LIFE AFTER LARY Community News

Volume 4 — 01 November 2026

In this Edition

- A Familiar Face and a New Chapter
- A lifetime of Lary Experience
- More Than A Support Group
- And so much more..

No lary will ever feel alone

www.lifeafterlary.co.uk

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Thirty-One Years a Lary

On 27th September 1995, aged 54, I had a laryngectomy and my life changed. Not for the worse but it certainly became different.

At the time I ran a hairdressing salon, so, after thirty-two years, that part of my life ended. It's difficult for a stylist to work using both hands while needing to also use her valve! It was a hard decision, but I decided to sell the salon.

After the operation - which followed many hospital appointments, CAT scans and MRIs - I spent three weeks in hospital. My son picked me up to take me to my sister when I was discharged. He popped me in the back seat and then proceeded to ask me for directions. I felt like wringing his neck from behind!

A few weeks later I was fitted for the mask that was to be used during radiotherapy. Thirty-one years ago, the masks were made of hard, clear plastic and to get the exact contours of my face, enabling it to fit properly, my face was wrapped in gauze, just as for a broken limb. It was then covered in wet plaster of Paris (my nostrils were not covered for some reason!!) The plaster was allowed to dry before it was all lifted off, to be used to make the plastic mask. After my treatment finished my young grandson asked for the mask and had it on show in his bedroom!

I wasn't given chemo, having radiotherapy 5 days a week for 6 weeks. The final session was just before Christmas and my birthday. We are a family with a sick sense of humour, so I wasn't surprised when presented with a birthday cake with a lit candle.

I sucked in as much air as possible into my mouth and then puffed it out!! A Christmas present was a game of blow football.....which I did play but rather badly!
I was unable to use the valve that was inserted during the operation for over a year, due to neck muscle problems which were resolved by a further operation. I did try using an Electro Larynx but my family – including our three dogs - couldn't get used to it, so I didn't use it very often. Fortunately, I was able to mouth my words and be understood as apparently, I have good diction this meant so a sort of sound was made, making it a bit easier for people to understand me - as long as they watched my mouth. During an appointment with my neurologist (I have relapse- remitting MS) he remarked how pleased he was that my voice was "coming back". I mouthed "I think not"!!! I'm not sure he knew what happened during a laryngectomy.

When I was in hospital the lovely ward sister gave me some advice that i have never forgotten: "If people don't take the trouble to try and understand you, that's their problem, not yours". Recalling this has often helped me in many situations. I have found most people do make the effort and are very understanding.

Children are fascinated and often ask why I have a funny voice, but once I have explained in simple terms, and allowed them to press the "button" to make me talk, I find they are in awe and not at all worried.

Once I was able to use my valve it was wonderful as I could speak on the phone again! In those days we didn't have all the tech available now. No texting, WhatsApp etc. As my husband worked abroad a lot and I was often on my own and temporarily nonverbal, we bought a landline phone that had an attachment with 16 press buttons which I could press to use short, prerecorded messages, such as "Please come home". "I need some help please" and one giving my name and address. I recorded one rather rude sentence that I pressed if someone on the other end annoyed or frustrated me. Thirty-one years later I have a friend who still says Shift 16 if we are finding other people annoying!!

For a few years after the op, I was very susceptible to violent coughing fits when people smoked, or aerosols were used, near me. Scented candles, dust, pollen etc. and walking past the freezers in the supermarket, all were irritants. To this day I still cough, from these things but to a lesser degree. Unfortunately, I continue to cough violently when having valve changes. I have a very, very sensitive area around my valve....as my lovely speech therapist will confirm!!

Some valves, in those days, were inserted by pushing it up the nose and into the throat, then pulled through the TEP via the stoma. I experienced this once and it was traumatic. Thankfully, valve changes are now much easier and straight forward.

There have been challenges. I think one of my worst was when I had my valve removed just before the covid pandemic.

This was to allow the puncture (TEP) to heal so they could re-site it. It did heal quickly so, thankfully, I didn't have to use nasal tub feeding for long. The date was set for the operation .....and then the world closed down and my operation was postponed. I lived on my own and can honestly say that messages via my laptop and mobile phone, stopped me going mad. They were the only way of communicating with my friends and my family - at that time I lived over 100 miles away from them. It was frustrating.... I couldn't even talk to myself!

Due to the enormous back log and the pressures all hospitals experienced, it was over 18 months before I could have the valve inserted and "talk" again.

Until recently I was secretary of a head and neck cancer support group in Cambridgeshire. For over twenty-two years I visited many laryngectomy patients both pre and post op. I noticed during this time that recovery time seems quicker than 30 plus years ago. Members of the MDT seem more accessible to patients if concerns arise and reassurance is required. Help from dieticians is more focused on. I don't remember seeing a dietician at all before or after my operation.

I also am aware that a lot of patients feel lost once treatment has been completed and the many appointments become fewer. This means contact with members of their team suddenly comes to an end. The feeling can be related to a security blanket being removed. This can be the time reality kicks in, and with it can come the feeling of "being alone". It is not unusual to become depressed for a while, with confidence taking a dive.

This really hasn't changed since I had my operation, but today there are far more support groups, both physical and online, (such as LaL) and talking to people who understand all the problems and worries, makes a huge difference. This is also important for family members and friends, as they often need as much support as the Lary.

