

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT FOR PROFESSIONALS

What is it?

Macmillan works with partner organisations to deliver a wide range of first class learning and development opportunities for health and social care professionals.

These can include cancer awareness courses, careers advice, communication skills and management courses amongst others.

Training can be delivered face to face, via the extensive information resources on the Macmillan website or via e-learning on the specialist Macmillan Learn Zone.

'It made me realise that I had skills to pass on to people, it also gave me confidence to deal with what could be seen as difficult issues.'

This Impact Brief is part of a suite of Impact Briefs which provide evidence about the impact of Macmillan's direct and indirect services, available at www.macmillan.org.uk/impactbriefs

Need



With an estimated **4 million** people living with cancer by 2030, the increased demand on health services will require highly skilled and effective cancer specialists trained to understand the complexities of cancer.¹



45% of NHS England staff surveyed did not think there was enough opportunity to develop their potential through learning and development.⁸

Reach



In 2014, Macmillan reached over 6,000 people affected by cancer through learning and development courses aimed at people affected by cancer.¹⁵



In 2013 Macmillan awarded cancer care professionals with a total of **492** grants for learning and development.²³

Impact



Macmillan recognises and rewards Professionals through the Macmillan Excellence Awards. The second of these awards took place in 2013.^{21,23}



Information staff who attended Macmillan's 'Setting Out' course often describe the training as 'inspiring and motivating.'²⁵

www.macmillan.org.uk/impactbriefs



LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT FOR PROFESSIONALS

INTRODUCTION

Macmillan works both directly and indirectly with partner organisations to deliver a wide range of first class learning and development opportunities for staff, volunteers, people affected by cancer and health and social care professionals.

The service offerings range from cancer awareness courses and careers advice to communication skills and management courses. These can be delivered face to face, via the extensive information resource on the Macmillan website or via e-learning on Learn zone.*

This Impact Brief is focussed on the need for, and impact of, the specific learning and development service offerings for Macmillan Professionals.

KEY FINDINGS

- **Need for wide ranging skills and knowledge**
The complex nature of cancer means that in order to deliver first class customer service, which is both efficient and effective, health and social care professionals need to have considerable specialist skills and knowledge in a wide variety of cancer-related areas.
- **Free Macmillan learning and development offer**
The learning and development delivered free of charge by Macmillan is high quality, up to date and relevant. We enable health and social care professionals to become leaders in their field through enhancing their cancer specific knowledge and skills.
- **Trained Macmillan Professionals**
Trained cancer specialists such as Macmillan Professionals can ensure that patients are dealt with in the most efficient, appropriate manner, aiding faster recovery, reducing inappropriate use of services and resulting in efficiency gains.
- **Employee satisfaction**
Learning and development is a key factor in keeping employees engaged and motivated. It is also closely correlated with retention rates and customer satisfaction. Participants on our courses express a high degree of satisfaction with the training they have received.

* *Learn Zone is a dedicated section of the Macmillan website which enables free and easy access to a wide variety of online resources, e-learning programmes, professional development tools and information about latest learning and development opportunities. Learn Zone is open to Macmillan professionals, other healthcare professionals and members of the public.*

DETAILED FINDINGS

1. What is the issue?

Increased demand for high-skilled, trained cancer professionals

There are currently 2 million people living with cancer and this is estimated to rise to 4 million by 2030.¹ Given this level of demand on health services there is a growing need for highly skilled and effective cancer workforce cancer specialists who have been trained to understand the complexities of cancer.

There are over 200 known types of cancer affecting people of all ages, ethnic backgrounds and gender.² The clinical care needs of people with cancer are more complex than other long term conditions as cancer is not limited to one part of the body but can affect different organs and areas within the body. This means that implications of living with each different type of cancer are unique to each cancer site and will create differing needs during the cancer pathway in terms of recovery and rehabilitation.³ For example different types of cancer cause differing symptoms and treatment for different cancers have varying consequences in length of time and severity.

Importance of workforce development

In 2007 the Cancer Reform Strategy for England highlighted workforce development as a key priority for the development of future cancer services.⁴ This followed on from previous recognition in 2000 by the Department of Health that the workforce was their most valuable resource in cancer care and that the quality of cancer care was inextricably linked to continued professional development.⁵ The 2011 Improving Outcomes: A strategy for Cancer (England's current cancer strategy) also recognised Macmillan's role in funding and supporting the cancer care workforce.⁶

Despite workforce development being important a Macmillan led study which mapped staff qualifications and training in cancer care across the UK identified significant gaps in the cancer nursing workforce.⁷

