



North Staffordshire Cancer Service User Forum

SURVIVING CANCER

North Staffs Medical Institute, Hartshill Road, Stoke-on-Trent.

December 8th, 2011

During a monthly meeting of the North Staffs Cancer Service User Forum concerns were expressed on the future of the Cancer Network and therefore the Partnership and Locality Groups. Staff members working for the Network had been put on the 'At Risk' register and were therefore likely to be transferred to other NHS posts or may be seeking alternative employment. The future means of support for the Locality Groups was not at all clear.

During the discussion Dorinda Palmer, Lead Cancer Nurse at UHNS, suggested working with local Support Groups to hold an event at which members of the newly emerging GP Consortia could be made aware of the support already available for cancer survivors, carers and other affected by a cancer diagnosis.

Marilyn Meade-Brown, the Macmillan Involvement Co-ordinator for the West Midlands, suggested that Macmillan would look favourably on providing a grant for such an event.

Members of the User Forum, supported by Fiona Daley, the Greater Midlands Cancer Network Facilitator for the group, discussed the practicalities of such an event and completed an 'Inclusion User Involvement Grant Application Form'. This was submitted during late March and approved in early June, 2011.

AIMS

Discussions within the User Forum identified a number of aims for the event, these formed part of the grant application.

- To demonstrate how patients and carers can work collaboratively with commissioners and other health professionals to develop and improve cancer care and support for everyone affected by cancer.
- To provide an opportunity for Support Groups to engage with the commissioners in an informal way to demonstrate their ability to provide specialised support to patients, carers and others affected by a cancer diagnosis.
- To use round table workshops to identify current issues and identify areas where the support groups can offer practical support to the commissioners.
- To use this event to extend and increase The User Forum's involvement with local cancer support groups and other community groups and organisations in order to better understand the issues which give concern to the increasing number of people whose lives have been affected by cancer.

During March a letter was sent to all the identified Cancer Support Groups in the area explaining our intentions and asking if the Support Groups would be willing to attend and support the event. The responses received were enthusiastic and it was clear that we would have attendance from more than eight support groups, perhaps as many as fifteen.

The North Staffs Medical Institute was chosen as the venue because of its central location and its ability to provide a selection of lunch menus and regular supplies of drinks.

INVITATIONS – SUPPORT GROUPS

Letters explaining the objectives of the day were sent to all the identified support groups, followed by an electronic version of the invitation. Other groups likely to be interested in an involvement with

the event were also sent electronic invitations, in most cases to individuals or leads within the group.

INVITATIONS – MEDICAL PRACTICES

The GP Newsletter, which is sent to every Practice in North Staffs and Stoke-on-Trent, was used firstly to give a 'save-the-date' entry and then, in two further issues, to give details of the event together with instructions for registration.

An electronic invitation was then sent in the body of an e-mail to all GPs, Practice Nurses and Practice Managers. (We were advised that if it were sent as an attachment it was likely that no-one would open it.)

MARKETPLACE

Many of the Support Groups have table-top display boards, pop-up banners or posters. All the Health Professional driven groups invited also had display material. We asked attendees to identify their requirements in terms of tables, space, etc. However, a number of attendees did not make it clear that they required display space and there was a considerable amount of re-organisation of the space and movement of furniture in order to accommodate them.

The Marketplace was one of the most popular parts of the event and future events could make much better use of the marketplace with more time allowed for attendees to browse and discover support and services available.

AGENDA

During the planning stage the User Forum were keen to ensure that the programme kept the attendees interested and therefore limited presentations to about ten minutes. This proved to be insufficient for most presenters, future events should allow more time.

WORKSHOPS

Four questions were developed by the User Forum, to be discussed during the afternoon workshops.

1. How best can we engage with the wider community for those patients affected by cancer?
2. How best can the User Forum and Cancer Support Groups assist the Primary Care Team with cancer survivorship?
3. How best can patients inform Healthcare Professionals of their treatment and delivery of Service
4. How will the Primary Care Team support the increasing number of cancer Survivors?

A report of the event containing more details – costings, a list of the support and other groups who attended, responses to the workshop questions and photos taken during the event – is available. It also gives some details of the ways in which the User Forum intends to build on the experiences of the day.

For a copy of the full report please contact fiona.daley@wolvespct.nhs.uk (01902 446809) or ann.lake@wolvespct.nhs.uk (01902 446810)

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WE LISTEN,
WE LEARN,
WE ACT**
**WE ARE
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CANCER SUPPORT**