I have enjoyed working with my support group and it also helped me understand the problems all the other head and neck cancer patients face.

I have seen changes over the last thirty-one years and all for the good. Cancer is diagnosed sooner, Chemo is not as brutal and radiotherapy seems kinder too. Mouth ulcers, skin soreness and swellings etc. are treated with more up-to-date methods. What does remain the same is the care, dedication and kindness shown by all the health care professionals working with cancer patients.

I could possibly write a book about my experiences – just as every Lary could.

What is important to me is knowing it has made me a stronger woman, and that is definitely a plus.

A familiar face and a new chapter

We're delighted to share that Michelle Vickers is now Chair of Trustees at Life After Lary.

Many of you will already know Michelle through our events, presentations and her work alongside Jono. She has been helping behind the scenes for some time, bringing her experience, encouragement and a willingness to roll up her sleeves.

Michelle first got to know Jono through her work in head and neck cancer. When she mentioned that retirement might give her a little more spare time, he spotted an opportunity.

"I made the mistake of telling Jono I was retiring," Michelle jokes. "He clearly heard that as a job application."

Having previously led the Head and Neck Cancer Foundation as CEO for a number of years, Michelle understands how much support can matter to patients and the people beside them. Becoming our Chair is a chance to continue doing something close to her heart.

"Getting to know the Life After Lary community has been a real privilege," Michelle says. "There is so much kindness here, alongside the practical advice, shared experiences and humour that help people through difficult days.

I may have retired from paid work, but I haven't retired from caring. I'm looking forward to getting to know more of you and being part of what we do next.

"I'm proud to be part of it. I want to support Jono, Ian and our wonderful volunteers, and help us reach more people who might need us. Above all, I want everyone who finds Life After Lary to feel welcome, listened to and less alone. That includes partners, families and carers too."

For Jono, the appointment is personal as well as practical:
"Michelle became a friend before she became our Chair, and that means a great deal to me. She understood why Life After Lary mattered and has given her time, experience and heart to helping us grow. Ian and I are delighted to have her alongside us. She cares deeply about the people we support, and we're so lucky to have her."
Michelle will help us look after the charity as it grows, while keeping the personal connections that mean so much to our community.
As she puts it: "I may have retired from paid work, but I haven't retired from caring. I'm looking forward to getting to know more of you and being part of what we do next."

A special day in Newbury with Severn Healthcare

Sometimes, three little words say more than a whole presentation ever could.

"I'm not alone."
That was a patient's response following the Regional Laryngectomy Patient Event at the Donnington Valley Hotel in Newbury, sponsored and organised by Severn Healthcare. For everyone involved with Life After Lary, those words capture exactly why coming together matters.

The day brought patients, partners, carers, clinicians and support organisations together to share information, ask questions and meet others who understand life after laryngectomy.

A partnership with people at its heart
Severn Healthcare's support helped make this opportunity possible. By sponsoring the event and bringing clinical expertise and lived experience together, the team created space for people to learn, share their concerns and discover the help available to them.

For Life After Lary, this is what makes our relationship with Severn so valuable. We share a commitment to helping people live well after surgery, and events like Newbury allow us to contribute in different but complementary ways.

Patients and families can hear from professionals, explore practical questions and speak with people who have experienced similar challenges themselves. Those conversations help connect the information someone receives with what it means for their everyday life.

Sharing our stories and our support
During the event, Jono and Michelle presented Life After Lary's work and explained how people can find support before surgery, after returning home and whenever they need it further down the line.

They spoke about the reassurance that comes from meeting someone who understands, and the importance of including partners, families and carers. Life changes for the people beside a patient too, and their questions and worries deserve attention.

The presentation also explored how peer support sits alongside clinical care. Healthcare professionals bring essential expertise, while someone with lived experience can offer practical insights and an understanding of the everyday adjustments after surgery.

The feedback showed how strongly people connected with the personal stories.

A welcome that made a difference
Afterwards, a patient's wife sent us a message about attending with her husband. She explained that she had felt anxious about coming because life had been overwhelming recently. But they were welcomed and both soon felt at ease.

She found the day informative and praised the presentation by Michelle and Jono. What meant most to her, however, was her husband writing "I'm not alone" on his feedback form.
She added: "It's reassuring to know you are all around if we need."

That reassurance is something we hope people take away from every event. Attending can feel like a big step, particularly when someone is tired, anxious or unsure what to expect. A welcoming environment and the chance to talk with people who understand can make all the difference.

Encouraging feedback

Every single person via their feedback form said they enjoyed the day and would come again.

People spoke about feeling less isolated, discovering support and meeting others who understood their experiences, sometimes for the first time.

Reflecting on the event, Chris Kasbia, ENT Business Manager at Severn Healthcare, said: "Seeing clinicians, patients, carers, and support organisations come together highlighted the real impact that collaboration and peer support can have. That moving comment, 'I am not alone', perfectly captured the importance of what these events achieve."

His words reflect the shared purpose behind the day: helping people feel informed, supported and connected.

Thank you, Severn

A heartfelt thank you to Severn Healthcare for sponsoring the event, and to Menna, Sacha, Chris and the wider team for their care, welcome and commitment to the laryngectomy community.

We value the relationship we are building together and look forward to exploring further opportunities to support patients and families. Newbury showed how much can be achieved when people bring their different skills and experiences together around a shared purpose.

