**BBAFS Patient and Carer Day article**

Bristol and Beyond Asbestos Family Support had another excellent turnout at their 7th Annual Patient and Carer Day at Bristol Zoo on 13 March, 2017 with around 60 mesothelioma patients and carers attending.

The day began with an inspiring talk from Dr Alfredo Addeo, Consultant Medical Oncologist from Southmead Hospital. Dr Addeo updated the group on the current trials taking place for mesothelioma patients. There was a question and answer session at the end of the talk which was extremely useful.

Next up was Mr Tim Batchelor, Consultant Thoracic Surgeon at Bristol Royal Infirmary. Mr Batchelor shared some interesting data on the various methods of treatment available to mesothelioma patients and provided a helpful insight into when surgery might be an option for them.

The third speaker was Anne Moylan, a Lung Cancer and Mesothelioma Clinical Nurse Specialist from Portsmouth. Anne recently became the team leader for the Mesothelioma UK nurses across London, Wales, Cambridge, Oxford and Plymouth. Anne provided practical and positive advice to the group about how they can access support and guidance if they need it.

After lunch, the group heard from Dr Lizzy Banwell, Clinical Psychologist at Bristol Haematology and Oncology Centre. Dr Banwell talked about the psychological impact of receiving a terminal diagnosis and suggested coping strategies and relaxation techniques. This received very positive feedback from the group.

Our last speaker of the day was Karen Gough, Macmillan Welfare Rights Advisor and Project Lead at the Citizens Advice Bureau for Bath and North East Somerset. Karen provided a useful update regarding changes to the benefits system and offered her on going support to any cancer sufferer trying to complete any type of benefit form. This will be a huge help to patients and their families, as they try to understand what can sometimes seem like a very complicated system.

The day was a huge success and we are very grateful to all those who attended. We were also very pleased to raise significant funds for Mesothelioma UK through a raffle with gifts generously donated by our members.

A huge thank you to Irwin Mitchell solicitors, who organised and sponsored the event. The meeting was led and supported by Lois Phillips, Thoracic Nurse Specialist at Bristol Royal Infirmary and Sarah Smith, Lung Cancer and Mesothelioma Nurse Specialist at North Bristol NHS Trust. Lois and Sarah were able to answer questions throughout the day and made a positive contribution to group discussions.

Stay tuned for details about next year’s event.