

VOICE Annual Report 2019-2020

This extraordinary year started with many members involved with the **Macmillan Big Coffee Morning**, some helping at the information centre in the hospital and some raising funds amongst their friends and neighbours. The staffs of the Macmillan information and support Centre were delighted with the record sum of 4500 pounds that they raised.

The Voice Core group continued to meet monthly up until lockdown and then transferred their meetings to Zoom so that they could continue to plan patient involvement in projects to improve cancer treatment at St George's. This involvement is so valuable as the following results have proved.

The **2019 National Cancer Patient Experience Survey** involves 143 NHS Trusts and the results this year showed significant improvement for St George's with its position in the national league tables moving up to 37th from 124th in 2018 also becoming the **2nd highest performing Trust in London!**

The results and an action plan have been presented to the Trust board and the Patient Safety and Quality committee. At both, the work with VOICE was mentioned as it has helped to develop the cancer services at St George's to improve the cancer patient experience. The areas of improvement are around written information, explanation of treatment options, confidence and trust in the doctors and being given a named Clinical Nurse Specialist. The Cancer Directorate are keen to continue the improvement and are developing an action plan to address the issues where we scored at the lower end of the national average.

Following the results of the National Cancer Patient survey the focus has been on improving the inpatient experience and personalised care. The Listening event that was planned for June has had to be postponed to the Autumn, but you will soon be sent an invitation to a **Virtual Listening Event**, and I hope you will continue to contribute your ideas and opinions having seen the above results.

A team from St George's (featuring three of the Voice Core Group) were invited to **join the Steering Group of NHS England's Cancer Improvement Collaborative**. This is an initiative to uplift patient experience and quality of care, using the Cancer Patient Experience Survey results as the driver for improvement. St George's project focused on patient discharge information, (what patients should do/not do post discharge) A leaflet/checklist was successfully piloted in Vernon and Trevor Howell wards with a view to expanding the Pilot across the Trust in 20/21



As a result of Bruce Johnston's involvement in that project, he has been invited by the NHS England Patient Experience Collaborative to be part of a **National Cancer Patients' Panel** to discuss patient involvement and its impact.

Voice continues to be represented on [the Patient Partner Engagement Group](#) which ensures that the interests of cancer patients are considered in all projects of change and

transformation at St George's. One such project was Mystery Shopping in the hospital Pharmacy, a place many of us has spent time! Members volunteered but unfortunately this has also been postponed due to Covid19. Watch this space for when it can start.

The Patient Partnership wants to establish more patient support groups and has used Voice as the template for future groups, something to be proud of I think.

Due to the lockdown the regular **Wellbeing events** organised by the Macmillan Information and support Centre have been moved to the [YouTube wellbeing channel](#) with great success, and a video about the [CanChat telephone](#) support line has been added. We continue to spread the word about this unique service, manned by volunteer patients and carers who totally understand the issues confronting anxious Cancer patients and their families. Please spread the word to anyone who might benefit from using the service.

The **new Patient Information Pack** has been totally revised after several consultations with Voice members and the result is a much more user-friendly and yet comprehensive leaflet, as opposed to the unwieldy set of inserts. Voice members also reviewed the [Macmillan Information and support Centre webpage](#) which have been redesigned.

Another piece of work was undertaken by member Gregory Ricks, was to try to **understand why fewer men access Cancer support services and groups**. Gregory visited various London groups and his conclusion was that male cancer patients are much more likely to become involved if there is initially a social aspect to the meetings, such as a male only exercise class. Once the ice is broken, the men are more likely to discuss emotional and practical issues. We are grateful to Gregory for his time spent on this and hope we can develop more cancer support for men at St George's.



Two issues of Cancer Connect have been published.

Voice members have also attended meetings on behalf of Voice:

- Regular meetings with the South West London CCG Cancer Design Group
- Conference held by London team of Living With and Beyond Cancer; it was in conjunction with Macmillan and focused on psychological pathways.
- A member took part in collaboration between Macmillan, British Heart Foundation and an innovative organisation, NESTA, called Reimagining Help.

As you can see despite the lockdown we have been busy in many areas working on behalf of all cancer patients at St Georges and will continue to do, so even if we have to find new ways of working. I hope to see you all again soon, even if it is only on a screen!

Watch out for news of our new Listening Event, **invitations coming soon**

Sue Fox
Joint Chair of VOICE.