Thank you, too, to everyone who attended, contributed and shared their feedback. Your experiences help us understand what matters and shape what we do next.

If you couldn't join us in Newbury, you are still very much part of this community. Whether you have a practical question, want to meet others or simply need someone who understands, we would be pleased to hear from you.

Visit www.lifeafterlary.co.uk or email contact@lifeafterlary.co.uk.

Our partnership, going from strength to strength

Member Feedback

I feel as though I have met a lot of you just by reading your comments and got to know you personally. Difficult to say what I value the most about LaL because it all means so much to me.
Being able to share how I really feel and being understood by fellow larys is an immense support.
Using an electrolarynx can be frustrating, especially when using other electronic devices, but thanks to Life After Lary, I received a microphone which helps with Zoom meetings and phone calls.
The humour, the sadness, the courage, the joy, the honesty and all the emotional words, both good and bad experiences, give me strength to help me in my daily life.
I feel very blessed to have found you all.

I've yet to see anyone judge anything, which is really important to me.

I just wanted to say that it's a wonderful little community, and it is a community.
This group offers positivity at a time when that is needed and absolutely fantastic advice and support.
After reading things here, I have an idea of what questions I should be asking my care team. I have realistic expectations and hope for my future, and know I can ask my questions without being belittled or humiliated by my lack of knowledge.

I reached out at silly o'clock feeling lonely and upset, and someone got back to me and made me feel soooo much better.
Also, the fact that you know others are going through some of the same things helps massively.
Honestly, I am soooo glad I joined this group.
Thank you, each and every one of you.

There is no other source like it, enabling people to share lived experience. There is simply no other charity like it.

I only joined recently as I wasn't aware of this group. The others I'm a member of seemed to be quite US-oriented – no issue with that, but obviously a UK group is much more relatable! It's a superb group. I think the rules are perfect, as some groups tend to have people who push their beliefs on everyone else, and it gets wearing.
Also, everyone seems to be really supporting each other here.
And finally, the posts like these that encourage people to join in are lovely.

"The lovely care pack was very well received... what a bonus! What a group! Thank you all, I'm glad you are there!"

I like using Life After Lary UK as the people understand what I have gone through, being 'club' members. It is a useful sounding board and gives valuable insights into the condition and methods of support available.
Highly recommend the site.

I remember walking back to the on-site accommodation at BCH at around 11:30pm after hearing about what my daughter needed to have done to her to survive. I decided to find some support groups to see if I could get an insight to stop me feeling so overwhelmed. One of my best decisions. The support you all show to my daughter, myself and Jay is astounding, and I can't thank you enough.
This group has got us through some dark days, and we have been lucky enough to share my daughter's recovery with you all.
This group is so important and vital to anyone going through this journey.

A Wonderful Day at The Churchill Hospital, Oxford: Building Connection, Confidence and Community

Earlier this month, Ian and Jon visited The Churchill Hospital in Oxford, meeting patients, families and the dedicated clinicians who support them.
It was a day filled with conversations, shared experiences and opportunities to introduce more people to Life After Lary. The charity's stand was busy throughout the visit, with patients and families stopping to ask questions, share their stories and learn more about the support available.
Meeting other laryngectomees face to face can be particularly reassuring. Seeing someone living with a stoma, hearing their voice and speaking to someone who understands the challenges firsthand can make an enormous difference.

Wonderful Feedback from the Hospital
Following the visit, Nikki and Gin from The Churchill Hospital shared their feedback: "The stall yesterday was a great success! It is really beneficial to have you there in person, as it gives people the opportunity to meet you face to face, learn more about what the support group offers, and makes them feel more comfortable about making contact."
— Nikki & Gin, Churchill Hospital
The team also highlighted the importance of providing newer laryngectomees with an approachable first point of contact and opportunities to connect with people who have lived through similar experiences.

Could Oxford Be Our Next Support Group?
One particularly encouraging outcome was a discussion about establishing an Oxford support group in the New Year. The clinical team recognised the need for additional support, particularly for newer patients, and Life After Lary is delighted to explore the possibility of developing a local group.

Growing Together
As Life After Lary continues to expand its hospital visits, patient events and partnerships, the involvement of volunteers and the wider team is becoming increasingly important.

Ian and Jon have dedicated considerable time to developing these connections, but maintaining this level of activity requires a sustainable approach and more people sharing the workload. Volunteers, clinicians, families and supporters all have an important role in helping the charity continue to grow.
A huge thank you to Nikki, Gin and everyone at The Churchill Hospital for their warm welcome, and to everyone who continues to support Life After Lary.

See you in the New Year, Oxford. We're just getting started!

Growing Our Irish Network: Strengthening Partnerships with SIVUH & IHNS

This summer, Life After Lary joined the Speech and Language Therapy team at South Infirmary Victoria University Hospital (SIVUH) for a patient event that received a wonderfully warm welcome from patients and clinicians alike.

The event highlighted the importance of making peer support more accessible to laryngectomy patients across Ireland and opened the door to several exciting opportunities.

Following the event, Eimear from SIVUH contacted us, explaining:
"We thought to include a section on Life After Lary so that more Irish patients can find your community."

It's encouraging to see Irish healthcare professionals recognising the value of our community and helping patients connect with others who understand their experiences.

