

Cancer Connect

The St George's newsletter for people affected by cancer

Issue 5, Summer 2019

Cancer services prioritised in St George's five year strategy



Mr Nick Hyde, Clinical Director for Cancer at St George's.

In April we published our new five year strategy for St George's. The strategy – Delivering outstanding care, every time (2019-2024) – is designed to give everyone connected with the Trust clarity about our aims and ambitions for the future.

We will continue to provide and improve the many different hospital services local people have come to depend on – such as maternity and emergency care.

We have decided, however, to prioritise and channel investment into the development of our cancer, children's, neurosciences, and major trauma services.

Mr Nick Hyde, Clinical Director for Cancer, said: "I'm delighted that a key part of the Trust's new strategy is to strengthen and further develop our cancer services. I've been a consultant here at St George's for 18 years, and recently returned to the role of Clinical Director for Cancer. We are very proud of the cancer services we provide, both to our local community and to regional and national patients, and have made some really positive developments over the past few years including the opening of our Ambulatory Oncology Care Unit, and launching our innovative Get Set 4 Surgery sessions. However we also know there is more to do.

"This is the first time in my clinical career that cancer has been specifically mentioned as a priority service for us at St George's, and as such this represents an exciting opportunity for the cancer community here, and the patients we treat. I therefore look forward to working with colleagues, patients and their families to further develop cancer services and the environment in which they are delivered, to enhance both outcomes and the experience of patients."

To read more about our strategy, visit: www.stgeorges.nhs.uk

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Helping us shape the future cancer treatment centre



A photograph of Richard Stamp, a man in a blue tracksuit, performing on a stage. He has his arms raised and a joyful expression. In the background, an audience is seated, and a white chair and a metal trolley are visible on the stage.

Spreading the message

Dick: One Man in 100,000, written and performed by Richard Stamp

The St George's patient addressing the stigma around penile cancer

Richard Stamp (54), a cancer patient at St George's, is challenging the stigma around penile cancer and promoting understanding through a one-man show about his experiences.

Richard has been a performer for over 30 years and it was while on tour in 2018 he was informed he had penile cancer.

Richard describes being told bluntly by a doctor in Australia, "You have to have an amputation, and forget about being a man."

Fast forward a few months, Richard was referred to St George's for treatment, where he met Consultant Urological Surgeons Mr Ben Ayres and Professor Nick Watkin, and Urology Cancer Nurse Specialist Chris Backhouse. "They were wonderful," said Richard. "I was given options, support and hope."

"Writing down my experiences gave me a focus, a way to cope," said Richard. "When I got a grant from the Arts Council of England, I decided to turn my story into a play called Dick: One Man in 100,000."

The show is a deeply emotional retelling of his journey mixed with comedy and a poignant dose of real life. The message Richard wants to get across is penile cancer is one of the easiest cancers to treat if caught early.

He emphasises men must take better care of themselves and act sooner if they suspect something is not right. Richard said: "This could have been stopped a few years ago. It didn't have to get this bad." By spreading the message, Richard hopes men and GPs will look for signs more readily and be far more proactive.

For information and support on male cancers, visit:
Orchid: www.orchid-cancer.org.uk
Prostate Cancer UK: www.prostatecanceruk.org

CanChat

New telephone helpline for St George's patients living with cancer

Cancer patients at St George's can now get confidential phone support from trained volunteers through the CanChat service.

CanChat is for patients, their families and friends who are worried about practical issues such as money, work, or treatment, or would just like to talk to someone who has had a similar cancer-related experience.

Sue Fox, CanChat volunteer and Chair of Voice, the St George's cancer patient user group, said: "At a Voice meeting last year attendees said how good it was to chat



to other cancer patients. This gave us the idea that we should set up a telephone helpline. The Trust agreed, and volunteers were recruited and trained."

CanChat is initially being run as a pilot for a few months, with volunteers available from Sundays to Thursdays.

For more information contact the Macmillan Cancer Information and Support Centre on telephone: 020 8725 2677 or email: cancer.information@stgeorges.nhs.uk.

