



Voice
the voice of
people at St
George's affected
by cancer

Voice Annual Report 2021-22

The VOICE Core group continued to have monthly meetings despite disruptions due to COVID related illness and staff working pressures. They were held on-line as was the VOICE Listening event in October 2021, which was very successful.

It has been a busy year for the group as the Cancer Services team have adapted to the new ways of working post COVID. I am happy to report that there have been many requests for our members' involvement developing new services and videos to improve the cancer patient experience at St George's Hospital.

The first project, about to be completed and launched, was a video about systemic anti-cancer treatment. It aims to help alleviate the anxiety patients feel on starting treatment, help them manage side effects and empower them to look after themselves, covering emotional wellbeing, physical activity, and healthy eating. Two VOICE members along with the clinical staff spent two days filming using a script developed with the help of VOICE to ensure it represented the true feeling and needs of patients.

Another initiative involving VOICE was a staff education video called Billy's Cancer Journey. Cancer patients often come into contact with staff who are not members of the cancer team. The video will help those staff better empathise with cancer patients and their experience at SGH.

A major initiative for SGH was the development of the Patient Portal. Two of our members, Claire Morgan and Janet Duff worked on this project, giving many hours to represent patients and ensuring that it is user-friendly. Other members of VOICE helped with the testing phase, making useful comments and findings. Although the Patient Portal has been launched there is still a lot of work to make it fully functional and more user-friendly.

Another major piece of work started this year is the development of a holistic service for patients called Living With and Beyond Cancer. Many patients now live for many years dealing with Cancer treatment and its many effects. Because of its complexity, this project has needed a large scoping phase with a team comprising senior consultants, psychiatrists, primary care staff, physiotherapists, Cancer nurses, Macmillan Wellbeing Coordinator and three patients. The team may be further expanded as it drills down to specific needs and include more patients.

To inform the project initially, VOICE held a virtual Listening event. Dr Fiona Kyle, consultant oncologist, introduced the project to patient attendees who then broke out into discussion groups and also used the chat room. The patients contributed very valuable insight and opinions to guide the design of the service. A quick analysis of conclusions was presented and a more detailed report was circulated to the attendees. A survey and more discussion groups are planned. The project team meets monthly and update regularly via email to develop design of the service.

The Vice-Chair of Voice, Bruce Johnston has worked with the Cancer Improvement Collaborative (CIC) which focused this year on Cancer Care for the BAME community. Although SGH was not involved this year, eleven Trusts participated and Bruce has reported all the findings back to VOICE and the Cancer team. One successful idea which we are adopting is to cultivate Cancer Champions in the Community and to enable this our members will attend as many Community events as possible, to network and create working relationships with these “hard to reach” cancer patients.

There are three new Patient Support groups trying to establish services similar to VOICE and we work with them in a mentoring role, guiding and supporting their efforts. Sarah Clark, Consultant Hepatologist has very quickly established a Liver Forum group of patients and held their first meeting in June. Jenny Wainman represented VOICE and gave her support. A Wheelchair User group and an Acute Physiotherapy group are also being started.

The Cancer Services pages of the St George’s website have been radically redesigned by Estelle Le Galliot and are currently being user tested by our members with a variety of tumour type pathways.

As you can see VOICE members have been busy throughout the year and we hope will continue to work with the Cancer teams on their exciting new projects.