Building Stronger Connections
Through ongoing discussions with SIVUH and the Irish Head and Neck Society (IHNS), several developments are underway:

- Patient Support: SIVUH's Speech and Language Therapy team will continue signposting new and existing laryngectomy patients to Life After Lary.
- Local Representation: Our Ireland volunteer, Louise Hegerty, is already supporting patients and families and helping strengthen connections with our wider community.
- Upcoming Event: Life After Lary has been invited to the SIVUH Head & Neck Information Day on 22 November 2026, with Louise available to represent the charity.
- Greater Visibility: Discussions are underway about displaying a permanent Life After Lary poster in SIVUH's ENT departments.
- Patient Resources: IHNS is exploring the possibility of including Life After Lary in its patient resources.
- Future Partnerships: Potential connections with ARC and the Irish Cancer Society are being explored, with support from Dr Eleanor O'Sullivan.
- Looking Further Ahead: Life After Lary is being considered for participation in the Irish Head and Neck Society Conference in 2028.

Looking Ahead to 2027

Early next year, Ian and Jon plan to visit Ireland to meet clinical teams, volunteers and partner organisations. The visit will provide an opportunity to build on existing relationships and explore further ways to support Irish patients and their families.

With Louise already providing a valuable local connection, these developing partnerships represent another positive step towards making support more accessible throughout Ireland.

As Life After Lary continues to grow across the UK and Ireland, our commitment remains the same: ensuring that people affected by laryngeal cancer can access information, practical advice and support from others who understand.

Because wherever you are, nobody should have to face this journey alone.

Supporting Laryngectomy Patients in Ghana: A Partnership Making a Difference

At Life After Lary, we firmly believe that support, education and care should not be limited by geography. That belief is at the heart of an inspiring collaboration between Life After Lary and SheffMed, helping to improve the lives of laryngectomy patients in Ghana.

On 23 October, Speech and Language Therapist Jane Dawson was due to travel to Ghana to provide much-needed support and expertise to local patients and healthcare professionals. During her visit, Jane planned to reconnect with Mary, a dedicated laryngectomy nurse and midwife who has become a vital source of support and care for patients in the region.

In preparation for the trip, Life After Lary members, alongside colleagues and SheffMed, generously donated a range of essential supplies and equipment. These items were intended to go directly to patients who often face significant challenges accessing the specialist products and resources that many of us take for granted.

The response from our members has once again been truly remarkable. A special thank you goes to everyone who donated bibs and shower bibs. Your generosity will make a real difference to laryngectomy patients and their families, providing practical support, comfort and dignity where resources can be scarce.

Building a Lasting Partnership

This initiative does not end with one visit. Another collection and shipment is already being planned for January, with the aim of building a sustainable programme of support for years to come.

By strengthening international partnerships and sharing resources, knowledge and experience, we can help improve outcomes for laryngectomy patients wherever they live.

We look forward to bringing you a more detailed report from both Jane and Mary, sharing their experiences, the impact of the donated equipment and the difference this support is making on the ground.

As the partnership grows, the need for supplies will continue. We will be reaching out to members again in the coming months with further requests for donations of specific items needed by patients in Ghana.

We hope you will continue to support Jane, Mary and this wonderful project as generously as you have done so far.

Thank You for Making a Difference

We extend our sincere thanks to Jane, Mary, Sian at SheffMed and all our members who have contributed to this initiative.

Together, we are demonstrating the power of community, compassion and collaboration.

As a charity founded on the principle that no laryngectomy patient should face their journey alone, this work reflects exactly who we are and what we strive to achieve.

Thank you for helping us show that the Life After Lary family reaches far beyond our shores. Through your kindness and generosity, hope, support and practical help are reaching those who need them most.

Trafford FC Under-14s Update

Life After Lary is proud to sponsor Trafford FC Under-14s, thanks to LaL member Hazel Roper, who arranged the sponsorship on behalf of the charity. It's been another action-packed few weeks for the team!

The squad started strongly with back-to-back victories, securing a hard-fought 2–1 win on 26 September, followed by an impressive 6–4 victory on 3 October.

Despite facing tougher opposition in the following weeks, the team continued to show determination and resilience, with a 2–0 defeat on 10 October and a 3–1 defeat on 17 October.

While results don't always go your way, football is about far more than the scoreline. The team continues to demonstrate commitment, teamwork and a fantastic attitude every week.

Everyone at Life After Lary is delighted to support these young players as they develop both on and off the pitch. We wish the team the very best for the rest of the season and look forward to sharing more updates in future newsletters.

Come on Trafford FC Under-14s! ⚽ 💙

Support Life After Lary

Calendars, Christmas Cards & More!

With Christmas just around the corner, why not support Life After Lary while picking up a few gifts and essentials?

📅 Life After Lary Calendars

Our calendars are starting to make their way to members!

We suggest a donation of £10 per calendar, but if that's not affordable, please don't hesitate to get in touch. Any donation is appreciated.

🎄 **Christmas Cards**

Our Christmas cards are currently being printed and will be available soon.
We suggest a donation of £5 for a pack of five cards.

Again, if you're unable to afford the suggested amount, please just let us know.

