



Heart Support Groups factsheet

Heart Matters, Heartstart and Hearty Voices

SUPPORT FOR YOUR GROUP

We know that, as a Heart Support Group, you're always looking for new ways to help your members. And, because groups across the UK do so much to help people with a heart condition, we're keen to let you know about services and resources that can help you and your members.

This factsheet focuses on the services and initiatives that might interest you and your group most. And as well as this factsheet, we've also put together a new British Heart Foundation (BHF) guide called *Heart health information and services – helping you support your community*, which will bring you up to date with all that the BHF can offer.



Heart Matters

Heart Matters is a free service designed for anyone who has, or is at risk of developing, a heart condition, and for anyone who cares for someone with a heart problem. It provides you with a unique package of information and support to help you live a heart healthy life.

Signing up for Heart Matters simply takes an email or a phone call (see details below). You might already be a member – but we really want you to encourage all your members to sign up to get the benefits of this great service.

The benefits for you...

Heart Matters is a personalised service with special features and tailored information for each member. When you join, you'll receive a welcome pack which contains:

- A quick guide to your heart health, with easy-to-follow information on heart conditions and other heart matters. There are also links to a whole range of BHF publications on getting active, reducing cholesterol and blood pressure, quitting smoking and many more.
- A 5-a-day food diary to help you keep on track with healthy eating.
- A Heart Matters measuring tape to help check if you're a healthy shape.
- Inspiring information on how you can get involved with the BHF's vital work.
- Your first copy of *heart matters* (formally *heart health magazine*). It's full of healthy lifestyle tips, articles on heart issues and updates on the latest research to help you know your stats from your stents. There are also delicious recipes to tempt your tastebuds that are healthy for your heart too. We'll deliver a fresh new edition to your door every two months – free. If you already receive the *heart matters* magazine but would like to benefit from the rest of the service, phone the Heart Matters Helpline (see below). Just tell us a bit more about yourself and we'll send you the information that is the most relevant to you.

There's also a dedicated Heart Matters Helpline for advice and support, which is staffed by cardiac nurses and heart health advisers, on **0300 330 3300**.

To sign up for Heart Matters, visit bhf.org.uk/heartmatters or call **0300 330 3300**.



And there are lots more benefits for members online. When you've received your personal membership number and password, you can:

- Take the online heart health lifestyle check to see what you can do to look after your heart. You'll get a personalised report with tips and support on how to make healthier lifestyle choices to help you achieve your goals.
- Check out our healthy eating toolkit, which includes:
 - A special recipe finder to browse for inspiration or search for recipes that are right for you and your health.
 - Brand new cooking videos on how to make delicious meals, step by step.
 - An illustrated portion guide to let you know how to hit your recommended '5-a-day'.
 - An interactive Eatwell plate which shows the different food groups and gives you more information at the click of a mouse.
- Log on to the dedicated members area for online information and advice from the Heart Matters team at bhf.org.uk/heartmatters

...and for your group

Heart Matters is great for individual heart patients and their carers, but there are real benefits for your group too. Our magazine can be a great source of topics for discussion or articles for your newsletter. It'll also tell you about what other groups are doing and help you come up with new social activities and ways of getting active together.

Heart Matters will also keep you posted on upcoming BHF events and campaigns, like National Heart Month every February or our sponsored bike rides. There are local and national events throughout the year and there's sure to be something to suit your group. You can have fun, get fit, and raise vital funds for our life-saving work.

Saving lives – where you live

Heartstart is a BHF initiative which helps volunteer groups teach members of the public what to do in a life-threatening emergency.

These emergencies are common. But many people who would otherwise die can be saved if simple life-saving skills are performed immediately by someone at the scene.

Emergency life support (ELS) is the set of actions needed to help keep someone alive until professional help arrives. They include performing cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), dealing with choking and serious bleeding and how to recognise the signs and symptoms of a heart attack.

Throughout the UK, Heartstart schemes are teaching ELS skills and lives are being saved. The need has never been greater.

The Heartstart ELS course is free of charge, takes only two hours and provides very practical hands-on learning. The BHF coordinates several different types of Heartstart scheme, one of which is specifically designed for cardiac patients and their families and friends.

If any of your members would like to learn how to become a life-saver, please email heartstart@bhf.org.uk or call **020 7554 0353** to find your nearest Heartstart scheme.

If you've already signed up that's fantastic – but please help us to help the rest of your group by letting them know about Heart Matters and encouraging them to sign up too.

If your group members would like to sign up for Heart Matters, just ask them to go to bhf.org.uk/heartmatters or call **0300 330 3300**.

When you sign up please make sure you tick the 'Are you a member of a Heart Support Group?' box – and pass this message on to your group members. Having this information will enable us to support you and tailor the service to your needs.



We offer groups like yours the opportunity to affiliate to Heartstart so that you can teach others these crucial skills. Once you've affiliated, we'll give you the information and support you need to start your scheme. We usually provide an initial grant to help you in your first year.

If you think you might be interested in running a scheme, please email heartstart@bhf.org.uk or call **020 7554 0353** to order a copy of *Be extraordinary*, our brief guide to setting up a Heartstart scheme.

Getting your voices heard

Hearty Voices is a BHF initiative that gives you the skills, confidence and knowledge you need to influence health services for the benefit of heart patients across the UK. You and your group can find out how to speak out on behalf of heart patients and carers, and get information about opportunities for having your say.

If you're a heart patient you can:

- draw on your experiences to improve heart healthcare for others
- work in partnership with health professionals to improve services where you live.

Or if you're a carer, you can:

- work with health professionals to make sure carers' needs are properly considered
- raise the profile of carers at a local and national level.

There are benefits for your group too. If some of your members take the Hearty Voices training, you'll be better equipped to succeed with any local (or national) campaigns you might be involved in. With trained patient representatives in your group, it will help you focus on the health issues you know need addressing in your area, and how to go about making changes. Working together, you'll have an even better chance of getting your voices heard.

The BHF runs free Hearty Voices training days throughout the UK. If any of your group would like to find out more, call the Hearty Voices team on **0844 576 6333** or visit **bhf.org.uk/heartyvoices**

We'll also send you regular issues of the *Hearty Voices e-Bulletin*, which gives details of a wide range of opportunities to get involved across the NHS, health organisations and within the BHF.



Working **together**, you'll have an even better chance of getting your voices heard.

About the BHF

The BHF is the nation's heart charity, dedicated to saving lives through pioneering research, patient care, campaigning and information to keep more hearts beating. But we can't do it without you and your essential donations of time and money, which allow us to continue our life-saving work. Because it's only together that we can beat heart disease. For good.