Join BBC Newsnight presenter Emily Maitlis at Asthma UK's Christmas Carol Service

Tuesday 24 November, 2015

Asthma UK is dusting off its Christmas decorations and preparing to welcome guests to its annual Christmas Carol Service. The event will take place at St Luke's Church in Sydney Street, London SW3 6NH on Tuesday 1 December at 7pm.

The charity is delighted to announce that BBC Newsnight presenter, Emily Maitlis, has been added to the list of celebrity guests who will be giving a reading during the service.

Emily is one of the most recognised faces on television news. She has interviewed all four of the last UK prime ministers and key figures from the world of sport, entertainment and business including David Beckham, Hugh Grant and George Soros to name a few.

Emily will join writer and broadcaster, Dame Jenni Murray, who will show her support for Asthma UK by reciting her favourite Christmas reading which is The Nativity Play by Joyce Grenfell. The service will also feature music from Irish classical soprano, Margaret Keys, and the Boys' Choir of Westminster Under School.

The event aims to raise funds to support people living with asthma in the UK, and fund world-leading research into better treatments and ultimately a cure for the condition. Every ten seconds someone in the UK has a potentially life-threatening asthma attack and three people die from an attack every day.

Kay Boycott, Chief Executive at Asthma UK, said: "We would be delighted to welcome you and your friends and family to our popular carol service. By buying a ticket to the event, you'll be helping Asthma UK to stop asthma attacks by funding new research into treatments and ultimately find a cure for asthma."

Mulled wine and mince pies will be served at the end of the service, which is being held for the eleventh year in a row.

Tickets are selling fast and are available now priced at £20 for adults, £10 for children or £50 for a family ticket (two adults, two children). For further information and to purchase tickets, visit: www.asthma.org.uk/christmas-carol-service or email: specialevents@asthma.org.uk

Ends

Notes to editors

For further information contact: Lee Armitt, Media Officer at Asthma UK on 020 7786 4982 or email: larmitt@asthma.org.uk

Picture: BBC Newsnight presenter, Emily Maitlis.

About Asthma UK

- Asthma UK's mission is to stop asthma attacks and cure asthma. We do this by funding world leading research, campaigning for improved care and supporting people to reduce their risk of a potentially life threatening asthma attack.
- Asthma UK is solely funded by public donations
- The Asthma UK Helpline is open weekdays from 9am to 5pm on 0300 222 5800.
- For more information about asthma please visit www.asthma.org.uk

Background information on asthma

In the UK, 5.4 million people are currently receiving treatment for asthma: 1.1 million children (1 in 11) and 4.3 million adults (1 in 12).

The UK has one of the highest prevalence rates for asthma in Europe, according to the ERS Whitebook.

The UK has some of the highest asthma death rates in Western Europe according to the Death rates (all

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ages) for OECD nations and the World Health Organisation

Three people die every day because of asthma; based on mortality data from Office for National Statistics (ONS) for England & Wales, General Register Office for Scotland, and Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency (Northern Ireland). 1255 people died from asthma in 2013 – divided by 365, this works out as 3.4 people per day.

Tragically, the National Review of Asthma Deaths found that two thirds of asthma deaths are preventable with good, basic care.

8 out of 10 people with asthma do not receive care that meets the most basic clinical standards.

Company Contact:

Asthma UK

E. larmitt@asthma.org.uk
W. https://www.asthma.org.uk

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