💙 **Life After Lary Merchandise**

We also have a range of merchandise and practical items available, including:

- Clothing – T-shirts, woolly hats and jackets
- Neck breather seat belt covers
- Trolley coins
- Badges
- Neck breather wallet cards
- Neck breather window stickers
- Red bracelets
- Blue support bracelets
- Handmade beaded bracelets
- Personal alarms

Whether you're looking for something practical, a gift for someone special or simply a way to show your support, there's plenty to choose from!

How to Order

To order calendars, Christmas cards or enquire about any of our merchandise, please email:
contact@lifeafterlary.co.uk

Every donation helps Life After Lary continue supporting laryngectomy patients and their families.

LARYNGOFOAM STOCK ISSUES!?

NOT WITH SHEFFMED! 💙

We've heard that some Laryngofoam users are being told their products are **'out of stock'** or **'unavailable'** through their pharmacies or healthcare providers.

Well, we're here to clear things up! 🎉

💙 LARYNGOFOAM IS IN STOCK! 💙

Here at Sheffmed, we're stocked up and ready to go! Our distributors also have stock available, so there shouldn't be any need to go without your Laryngofoam!

Having trouble getting hold of yours?

Please **don't struggle in silence!** If your pharmacy, GP, or healthcare provider is having difficulty sourcing Laryngofoam, simply pass them our details and we'll happily point them in the right direction! 📞

Our message is simple:
if you've been told Laryngofoam isn't available, please check with us!

We're here to help you get the products you need, when you need them. 💙

✨ DID YOU KNOW? ✨

- 💙 **FREE SAMPLES!** – Want to try Laryngofoam? Get in touch and we'll happily **arrange a free sample** for you!
- 💙 **FREE DELIVERY!** – End-users ordering directly from Sheffmed receive free delivery!
- 💙 **VAT EXEMPTION!** – Eligible end-users can purchase VAT-free with a completed VAT exemption declaration!
- 💙 **TWO SIZES AVAILABLE!** – Our Laryngofoam comes in Small and Large, both featuring a single adhesive strip along the top, designed to make application easier and be gentler on your skin!

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www.sheffmed.com

📣 **Please share this post** to help us spread the word to other Laryngofoam users! 💙

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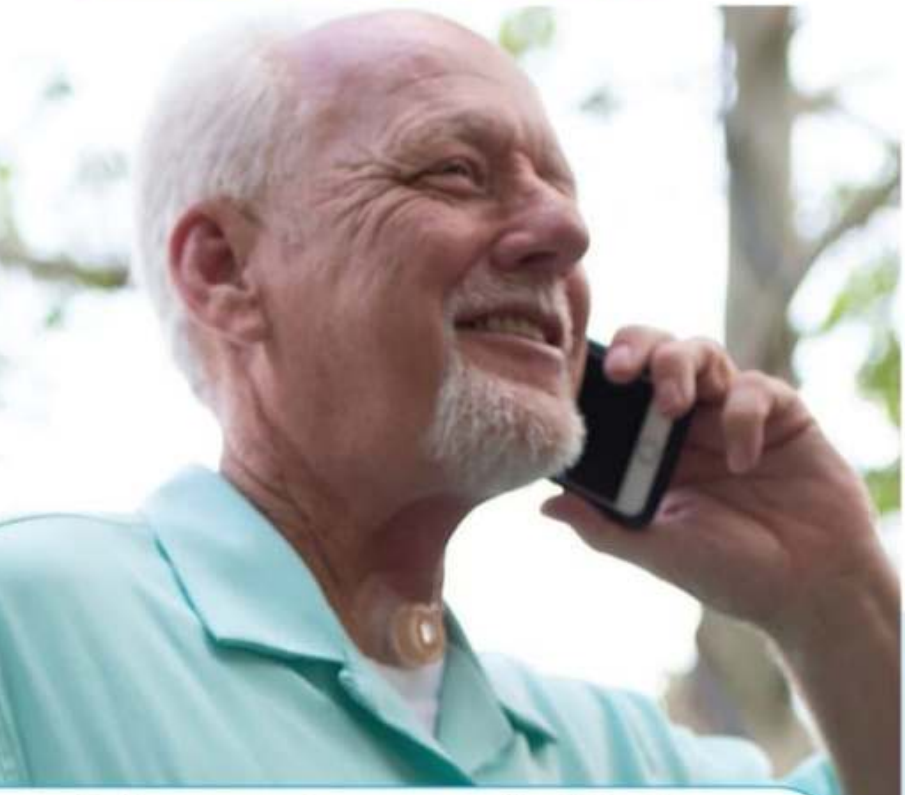

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THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LARYNGECTOMEE CLUBS AND LIFE AFTER LARY

History
NALC was formed in 1975 as part of Macmillan Cancer Support. Until 2013 Macmillan provided all the funding needed to support NALC's work. Twenty years ago there were around 100 laryngectomee support groups affiliated to NALC, each of which was an independent entity making their own decisions. Some were small, managed by a nurse or SLT, meeting perhaps every couple of months. Others were larger patient-led groups, with some registered as charities in their own right.

Core Activities
NALC was best known for its quarterly newsletter, CLAN, and the information packs they provided to hospitals to give their patients. CLAN contained details of recent developments, new prescription products and patient stories. There was an office in London and two staff, who manned a helpline and responded to patient and family enquiries. General committee meetings were held in London 3 or 4 times a year and any club could send a representative.

