

Cancer Connect

The St George's newsletter for people affected by cancer

Issue 4, Winter 2019



Macmillan Cancer Support and St George's celebrate improved cancer care at the Trust

Lynda Thomas (Left)
CEO Macmillan Cancer Support

Jacqueline Totterdell (Right)
CEO St George's Hospitals

Patients and staff have been celebrating the achievements of a three-year programme to provide an excellent experience of care for people affected by cancer at St George's Hospital.

Macmillan has invested £1.7 million since 2015 to help support patients during what can be an overwhelming and complex experience. Staff and patients recently attended an event to hear about the benefits of the programme so far.

These include the introduction of 'surgery school' that patients can attend to prepare them for an operation, the opening of a unit at the hospital which can help cancer patients avoid admissions to A&E if clinically appropriate, and the funding of six Macmillan Support Workers who assist cancer Clinical Nurse Specialists.

Throughout the programme, the hospital has made sure that people affected by cancer have been involved in shaping the improvements, and are able to contribute their experiences for the benefits of other patients.

Jacqueline Totterdell, Chief Executive of St George's said: "Hearing patients talk at the event about how the partnership has helped them made me incredibly proud. The results have been truly fantastic – we've not only improved access to specialist care, but through involving patients, we've been able to address their wider concerns and needs at every stage of their journey – from diagnosis, through treatment and beyond."

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Volunteering at St George's

"I have a revived sense of the value of friendships and a heightened awareness of empathy."

Anne

Anne Sunyer talks about her experience as a cancer patient and volunteer at St George's Hospital.

In 2014 a lump that Anne found was identified as breast cancer. Additional cancers in the bone and lung were also confirmed.

Anne told us that "Years of appointments with medical oncologists, radiation oncologists, surgeons and more have been a never ending roller-coaster. But having been well looked after by the hospital for a long period, there came a time when I wanted to take positive and personal action that gives something back."

This led to volunteering at the hospital's Macmillan Cancer Information and Support Centre. Anne helps with administrative tasks, and greets and welcomes visitors.

"Meeting patients, their families and friends from all walks of life has helped put my own challenges into perspective," said Anne. "I began to grasp how many cancer patients there are, and sadly, how some of them are in worse predicaments than me."

Anne also leads a weekly walking group from the Centre. She said: "I realised that although not as physically fit as before, by getting out and about with cancer patients I am in a position to promote the benefits of exercise. This makes me happy."

Speaking fondly about the volunteers at the Centre, Anne said: "They have been incredibly supportive throughout my treatment. I have a revived sense of the value of friendships and a heightened awareness of empathy."

Volunteering has become important in Anne's life. She said: "It has helped me embrace change, and contribute towards making life better after a diagnosis of cancer. Volunteering at the Centre has been so rewarding."

What is Voice?

Voice members want to make a difference



Voice is the group for anyone who has been affected by a cancer diagnosis at St George's Hospital. Patient, family, carer or friend, Voice is the best way to find out about cancer support activities at the hospital, and to share views about what works and where improvements can be made.

There are many ways for members to get involved. For example in the past couple of years Voice has held 'listening events' and focus groups with patients and carers who have helped to design and fine tune new cancer services. Voice members helped with interviews

when the Macmillan Support Workers were recruited. They continue to assist with organising informal get-togethers, usually with a theme, giving members the chance to talk to the cancer team.

For further information please visit
www.stgeorges.nhs.uk

For notification of events and two issues of Cancer Connect each year, please complete the membership form on: www.stgeorges.nhs.uk/33782-2/.

A new cancer service for young people aged 16 to 24

St George's Hospital is a designated hospital for teenagers and young adults (TYA) with cancer. Claire Fowler is the hospital's TYA Clinical Nurse Specialist, a role introduced as part of the hospital's partnership with the Teenage Cancer Trust.

"I help TYA patients to manage some of the more complex issues that they might be dealing with. This could be anything from being a parent to helping them balance their education or employment with their treatment."

The TYA service works alongside site specific oncology and haematology teams to provide age-appropriate care, as well as emotional, psychological, practical and social support, and advice to young people.



