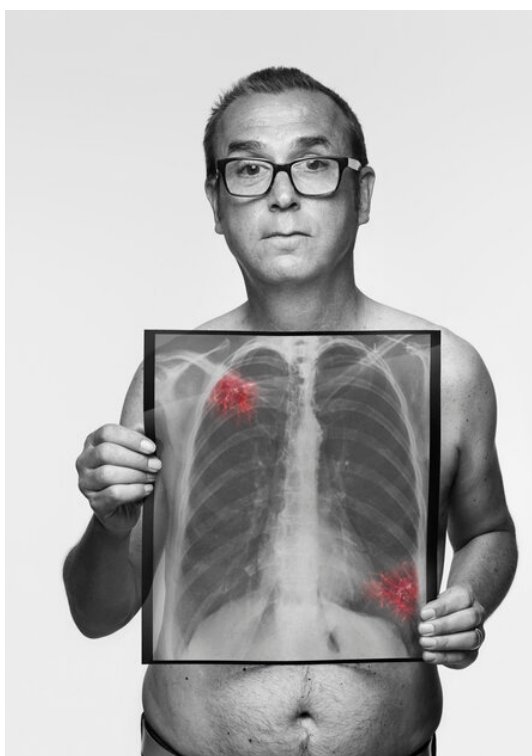
See Through The Symptoms tells the diagnosis stories of a selection of patients: eight never-smokers, and one social smoker. They range in age from 26 to 64—all of them diagnosed with stage IV lung cancer. Their names are Faye, Brenda, Jaber, Mark, Amelie, Debbie, Pete, Razia and Cameron.

In order to resonate strongly with the intended audience, the lung cancer patients were photographed with their real-life chest x-rays. The images were shot in black and white, with their visible cancer highlighted in red.

Images, videos, posters and adverts were created to facilitate different media platforms. These assets were placed on a variety of HCP-contact platforms such as GP Online, Practice Nurse, and British Journal of General Practice, as well as social media platforms including LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook. Posters were created for distribution. A microsite was also created for referral traffic from advertisements. The site includes further resources for HCPs to further understand the importance and impact of early diagnosis.

The campaign was consistent with NICE guidelines on diagnosis, and received support by the British Thoracic Oncology Group, the British Lung Foundation, the Taskforce for Lung Health, Macmillan Cancer Support, GatewayC and the Primary Care Respiratory Society, as well as leading respiratory physicians and oncologists.

"I'm pleased to see the launch of this campaign. I see too many patients who have never smoked, present with late-stage lung cancers. It is really important that we raise awareness amongst all healthcare professionals, that people who have never smoked can get lung cancer too."
Professor Sanjay Popat, Consultant Thoracic Medical Oncologist at the Royal Marsden Hospital, 2021.





Around 35,000 people die of lung cancer every year in the UK.

Early diagnosis saves lives.



If you see a patient with symptoms which are persistent or unexplained, please consider a chest X-ray or a referral on the Lung Cancer Pathway regardless of the patient's age or smoking status.

Persistent cough

Breathlessness

Recurring chest infections

Back / shoulder pain

Face / neck swelling

Jaber, 37, never-smoker
Symptoms: persistent cough, breathlessness
Stage IV lung cancer diagnosis

CAMERON, 52
NEVER-SMOKER
SYMPTOMS:
FATIGUE, PERSISTENT COUGH
DIAGNOSIS:
STAGE IV LUNG CANCER



Cameron isn't alone.

Unfortunately, 57% of lung cancers aren't diagnosed until stage IIIb or IV. Symptoms can include a persistent cough, breathlessness, recurrent chest infections, back or shoulder pain, hoarseness or swelling in the face or neck. If you see persistent or unexplained symptoms, please consider a CXR or referral on the Lung Cancer Pathway.

For more information: lungcancerseethroughthesymptoms.uk

Regd. lung cancer charities



See Through The Symptoms is a national campaign to encourage all healthcare professionals to consider lung cancer for persistent or unexplained symptoms regardless of smoking status or age.

The campaign has the support of the British Thoracic Oncology Group, the British Lung Foundation, the Taskforce for Lung Health, Macmillan Cancer Support, GatewayC and the Primary Care Respiratory Society as well as leading respiratory physicians and oncologists. For more information, please visit www.lungcancerseethroughthesymptoms.uk



Never-smokers get lung cancer too.

Lung cancer is the biggest cause of cancer deaths in the UK. Over 57% of patients are incurable at diagnosis.

Lung cancer in never-smokers is now the 8th most common cause of cancer related death in the UK.

If you are aware of anyone with persistent or unexplained symptoms, please encourage them to speak to their GP.

Persistent cough

Breathlessness

Recurring chest infections

Back / shoulder pain

Face / neck swelling

Faye, 28, never-smoker
Symptoms: back pain, persistent cough
Stage IV lung cancer diagnosis



See Through The Symptoms is a national campaign to encourage all healthcare professionals to consider lung cancer for persistent or unexplained symptoms regardless of smoking status or age.