A Notable Achievement
Patient safety was an important concern for NALC and the results of a survey of NALC members were passed to the NHS in 2004. This asked about experiences of inappropriate treatment, as a neckbreather, when receiving emergency care or when needing suction to remove obstructions in the stoma. The National Patient Safety Agency (NPSA) issued a briefing in 2005 in response to NALC's concerns, recognising the need for improved staff training.

This was in the days before the National Tracheostomy Safety Project (NTSP) was launched and a few years later NALC contributed to the development of the NTSP's manual and laryngectomee resources.

Bert Culling MBE, Past BALC President who led the work on patient safety

Providing The Laryngectomee Perspective
NALC always saw providing a voice for the laryngectomee community as an essential area of work. There were many examples of this right up until today. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) produces guidelines for the care pathway of NHS patients. It has done four pieces of work on head and neck cancer with full guidelines being published in 2004 and 2016, a minor update in 2018 and a Quality Standard in 2016. NALC provided committee representatives delivering the patient perspective for every one of these pieces of work. When the National Cancer Research Institute set up a head and neck clinical studies group the PPI input came from two NALC members and NALC continued to be represented until 2016. Similarly, there was NALC representation on DAHNO, the original head and neck cancer audit as there has been on the latest audit feasibility study.

Why is NALC Closing?

In recent years NALC's activity has decreased as a result of several factors. The number of affiliated groups declined, partly because as surgical services were centralised fewer hospitals carried out laryngectomy surgery. Macmillan funding ended completely in 2018 and increasing amounts of time and energy were needed for fundraising, to try to keep the NALC office open and retain paid staff. COVID had a devastating effect on all charities' fundraising work and meetings had to be online rather than face to face. Replacing key committee members lost through old age or infirmity proved very difficult. Sadly, in 2022, staff had to be made redundant and the office closed. In 2024, Trustees finally decided NALC would have to start the process to close as a charity.

Supporting Speech and Language Therapists

In recent months NALC Trustees have been considering how to dispose of the funds held and identifying suitable charities to receive them. Speech and Language Therapists are the key clinician for the majority of laryngectomy patients. Managing the stoma, maintaining a new method of speech and help with swallowing problems are key issues for patients for life. NALC is providing funds to the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists for training bursaries for SLTs working with laryngectomees, recognising the tremendous work they do to support our community.

President Malcolm Babb and Brenda Loynds (Manchester Club) at a Head and Neck event at Wythenshawe Hospital, Manchester

Supporting Life after Lary

Whilst some of NALC's affiliated clubs will be continuing their excellent work, the closure of NALC leaves gaps in both local and national provision of laryngectomee services. Our Trustees have noted the emergence of Life After Lary as a national charity and its ambitious plans for the future. Since NALC's formation fifty years ago much has changed in the way that people work and socialise. LAL's use of social media gives it a very wide reach and the numbers engaging with it reflect this. Already there are novel interventions like the online sessions supporting the use of oesophageal speech for those with no alternative method of speech. There is no other laryngectomee charity with such a wide range of activities.

Trustees have decided NALC will be giving LAL £10,000 to support the expansion in its work.

Malcolm Babb

New look
Same reliable products and services

Atos Care is now part of the Coloplast Group, we are now unveiling our new look that reflects our heritage while embracing our journey ahead.

0800 783 1659
www.atos-care.co.uk

Throughout 2026 you will see our new look appear everywhere, from our packaging to all communications with you. Even as our design evolves, what truly matters remains unchanged.

Atos Care → Atos | Care

Now, as part of the Coloplast Group, we are stepping into a new shared identity.

Our look is changing, our purpose is not.

We are still Atos, still fully dedicated to supporting you and our mission remains to help make life easier for people living with a neck stoma.

Atos Care will continue to be an integrated care and distribution service for people with a laryngectomy in the UK.

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Welcome to Atos Care

The only integrated care and distribution service for people with a laryngectomy and tracheostomy in the UK.

Atos Care is a comprehensive support service, dedicated to making life easier for people living with a neck stoma. We provide a range of services to patients and the clinicians who care for them, including delivery of prescription products and a rich network of care and support services to help them adjust to life after a laryngectomy or tracheostomy.

The Atos Circle of Care

Best Start: Get off to the best start in life after a laryngectomy.

- Enhanced support for your first six months from our Welcome Team of CQC Registered Nurses
- A welcome pack and a welcome call
- Practical tools and equipment to make life easier, including a complimentary care bag containing a range of helpful items
- Regular liaison with clinicians for joined up care

Inspected and rated Good CareQuality Commission

Connection hub: Stay connected to those who know and understand.

- A dedicated Customer Care Representative
- Personalised service - you choose how and when you hear from us
- CQC Registered Nurses to support you in your daily routines, in close partnership and communication with clinicians
- Educational events in the community for people with similar experiences
- Atos MyLife app to provide inspiration and information on living well after a laryngectomy

Care delivered: Bringing the right products and care your way.

- Easy and convenient ordering
- Optional convenient monthly reminders
- Electronic Prescription Service
- Rapid, reliable delivery
- Discreet packaging
- Convenience orders by subscription

Call: 0800 783 1659
Text: 0753 7417 928
www.atos-care.co.uk

Atos | Care

Building Community Across the UK
This Month's Life After Lary Meet-ups

This month, we were delighted to hold three regional Life After Lary meet-ups across Shropshire, Surrey and Norfolk. Each group brought people together in the way only laryngectomy communities can – through honest conversations, shared experiences, practical tips and the reassurance of being with others who truly understand.