Specialist and soft skills

It is also not only the development of specialist skills and technical ability which can be improved through learning and development. Technically able people may still be ineffective in their role if they lack vital soft skills such as communication and management. Evidence from a study on staff engagement in the NHS in England suggests that some staff in management positions are ineffective at their job because they have not received the right management skills training.⁸

The End of Life Care strategy in England identified the provision of communication skills training for a wide range of different workforce groups as a vital part of a major workforce development initiative needed to improve the quality of end of life care.⁹ A 2012 update by the Department of Health recognises that workforce development underpins the majority of end of life care service improvements, and that this not only increases levels of competence and confidence but also contributes to shifting behavioural change around end of life care.¹⁰

Training demand

In 2013 the NHS England employed 147,087 doctors, 371,777 qualified nursing staff, 154,109 qualified scientific, therapeutic and technical staff and 36,360 managers.¹¹ Employing skilled staff to replace those who have left is costly, yet employing non-skilled staff requires internal training, which also places a burden on the already stretched NHS budget.¹² Workforce movement costs the health sector at least £1.36bn per annum. Staff retention policies are therefore financially important and need to include addressing competition from other health sector employers. This may for example include ensuring there are sufficient internal career development opportunities.¹³

One study of staff engagement involving over 200 staff in the NHS in England found that staff from all departments have an ongoing interest in professional learning and development. Many see learning and development opportunities as an inherent benefit and attraction to working within the NHS in England.⁸

People want training and resources to enable them to do their job to the best of their ability. In the same study although 84% of people surveyed agreed that they had the knowledge, skills and equipment to do a good job, 45% did not think there was enough opportunity to develop their potential through learning and development.⁸

There is a particular lack of statutory training opportunities for Allied Health Professionals who would like to specialise in cancer care.¹⁴

2. What is Macmillan doing to address the issue?

In 2014, Macmillan reached over 6,000 people affected by cancer through learning and development courses aimed at people affected by cancer. We reached many thousands more professionals through courses aimed at professional audiences.

¹⁵ All our professionals are specialists in their area of cancer care and leaders in their field. They use their expert knowledge to help people understand more about cancer, manage their symptoms and side effects, and find practical ways to live with their illness. The Macmillan L&D resources catalogue provides information about the resources available for professionals.²¹

In 2014, Macmillan reached over 700,000 people through all of the Macmillan healthcare professionals (Macmillan Nurses, AHPs, Macmillan Source of Support Doctors and Macmillan 1-2-1 support roles combined).¹⁵

Macmillan works with Macmillan Professionals to identify individual needs and establish career development plans. Macmillan Professionals can apply for an additional educational grant to gain specialist skills such as how best to help patients manage breathlessness and how to approach and manage end of life care.

Each professional may apply for one personal grant per year, up to a value of £1,000, to support the costs of course or conference fees. Professionals can apply for two individual grants per year. Since 2007 Macmillan Professionals can also apply for a group grant of up to £5,000, for example to pay for facilitation of a specialist training day.^{16,17} An online education grants system was launched in 2013 to make it easier for professionals to access L&D grants. A total of 492 Macmillan L&D grants were approved in 2013.²³

The learning and development resources that we provide range from exclusive e-learning programmes, workshops, audio CD's, access to online learning advisors and managing toolkits. Macmillan Professionals have access to the Learn Zone on the Macmillan website, which contains full details and listings of all available courses, workshops and resource offerings.¹⁸

The learning and development offered to Macmillan Professionals meets the need for cancer specific training and helps to fill current gaps in service provision. No other organisation offers such extensive cancer specialist training courses or such a high level of ongoing support.

Macmillan's Learning and Development team also delivers conferences for professionals, the 2013 conference was the largest and most impactful to date, with over 400 professionals attending who awarded it with a delegate approval rating of 98%.

Some examples of the courses we provided to Macmillan professionals include cancer awareness and breathlessness management courses.

*'This was a brilliant study day. I got a lot out of all the sessions, will definitely be coming again! Thank you!'*²⁰

'Setting Out' course delegate

All our courses receive fantastic feedback with participants gaining new knowledge and skills.¹⁹ The 'Introduction to Macmillan' and 'Setting Out' induction courses for new Macmillan Professionals are particularly successful with all attendees agreeing that the aims of the programme were achieved.¹⁸

Macmillan regularly engages with Macmillan Professionals through workshops and focus groups, to gather information on their needs and preferences. In 2013 Macmillan engaged with and sought the views of 500 Macmillan professionals including Macmillan GPs,

Cancer Nurse Specialists, and Palliative Care Professionals. Having listened to their views, in 2014 Macmillan is revising co-created Learning and Development offers alongside Macmillan Professionals.²¹