Managing psychological and emotional challenges at the end of cancer treatment



Macmillan Cancer Psychological Support team

The Macmillan Information and Support Centre's Health and Wellbeing Day took place in May, and was a day of practical insights for cancer patients, their relatives and others affected by cancer.

On the day, Dr Sahil Suleman, Macmillan Consultant Clinical Psychologist, ran a session on the topic of 'Managing psychological and emotional challenges at the end of treatment'. He said: "We were keen to emphasise the idea that psychological or emotional difficulties towards the end of treatment are common, but there are things that patients and loved ones can be doing to help manage these and progress through the adjustment process."

The talk ended with 'top 10 tips' which included be kind to yourself, set targets and make plans for your future, make room for your emotions, make peace with uncertainty, and connect and communicate.

The Macmillan Cancer Psychological Support team can be contacted on 020 8725 0461.

The next Health and Wellbeing Day is 23 October 2019. For more information contact the Macmillan Cancer Information and Support Centre (see overleaf).

Mayor of Merton and Macmillan Merton visit our Ambulatory Oncology Care Unit (AOCU)

The Mayor of Merton, Councillor Janice Howard, joined staff from Macmillan and St George's to celebrate Macmillan Merton's tremendous efforts to fundraise for our Ambulatory Oncology Care Unit (AOCU).

The AOCU is a vital service that gives cancer patients rapid access to specialist care when they experience serious side-effects or complications from their cancer or cancer treatment. Previously, struggling patients may have been admitted for overnight stays unnecessarily, but thanks to the unit, patients are now seen on average within six minutes of arrival.

The Macmillan Merton Committee, led by Chair Zoe Penny, raised over £150,000 to fund this service. Zoe said: "Our committee members have worked tirelessly to raise this money over the past two years, putting on fundraising events such as concerts, quiz nights, garden parties and our annual Christmas Fair. It was wonderful to see the unit in action, speak to patients who have used the service and have got so much from it, and to see what a huge difference it is making to local people living with cancer."

Dr Mehran Afshar, Consultant Oncologist, and Clinical Lead for the AOCU at St George's, added: "We would like to thank the members of Macmillan Merton for their huge contribution to this facility and it's wonderful to be able to show them first-hand what a positive impact it's having on our patients."

The Mayor of Merton said at the visit: "Thanks to Macmillan Merton these vital funds have been raised in a record amount of time. It is truly wonderful that their hard work and dedication has enabled this valuable unit to exist and continue."



Representatives of the Macmillan Merton Committee, the Mayor of Merton, and members of our cancer team

Exciting times ahead for cancer care at St George's



Voice, the Trust's cancer patient user group, recently held a listening event for patients and their carers to share personal experiences and ideas for a proposed new cancer treatment centre here at St George's.

Patients and carers told us the new building should:

- Be a one-stop shop in one convenient location with access to the full range of services;
- Provide diagnostics, specialist chemotherapy and other drug therapies, radiotherapy, surgery, inpatient and outpatient care, urgent cancer care, a pharmacy service, a phlebotomy service, rehabilitation, and more;
- Adapt and extend to evolving needs, and allow patients to choose from either large communal areas or more intimate and private spaces when receiving treatment;
- Embrace and fully utilise new technology to improve on our current appointments system, and to enable patients to self-check-in to register their arrival;
- Enhance patient support services by providing education, quiet places, a café, a boutique for pampering, complementary therapies, yoga and exercise, support groups, and a retail section with prostheses, wigs and mastectomy clothing.

In order for us to get this right, it's crucial that we do all we can to encourage our patients, service users, colleagues, stakeholders and followers to get involved and make their voice count.

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

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.

The Mulberry Centre

West Middlesex University
Hospital, Twickenham Road
Isleworth TW7 6AF
Tel: 020 8321 6300

www.themulberrycentre.co.uk

Macmillan Cancer Support

Help Line: 0808 808 00 00
Mon - Sun, 8am - 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, 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 visit the centre on the ground floor of Grosvenor Wing, St George's Hospital.

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