These meet-ups are more than just social gatherings. They are lifelines.

For new laryngectomees, they offer confidence, connection and the chance to meet others who have walked the same path. For long-term members, they provide friendship, continuity and a space to give back. For families, they offer understanding and support. And for clinicians, they demonstrate the power of peer-to-peer support in action.

None of this would be possible without our incredible volunteers:

- **Chris – Norfolk**
- **Lucy – Shropshire**
- **Carl – Surrey**

Your commitment, kindness and leadership make these groups what they are. You welcome people, listen, guide and create safe spaces where patients and families feel seen and supported. Life After Lary is stronger because of you.

And, of course, a special thank you to **Atos Medical** and **Severn Health** for their continued support and refreshments.

As our charity continues to grow, we hope to expand these meet-ups even further. If you would like to volunteer and organise a group in your area, we will support you with training and funding. You won't be doing it alone – you'll be part of a national network of volunteers, clinicians and families working together to ensure no laryngectomy patient feels isolated.

These groups change lives, and with your help, we can bring that support to even more communities across the UK.

Interested in starting a group? Get in touch – we'd love to hear from you!

Upcoming Meet-ups

Scottish Meet-ups – Wednesday 25 November

Our Scottish meet-ups are back on Wednesday 25 November, with two opportunities to get together, enjoy a friendly chat and connect with others who understand life after a laryngectomy.
Whether you're a laryngectomee, family member, friend or carer, we'd love to see you. New faces are always welcome!

Blethers – Dundee
📍 Ninewells Hospital, Area 4 Outpatient Clinic (room to be confirmed)
🕐 10:30am–12 noon

Chinwags – Kirkcaldy
📍 Salvation Army Community Hall, Hayfield Road, Kirkcaldy
🕑 2:30pm–4:30pm

Both meet-ups offer a relaxed, welcoming space to share experiences, ask questions, make new friends or simply enjoy a blether over a cuppa.
We hope to see you there!

Can't Make It to a Meet-up?

Not everyone is able to attend a meet-up in person, but that doesn't mean you have to miss out on friendship and support! Life After Lary's Pen Friend Support Service offers another way to connect with someone who understands the laryngectomy journey.

This free, confidential postal service matches patients, families and carers with volunteer pen friends who have lived experience and can offer friendship, encouragement and understanding through written letters.
Whether you're preparing for surgery, adjusting to life after a laryngectomy or simply prefer communicating by letter, the service is there for you.

Interested in finding out more?
Write to:
Life After Lary
90 Brabazon Avenue
Wallington, Surrey
SM6 9ET

A Little Christmas Cheer!

Christmas Raffle

Our Christmas raffle offers a fantastic selection of prizes, generously donated by local businesses and supporters. From gift hampers and chocolates to gadgets, experiences and much more, there's something for everyone. Every ticket purchased helps Life After Lary continue providing vital support, information and friendship to the laryngectomy community.

TICKET PRICES
£1 per ticket | 12 tickets for £10 | 25 tickets for £20

How to Enter

To purchase tickets, please contact Ashlie Phillipson or Ian Phillipson directly. **Please message before making any payment so your ticket numbers can be allocated correctly.**

Payment options:
Bank transfer
Account name: LIFE AFTER LARY
Account number: 67401252
Sort code: 60-22-20
Reference: RAFFLE TICKETS

Alternatively, donations can be made through Ashlie Phillipson's JustGiving fundraising page.

Please adjust the optional JustGiving tip to £0 if you do not wish to make an additional contribution.

TICKET SALES CLOSE: 30 NOVEMBER 2026

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who has donated prizes and to those helping organise the raffle. Your generosity makes a real difference to our community.

December Christmas Quiz
Thursday 17th December 2026
6.30pm–8.00pm

Join us for our December Zoom meet-up and a little festive fun!
We'll be testing our Christmas knowledge, sharing a few laughs and enjoying some friendly competition as we approach the festive season.

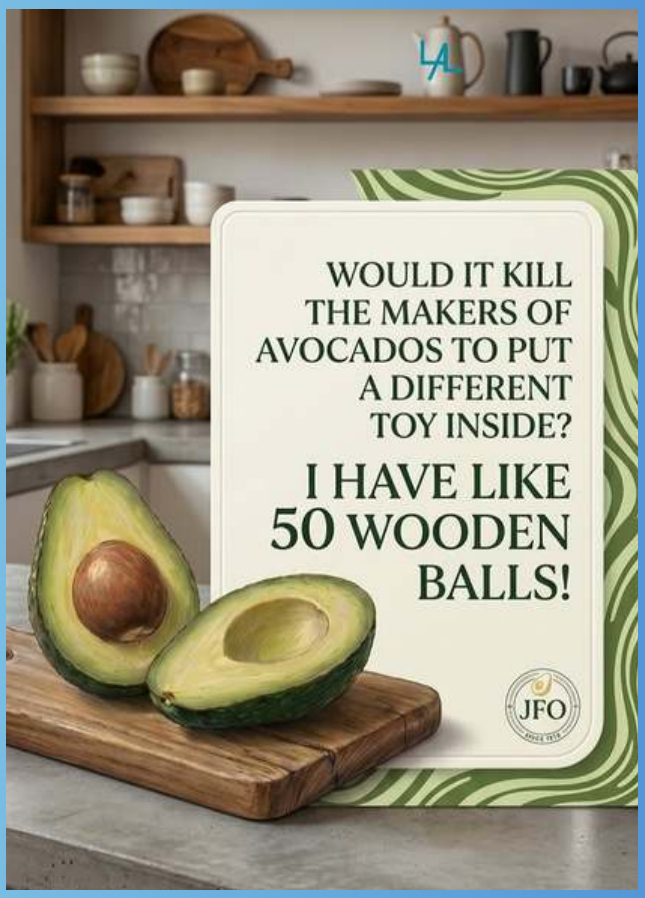
Whether you're joining in with the quiz or simply coming along for the company, everyone is welcome.

