

MACMILLAN USER INVOLVEMENT NEWSLETTER

ALISON'S STORY

Welcome to the twenty-third edition of the newsletter from the Macmillan User Involvement team at Greater Manchester Cancer.



L-R Back: Paula, Natasha
Front: Wendy, Mel

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"...I can continue to use my professional skills and select opportunities which best suit this..."

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Mel Attack has recently joined the team as a Macmillan User Involvement Manager

Alison was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2007 and following her initial treatment, she continued on oral medication for a further four years. Two years ago, she was diagnosed with secondary breast cancer for which she received a course of chemotherapy and now continually receives monoclonal antibody treatment.

Before retiring, Alison worked as a dietitian in the NHS for 40 years. During her career, the holistic nature of her professional role meant that she worked across a diverse range of services.

Initially, Alison was asked by a breast cancer clinical nurse specialist (CNS) to attend a regional Patient User Partnership (PUP) meeting as a Tameside representative. Following on from her involvement with the PUP group, she became involved with Manchester Cancer and the Macmillan User Involvement Programme. Talking about this transition Alison says, "I was glad to continue working towards improving cancer services for all users and carers."

Over the previous two years, Alison has been a very active Service User Representative (SUR). She has been the SUR on the Cancer Education Board, co-produced materials with the Learning & Development sub-group, attended several focus groups, and has been an attending member of the User Involvement Steering Group (UISG). Reflecting on the development of the UISG Alison says, "It has become a more dynamic, assertive and pro-active group. Members now understand the role they fulfil in governing processes and changes, and are confident to challenge when necessary."

"I enjoy being involved as it gives me a sense of satisfaction to feel useful," says Alison, "and I meet many like-minded people, several of whom have become friends as well as colleagues."

Alison has a very active lifestyle and can be found orienteering, doing aqua aerobics or Pilates, child-minding, dog-walking and on occasion relaxing (with wine) in a hot tub!



DATES IN THE DIARY

14 th September	15 th September	21 st September	21 st September
Vanguard - iWant Great Care – roll out start at the Christie	User Involvement Induction: Involvement Matters	User Involvement Learning & Development sub-group meeting	Vanguard Innovation Showcase: Patient Self-referral

HOW YOU'RE HELPING US MAKE A DIFFERENCE

User Involvement Steering Group receive an update on new ways to commission cancer services

In our previous May newsletter, we reported on the Vanguard Finance and Commissioning workshop that had taken place. Following on from the workshop, the team leading on this work were invited to come and speak to the User Involvement Steering Group in July. Darren Griffiths, Associate Director for Finance with Greater Manchester Cancer Vanguard, came to the meeting and began by describing what a review of the current system had found.

Darren said "Although giving a presentation on Cancer finances and governance arrangements might not sound the most exciting topic, we in GM Cancer all recognise how important the revised organisational form and contracting arrangements will be in improving patient outcomes, so whilst the subject matter might seem a little dry, I was keen to ensure that the UI Steering Group understood the situation. I needn't have worried as using the case of Bisphosphonates (a drug to prevent secondary cancer in post-menopausal breast cancer patients) as an example, the UI Steering Group clearly grasped the complexity and criticality of what we are trying to achieve. Whilst there was a shared sense of frustration at the pace of change, I was encouraged by the members' willingness to work with colleagues to drive the changes and I got a clear sense that the Steering Group would lend its support, in a variety of forums, to what we are trying to achieve. Thank you for inviting me."

A review of cancer commissioning found that commissioning along the patient pathway is fragmented, with different organisations responsible for different stages. There is variation in access to and outcomes from services across GM and challenges were also identified in relation to access to information and specialist clinical opinions to inform the development of services.

Darren explained the need for people affected by cancer (PAbC) to be informed about how the system can be better organised. As 'customers' of services, through mechanisms like the GM Cancer Board and other User Involvement Programme boards and governance groups, PAbC can use their influence to demand changes that can ensure we have an organisation that can deliver a world class system for cancer going forward.

LET'S MEET... MEL ATTACK

New to join the Macmillan User Involvement Team is Mel Attack. Mel has recently started the role of Greater Manchester Cancer User Involvement Manager and she is: "Very much looking forward to working with people affected by cancer to help shape changes to cancer services." She added: "It's so important that we have a real understanding of what the experience is like for the people using the services, these people are the experts and can tell us how things can work better."



Before moving to Greater Manchester Cancer, Mel worked on the MCIP (Macmillan Cancer Improvement Partnership) Programme of work as a User Involvement Facilitator. Previous to this, she worked in the city of Salford for seven years. Mel explained: "All my work has been community based working with members of the public to ensure that they have an awareness of health services and to encourage their views and experiences to be shared. This was to enable Salford to become better at delivering different aspects of health."

Away from work Mel also explained that she is an opened minded person with a keen interest to explore new things. She said: "I don't have a particular interest but I love to give everything a go. Whether it's going to the theatre, the cinema, ice skating or a new restaurant - the list goes on!"

WANT TO GET INVOLVED?

Greater Manchester **Cancer**

Have you been affected by cancer? By sharing your experiences and opinions, you can help improve cancer services. If you're a patient, family member, carer or friend, we would love to hear from you.

Please call us on 0161 918 2087, or email mc.userinvolvement@nhs.net.