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Razia isn't alone.

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RAZIA, 37
NEVER-SMOKER
SYMPTOMS:
PERSISTENT CHEST & RIB PAIN
DIAGNOSIS:
STAGE IV LUNG CANCER





Lung cancer

See through the symptoms

Lung cancer is the most common cause of cancer death in the UK, with only 16% of patients expected to survive more than five years, and over half being diagnosed with advanced metastatic disease. It can affect anyone, smokers and non-smokers alike, with lung cancer in never-smokers now the UK's 8th most common cause of cancer-related death.

Early investigation and referral is the key to improving outcomes. Early diagnosis saves lives. Below is a list of resources for primary healthcare staff and their patients.



Resources for primary care professionals

Lung Cancer in Never-Smokers

2019 article from the Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine on the incidence of lung cancer in never-smokers

[Visit Site](#)

NICE guidelines NG 122

Advice on lung cancer diagnosis and management in both small-cell and non-small cell lung cancer.

[Visit site](#)

Lung cancer and Covid-19

Recommendations on differentiating symptoms by the Clinical Expert Group for lung cancer and mesothelioma.

[Download pdf](#)

Early Diagnosis Matters report

Report from the UKLCC's Clinical Advisory Group (CAG) making the case for early and rapid diagnosis.

GatewayC

GatewayC is a free online cancer education platform developed for primary care professionals across England aiming to improve cancer outcomes by facilitating earlier diagnosis and improving patient experience

Primary Care Respiratory Society

Support focused on developing a holistic, high value approach to caring for people with respiratory conditions.



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See through the symptoms.**

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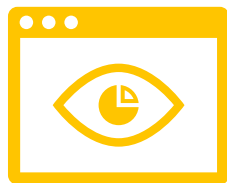
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RECEPTION

Two rounds of the See Through The Symptoms campaign ran in the spring and autumn of 2021.

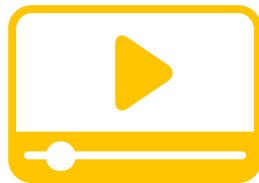
The first campaign took place in May 2021 and included four of the nine patients. The second took place in October (to coincide with Lung Cancer Awareness month in the November) and featured the additional five patients. Both campaign runs were met with an incredible response.