No voice? No problem! You can take part using the Zoom chat box.

We look forward to seeing you there!

A Little Lary Laugh

- I told the gym instructor I wanted to learn how to do the splits. He said, “Are you flexible ?” I said, “not bad, but I can do Tuesdays.”
- I was digging in my garden the other day and found a hole full of gold coins. I was so excited, I was about to run inside to tell my wife, but then I remembered why I was digging a hole.
- Believe it or not but there are twice as many eyebrows in the world as there are people.
- "My dog used to chase people on a bike. It got really annoying, so I had to take the bike off him."



More Than A Support Group

The many ways Life After Lary makes a difference

A laryngectomy changes far more than the way someone breathes or speaks. It can affect confidence, relationships, independence and everyday life in ways that aren't always obvious to others.
That's why Life After Lary is about much more than providing information. It's about bringing people together, sharing experiences, offering reassurance and helping individuals and families navigate life after surgery.

Whether someone is newly diagnosed, preparing for surgery or has been living as a laryngectomee for many years, our community is here to offer understanding, encouragement and friendship.

Connection & Community

Nobody should have to navigate life after a laryngectomy alone.
Through our online community, Zoom sessions, regional meet-ups and friendships formed along the way, we bring together people who understand the challenges, the achievements and everything in between.
Sometimes, simply speaking to someone who has been through a similar experience can make all the difference.

Finding Confidence Again

Life after a laryngectomy can involve learning to do familiar things differently. Returning to work, travelling, socialising or simply feeling comfortable going out can take time.
By sharing real experiences and celebrating personal milestones, we hope to encourage people to regain confidence, discover what works for them and recognise how much they can still achieve.

Every step forward matters, however small it may seem.

Making Our Voices Heard

Lived experience has an important place in improving care.
Life After Lary works to build relationships with healthcare professionals, hospitals and organisations, helping to raise awareness of the challenges faced by laryngectomees.
Through patient stories, educational resources and community engagement, we aim to improve understanding and ensure the experiences of those living after a laryngectomy are recognised and heard.

Challenging Misconceptions

Many people have never met someone who has undergone a total laryngectomy.
Raising awareness of neck breathing, communication differences and the realities of life after surgery helps challenge misconceptions and build understanding.
The more people know, the more inclusive and supportive our communities can become.

Learning From Each Other

Every laryngectomee's experience is different, and there is so much we can learn from one another. What works for one person might not work for another, but sharing those experiences can help people discover new ideas, ask questions and feel more informed. Our community brings together people at different stages of their journeys, creating opportunities to exchange knowledge, offer encouragement and learn from those who understand life after a laryngectomy firsthand.

Looking to the Future

As Life After Lary continues to grow, so do our opportunities to reach more people, develop new connections and strengthen relationships with healthcare professionals and organisations. We want to build on what our community has already achieved, ensuring that more laryngectomees and their families know where to find friendship, understanding and support. Whatever the future holds, our commitment remains the same: putting our members at the heart of everything we do.

Celebrating Life After Lary

Life after surgery isn't always easy, and we don't pretend otherwise.
There can be setbacks, frustrations and difficult days. But there can also be laughter, friendships, achievements and moments worth celebrating.
Our community is about recognising all of those experiences, without judgement or pressure to feel a particular way.
Because everyone deserves to feel understood, supported and included.

Life After Lary — No Lary Will Ever Feel Alone.

Advertise with us

Support Life After Lary's commitment to improving the lives of people affected by laryngectomy while sharing your organisation with our growing community. We offer flexible advertising packages to suit a range of budgets and will work closely with you to ensure your advert complements our publication and reaches the right audience.
To discuss advertising opportunities, please contact: **contact@lifeafterlary.co.uk**

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JOIN US THIS MONTH

Upcoming Zooms, contact details and community updates

Volume 4 — 01 November 2026

Oesophageal Speech Zoom

Wednesday 4th November / 1.30pm Oesophageal Speech with Ian and Sarah

Monthly Support Zoom

Thursday 5th November / 6.30pm / General Catch-Up

Christmas Quiz Zoom

Thursday 17th December/ 6.30pm Christmas fun and cheer, with a big fat LaL prize for the winner!

Details of how to join will be shared in the Life After Lary Facebook group.

CONTACT US

www.lifeafterlary.co.uk

contact@lifeafterlary.co.uk

Facebook: Life After Lary

Charity No: 1215969

With thanks to S & J Cleaning for their continued support.

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