Claire Fowler
Teenagers and Young Adults Clinical Nurse Specialist

George's Story



George Norton

I was diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukaemia at the age of 23 and relapsed when I was 31. Treatment on the Ruth Myles Unit was fantastic, but it was clear that cancer at those vulnerable 'in-between' ages brings particular challenges.

It can feel lonely to be the youngest person on a cancer ward, and just when you expect to be focusing on building an independent adult life, career and relationships, everything gets a lot more difficult.

During a post-relapse chemotherapy session, though, I saw a poster advertising Shine Cancer Support. They were inviting young adults in their 20s, 30s and 40s who had had a cancer diagnosis to a free four-day retreat.

The following January I was there, sharing stories, tips and challenges with around 20 other young cancer patients. Shine has been a huge support ever since through its social events, support programmes and amazing online and local networks.

- You're not alone! Find out more at shinecancersupport.org, Shine Cancer Support on Facebook or @ShineCancerSupp on Twitter.
- Trekstock also offer brilliant support to people in their 20s or 30s who have had a cancer diagnosis. Visit trekstock.com, Trekstock on Facebook or @trekstock on Twitter.

MACMILLAN CANCER INFORMATION & SUPPORT CENTRE



Health & Wellbeing Events:

Peripheral Neuropathy Workshops

Friday 25/01 & Wednesday 26/06

10am-12pm

Booking required

Coping with Fatigue Workshop

Thursday 21/03

10am-12pm

Booking required

Health & Wellbeing Day

Wednesday 01/05

For patients post treatment

Booking required

Weekly Activities:

Walking Group

Tuesdays 12pm for 30-45 minutes

Departing from the Centre - Drop-in

Social Morning for inpatients

Thursdays 10.30am-12pm

Gordon Smith Ward - Day Room

Drop-in

Monthly Workshops:

Look Good Feel Better

Tuesdays 05/02, 05/03, 09/04, 14/05

& Monday 17/06

2-4pm - Booking required

Headscarf-Tying Workshop

Fridays 18/01, 15/02, 15/03, 12/04,

17/05 & 21/06

10am-12pm - Booking required

For further information and to book:

Tel: 020 8725 2677

Email:

cancer.information@stgeorges.nhs.uk

Visit us at the Centre.

RESOURCES

Macmillan Cancer Information & Support Centre

Ground Floor, Grosvenor Wing,
St George's Hospital

Tel: 020 8725 2677

Open: Mon - Thurs 8.30am - 5.30pm

Fri 9.30am - 4.30pm

www.stgeorges.nhs.uk

Offers access to information,
emotional and practical support,
and activities and events.

Paul's Cancer Support Centre

1st Floor, 20 - 22 York Road,
Battersea, London SW11 3QA

Tel: 020 7924 3924

www.paulscancersupport.org.uk

Offers individual and group support
(including Asian and African-
Caribbean support groups),
complementary therapies
and home visits.

South East Cancer Help Centre

2 Purley Road, Purley,

Surrey CR8 2HA

Tel: 020 8668 0974

www.sechc.org.uk

Offers individual and group support,
complementary therapies and
information.

Macmillan Cancer Support

Help Line: 0808 808 00 00

(Mon - Fri, 9am - 8pm)

www.macmillan.org.uk

Provides physical, emotional and
financial information and support.



Ejiro Ejoh

The Cancer Connect
editorial team would love to
hear your comments about
our newsletter

If you would like to make a comment, want more information about any article or have a suggestion for a future article, please email Ejiro Ejoh the Macmillan Cancer Information & Support Centre Manager at patient.voice@stgeorges.nhs.uk or contact the Macmillan Information and Support Centre on **020 8725 2677**.

You can also drop in at the centre, which is on the Ground Floor, Grosvenor Wing, St George's Hospital.

St George's University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust,

Blackshaw Road, Tooting, London SW17 0QT

Tel 020 8672 1255 www.stgeorges.nhs.uk



Voice
Cancer patient
and carer user
group



**WE LISTEN.
WE CHANGE.
WE CARE.**

Driving excellence in cancer care, together



St George's University Hospitals **NHS**
NHS Foundation Trust