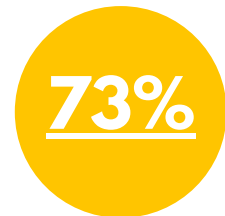
**5.2M
IMPRESSIONS**



**>27,000
CLICKS**



**>400,000
VIDEOS VIEWED**



**FOUND DIAGNOSES
BASED ON THESE
SYMPTOMS SURPRISING**

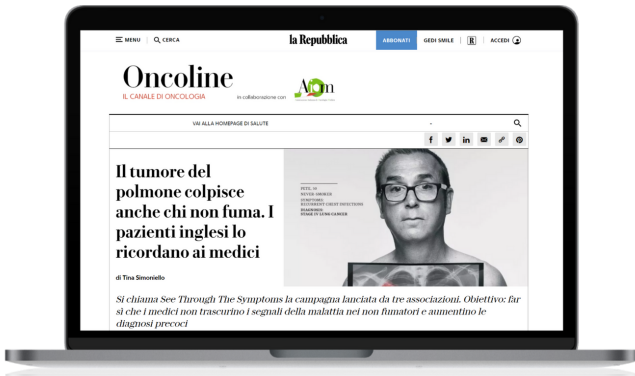


**LEARNT SOMETHING
NEW FROM THE STTS
WEBSITE**

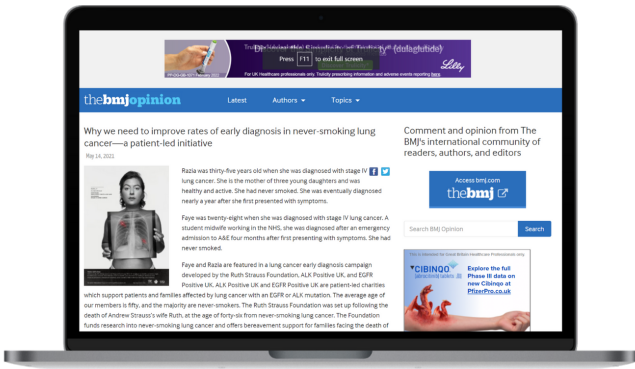


**44% OF WEBSITE
TRAFFIC CAME FROM
SOCIAL MEDIA**

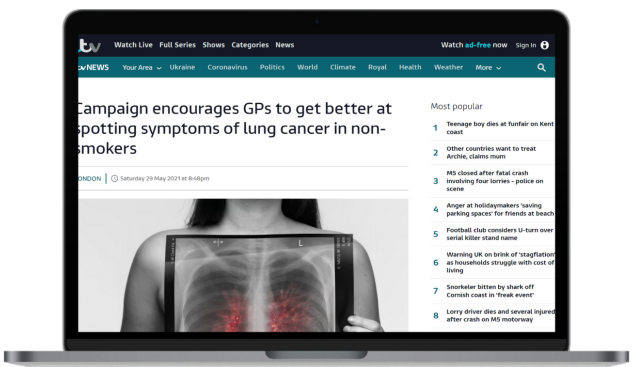
MEDIA COVERAGE



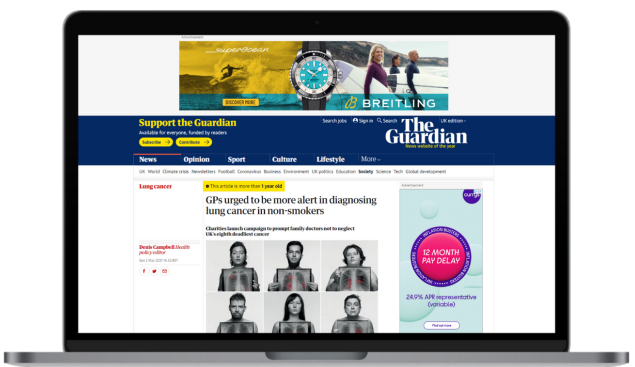
"Nobody is exempt from lung cancer," says Silvia Novello, Professor of Medical Oncology at the University of Turin and President of WALCE (Women Against Lung Cancer in Europe). "We are talking about a disease that also affects those who have never touched a cigarette in their life and more often, but not always, it is women and young people." [xi]



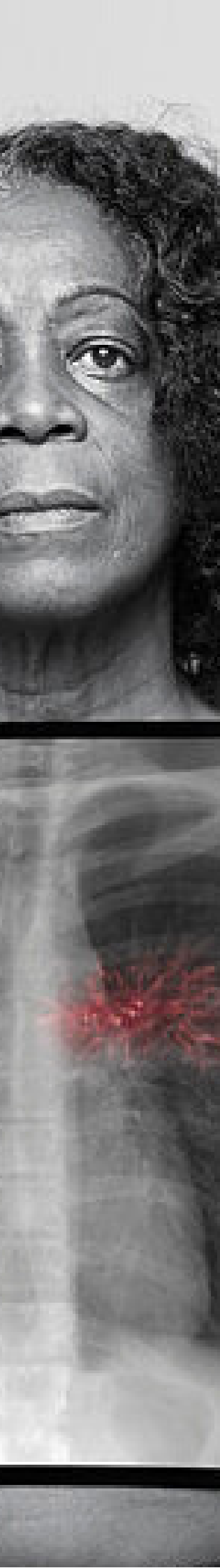
As patients, we are keen to play our part, particularly at a time when the great progress made in lung cancer treatment and diagnosis is under threat." Jenny Abbott, Co-Founder of EGFR Positive UK [xii]



The campaign calls on GPs and primary healthcare professionals to act on the symptoms of lung cancer, regardless of age or whether the patient smokes or not. [xiii]



Prof Martin Marshall, the Chair of the Royal College of GPs, said family doctors were good at diagnosing cancer, but added: "Lung cancer can be a difficult cancer to identify in primary care, particularly if patients aren't smokers, one of the well-recognise red flag for the disease. [xiv]



THE FUTURE

See Through The Symptoms is an incredible, sustainable campaign that consists of an extensive portfolio of assets including imagery, posters, adverts (of various sizes) and videos. This ready-made campaign has the potential to be reused and reimagined to suit the varying requirements of different lung cancer charities, alliances and organisations.

With smoking rates declining, and lung cancer rates increasing, the need for awareness of lung cancer in never-smokers has never been greater.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS & REFERENCES

This campaign would not have been possible without the hard work and dedication of Jenny Abbott, Co-Founder of EGFR Positive UK. Jenny worked tirelessly to support fellow lung cancer patients until her death in late 2021. Thank you for everything Jenny.

Thank you to everyone involved in this project, including but not limited to, the teams at EGFR Positive UK, ALK Positive UK, The Ruth Strauss Foundation, The Engine Group, Syneos Health, Smoke and Mirrors, Rankin and Wavemaker.

A special thank you also to the nine incredible patients who agreed to share their stories.

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- [ii] Causes, Lung Cancer, 2022. <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/lung-cancer/>
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- [ix] Recognition and referral of suspected lung cancer in the UK during the COVID-19 pandemic, 2021. https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/sites/default/files/gs120570_cruk_covidlung_oct21_final.pdf
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- [xiv] GPs urged to be more alert in diagnosing lung cancer in non-smokers, 2021. <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2021/may/02/gps-urged-to-be-more-alert-in-diagnosing-lung-cancer-in-non-smokers>

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