3. What is the impact of effective learning and development for professionals

Staff engagement, motivation and performance

Organisations need to provide their employees with training throughout their careers to ensure they can attract and retain the best staff, keep staff engaged and motivated and deliver the highest quality service. Ongoing learning and development demonstrates to the employee that they are valuable enough for the employer to invest in them and their development.²²

Macmillan recognises and rewards Professionals through Macmillan Excellence Awards. The second of these awards took place in 2013 a total of 83 nominations were received, and ten awards and one Fellowship award was resented to Macmillan professionals for their work in supporting people living with cancer. Additionally, seven Henry Garnett Awards were presented to professionals who give outstanding support to Macmillan above their role.^{23, 21}

*'I found the role transition and specialist practitioner sessions very useful. They made me think how I'd like to develop my role and the service.'*²⁰

'Setting Out' course delegate'

i) Engagement

A five year study in the NHS in England found that if staff are engaged then retention rates are higher and staff are more likely to be willing to embrace change within the organisation. It also found that staff were more productive, resulting in revenue growth for the organisation, and that customer satisfaction was higher when staff were more engaged in their roles.²⁴

Increasing an individual's level of engagement can improve their performance by up to 20% and reduce the probability that they will leave by 87%.²⁴

*'I'll take back lots of ideas and information to disseminate amongst my colleagues. This has been a very beneficial study day for me. Thank you.'*²⁰

'Talk about sex workshop' course delegate

ii) Motivation

The opportunity to develop potential through learning and development is a key factor in motivating staff.⁸ Staff who attend Macmillan's 'Setting Out' course often describe the training as 'Inspiring and motivating'.²⁵

Training can also be used to create positive attitudes through clarifying the behaviours and attitudes that are expected from the employee.²²

*'The course made me aware of the positive side of my role (I was in a negative place) and how much I enjoy it.'*²⁰

'Setting Out' course delegate)

*'Macmillan has equipped me with the tools to do the job and now it's up to me to be assertive and expand the role within the team'*²⁰

'Setting Out' course delegate

iii) Improving performance

Engaged and motivated staff are more likely to be higher performers than those who do not value their role. A study by the Department of Health found that people derive satisfaction from being able to 'do the job properly'. Having the right training to improve skills and knowledge enables them to complete their jobs efficiently and effectively and contributes to their sense of selfworth.⁸

Skills development

One of the obvious benefits of learning and development is that of technical skills development such as end of life care and breathlessness management in patients. The increase in cancer specific knowledge as a result of learning and development is evidenced in the quote below from a Macmillan Professional.

i) Communications skills development

In addition to knowledge and technical skills one of the key aims of learning and development is to develop communication skills. Communicating effectively with people affected by cancer, explaining information clearly and concisely, offering a sensitive ear whilst being reassuring and comforting can help relieve their anxiety and stress.

Macmillan is particularly effective at achieving the aim to develop communication skills as indicated by the quotes from delegates below.

*'I now feel much more confident in dealing with relatives. Before I would have avoided having those difficult conversations.'*²⁹

'Death and dying' course delegate

*'It was an excellent day and it gave me guidance on how to communicate effectively with children and families.'*²⁰

'Setting Out' course delegate

*'I am much more confident than before. This course will aid me to be more positive talking to patients – knowing the financial help available.'*²⁰

Benefits advice course delegate

ii) Management skills

Appropriate training enables managers to be more effective in their roles, which has a knock on effect, motivating and engaging the staff they manage. There is also evidence that patient and staff satisfaction directly correlates with effective management of teams and senior managers being involved in the work of their staff.⁸

Macmillan offers Macmillan Professionals a mentorship training programme which can help Professionals feel better prepared for their role and gain increased knowledge and the skills required to be a mentor.²⁶

*'It made me realise that I had skills to pass on to people, it also gave me confidence to deal with what could be seen as difficult issues.'*²⁶

Cancer patient

*'I believe that this has underlined Macmillan's commitment to present postholders and also new postholders. I hope to encourage other colleagues to take up this opportunity to cascade and share their expertise to new staff as I firmly believe this is an important aspect of the role of the clinical nurse specialist.'*²⁶

'Macmillan Nurse' (CNS)

Past participants of the mentoring programme have rated the teaching, learning resource, support from the lecturers and overall programme as good or excellent. In addition one participant made the following statement highlighting the importance of Macmillan's commitment to Macmillan Professionals and the way in which the message could be cascaded.²⁶

iii) Networking skills

Macmillan face to face training is a good way to network with other Macmillan Professionals, sharing ways of working and best practice ideas. Networking in this way also creates a community spirit, leaving Macmillan Professionals feeling like they are well supported and not isolated in their roles as demonstrated by the quotes below.

