

A woman with short brown hair, wearing a dark blue sweater and light blue jeans, is lying on her side on a grey sofa. She is looking down at a black and white speckled dog lying on a white shaggy rug in front of her. She is gently touching the dog's head. The scene is dimly lit with warm, golden light, creating a cozy and intimate atmosphere. A red patterned cushion is visible on the sofa behind her.

Don't ignore what could be
early signs of cancer in yourself.

Campaign Toolkit

The Campaign

The South East London Cancer Alliance (SELCA) is launching a campaign across Southwark, Greenwich, Lambeth, Lewisham, Bromley and Bexley to raise awareness of red flag cancer symptoms.

The campaign launches this summer and will be live throughout 2026 and 2027.

The care and attention we naturally give our pets is the same care we should give ourselves. If we would never ignore a worrying change in an animal we love, we shouldn't ignore one in our own bodies.

Most symptoms won't be anything serious. But some can be signs of something more serious, including cancer. Finding problems early can make a real difference.

Just as you'd never ignore a change in your pet, don't ignore one in yourself. Contact your GP practice if you notice any of these symptoms.

Early diagnosis can make treatment more successful, and may mean simpler treatment with better outcomes.



Know the red flag symptoms

Very heavy night sweats or an unexplained fever

Heavy, drenching night sweats or an unexplained fever can sometimes be caused by infections, medication or hormonal changes. But if you have very heavy night sweats or a fever with no obvious cause, speak to your GP practice.

Unexplained bleeding or bruising

Bleeding or bruising without an obvious cause should always be checked. This includes coughing up blood, vomiting blood, or blood in your urine or poo. Blood can be bright red or much darker in colour. Whatever the amount, contact your GP practice.

Fatigue that won't go away

Feeling tired from time to time is normal. But if you're exhausted all the time, or your tiredness has no clear cause and isn't improving, it's worth getting checked.

Persistent or unexplained pain

Pain is your body's way of telling you something isn't right. If you have pain or an ache that doesn't go away, gets worse or changes over time, speak to your GP practice.

Unexplained weight loss

Losing weight without trying isn't something to ignore. If you've noticed a significant change, or people around you have commented that you've lost weight, arrange an appointment with your GP practice.

A lump or swelling anywhere

A lump or swelling that doesn't go away should always be checked. This includes your neck, armpit, chest, breast, stomach, groin or testicles, or anywhere else on your body.

Breathlessness

It's not unusual to feel out of breath every now and then. But if you notice that you're feeling breathless more than usual, all the time, or for no reason, speak to your GP.

Persistent cough

If a cough doesn't go away in three weeks or you notice blood when you cough up phlegm, it's best to speak to your GP.

Share the campaign on social media

We have produced three ready-to-post variations, each pairing the specific pet with a set of red flag symptoms.

Social media example:



Remember that you can use any of the red flag symptoms from this toolkit, these are example variations over-page.

Social media copy

Symptom: Cough - To be used with parrot image

You wouldn't ignore a cough like that in your pet.
So don't ignore it in yourself.

If you're experiencing a persistent cough,
coughing up blood or unexplained weight loss, it
could be a sign of cancer.

Don't ignore what could be early signs of cancer.
Speak to your GP practice.



Symptom: Fatigue - to be used with the dog image

If your pet was this exhausted day after day, you
wouldn't ignore it.

If you're experiencing unexplained fatigue,
abdominal, pelvic or lower back pain, or changes
in bowel habit, these could all be a sign of cancer.

Don't ignore what could be early signs of cancer.



Symptom: Weight Loss - to be used with the cat image

You wouldn't ignore it if your pet was losing
weight for no reason.

If you're experiencing an unusual lump or swelling
anywhere on the body, loss of appetite or
unexplained bleeding, these could all be a sign of
cancer.

Don't ignore what could be early signs of cancer.





South East London
Cancer Alliance



Find out more at www.NHSredflags.com