



February 2018

Welcome to the latest update of the Macmillan Mental Health Cancer Care project! Thank you everyone for supporting the first year of the project. In this update you will find a summary of the findings and objectives for the year.



Objectives for Year 2:

- Explore what information on mental health diagnosis, is provided on referral between primary and secondary care and investigate what impact this has on appointments and consultations.
- Consider opportunities for cross fertilisation of knowledge across mental health and cancer services.
- Investigate the feasibility of developing mental health and cancer champion roles within respective services.
- Conduct a critical analysis of information provided by Macmillan and other organisations, identifying good examples of accessible information and making suggestions for improvements.

Staff involvement

In year 1 of the project, over **70 people** from a range of mental health, voluntary and healthcare settings met with Sarah Jane and shared information about their service and the people they treat and support.

"My colleague will see someone with a mental health diagnosis at least once every 6 months presenting with cancer. Sometimes they come with family members but often they come with support workers." *Clinical Nurse Specialist, Cancer Care Services*



Staff from mental health, lung, head and neck cancer teams participated in workshops to explore their experiences of supporting people with mental health conditions, who also were affected by cancer. This generated a wide range of insights and suggestions into improving the links between mental health and cancer services.

Mental Health service mapping workshop

- We are putting more emphasis on people's physical health needs
- We support people where we can to attend appointments
- We would like staff identified as cancer champions to improve our support for people affected by cancer

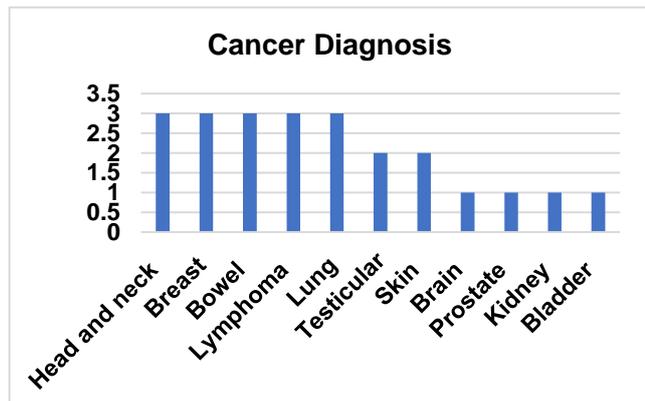
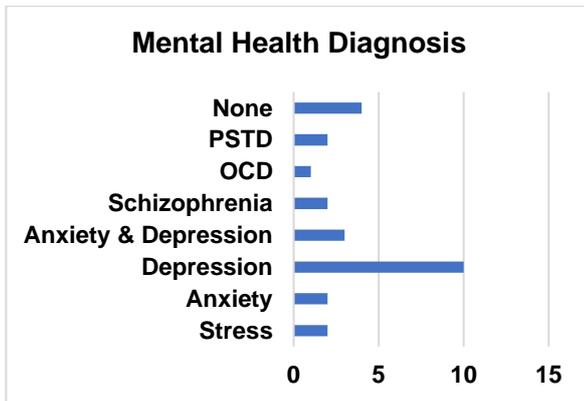
Cancer Care service mapping workshop

- We need more information about people's mental health problems on referral, so we can better support them
- We need contact details for their support workers / mental health teams
- Having the same support worker / carer throughout their treatment has a positive impact on treatment outcomes

Participant involvement

During the second half of the year, the focus was on hearing experiences from people affected by cancer. In total **twenty-two** patients and carers shared their story. Seven professionals shared their experience of supporting people living with mental health conditions who were also affected by cancer.

Twenty women and nine men took part in interviews. Of these, 23 were white British and six were from the BAME community. Twelve people described themselves as carers and seventeen people described themselves living with a mental health condition. A summary of the mental health conditions and cancers described are below:



Participant Focus Groups

In partnership with the Macmillan Engagement Officer, participants attended a series of focus groups. Lively discussions generated useful insights into the experiences of people living or caring for people with mental health conditions and affected by cancer.

The results so far....

Initial analysis of the information shows that people described issues with:

- Relationship / trust in GP
- Speed of referral / mis-diagnosis
- Being told the diagnosis
- Treatment experiences
- Aftercare – helpfulness, empathy, professionalism, attitude
- Support – who, where, availability
- Coping with cancer / feelings about the cancer

- Communication – between services / professionals / patients & carers
- Appointments – volume, location & waiting time
- Information – at diagnosis, treatment, format, amount and content
- Impact on outlook - positive & negative
- Financial impact

Some of the participants described how they received excellent care and support:

“They picked up very quickly that a member of staff that knew this lady, needed to be there with her right the way through the process. We both felt that we had time or that the staff who were with us, gave her the time that she needed.” *Support worker*

However, examples were given where the experience was not as good:

“She went numerous times to the doctor and was dismissed...” *Carer*

Further information

If you would like more information about the project, call Sarah Jane on 07802335570 or email:

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