*'The networking was positively invaluable. It was excellent to learn and share with others like myself. Overall a very positive learning experience.'*²⁷

'The Leader, the Vision and the Orchestra' delegate'

*'This is an excellent course. It is very helpful to know who's who in the organisation and how to make contacts. I had a great feeling of being part of a larger and supportive team.'*²⁰

'Introduction to Macmillan' course delegate

Case Study: Networking event ¹

The Peninsula Cancer Network recently hosted an Allied Health Professional and cancer day, funded by Macmillan. This was the first time that any networking of Allied Health Professionals had been attempted in relation to cancer. The event was hugely successful with 97 people attending. The resource table was cleared out and information on be.macmillan.org.uk (Macmillan's branding website) and the Learn Zone exhausted.¹

The cost saving benefits

i) Learning and development educational grants

Macmillan's learning and development programme helps Macmillan Professionals become leaders in their field through ongoing development and training.

Macmillan awards grants to professional individuals to support the acquisition of specialist skills and also to groups or teams of Macmillan Professionals to support the development of specialist skills where existing training or provision of resources is not available, or where bespoke arrangements are more cost effective.²⁸ This success is described below through an example of

how a Macmillan Professional, in this case an occupational therapist, can help bring cost benefits to the NHS.

Case Study: cost benefit example ¹

Macmillan occupational therapists benefit from being able to access funding for their own learning and development grants, which enhances the service they are able to provide.¹ Improving knowledge and skills of Allied Health Professionals at all levels encourages movement into specialist posts at a higher level.¹ Therefore the support that Macmillan Allied Health Professionals receive saves the NHS the cost of training professionals to develop specialist skills.

Occupational therapy interventions can bring cost benefits to the NHS by providing preventative advice and treatment to avoid complications which may lead to further referrals and admissions. Accident and emergency admissions can also be reduced by improving the physical wellbeing, for example by helping lymphoedema patients preventing limb injury or teaching patients breathing techniques to cope with panic attacks.¹

The case study described below is just one of many situations where a Macmillan learning and development grant has improved the knowledge and skills of the health and social care workforce and subsequently improving patient care.²⁹

Case Study: Macmillan learning and development grant

Many staff at the Milton Keynes Hospital lacked knowledge and understanding of death and dying. To improve knowledge and skills in this area the care lead applied for a grant to allow nurses within the hospital to complete an Open University course – Death and Dying.

The £1,000 grant allowed staff to complete the course at reduced student fees. There was no funding for this within the hospital and as such without the grant the training could not have gone ahead.

All staff successfully completed the course and reported increased confidence and improved skills in managing death and dying situations. In particular, they accepted that death does occur in a hospital setting and is not necessarily a failure. All staff felt more confident in talking to relatives and the medical teams, and now actively avoid using misleading phrases when talking about death and dying.

Cost of learning and development for Macmillan Professionals^{30*}

Macmillan funds a wide range of high quality learning and development opportunities for staff and health and social care professionals. Examples of typical 2013 costs are shown below.

Learning resource	Cost
2 day conference for 350 professionals	£180,000
Coaching to improve effectiveness and develop skills	£2,500
Attendance at an advanced course in pain and symptom control	£450

*For more detailed costs of these and other Macmillan services see be.macmillan.org.uk to download The Cost of Macmillan's Services fact sheet.

ii) Efficiency savings

It is cheaper to train existing employees compared to recruiting a new employee with the skills you need. In addition training can save the organisation money if the training helps the employee to become more efficient.²²

In 2002 the Department of Health in England spent £3 billion on learning and development.³¹ Organisations like this can therefore save significant amounts of this money on training budgets by employing Macmillan Professionals who are partly trained by Macmillan.³²

Learning and development can enable health professionals to educate people in cancer prevention and help to identify signs of cancer early on.³³ In many cases the earlier a cancer is caught the quicker, easier and cheaper it is to treat and the patient is likely to have a higher chance of survival.

Health professionals equipped with specialist cancer knowledge, such as that supplied through Macmillan's learning and development activity, can deliver efficiency gains for health and social care services through a range of mechanisms including faster diagnosis, reductions in accessing inappropriate services, tests, treatments and consultations.

CONCLUSION

Learning and development is viewed as one of the key motivating factors in attracting the best staff, engaging them to perform efficiently and effectively and retaining them for significant amounts of time. As a consequence investing in learning and development can be very cost effective.

The complex nature of cancer means that health and social care professionals need to be highly competent in their roles to be able to deal with the wide ranging diagnosis, treatment, care and support needs of people affected by cancer. The learning and development offered by Macmillan to Macmillan Professionals goes a long way to ensuring they lead the field in cancer care and support.

Employing Macmillan Professionals not only ensures that organisations have highly competent, motivated staff with a vast resource of cancer specific information at their fingertips, but is also cost effective, saving money on training and more widely through reductions in unnecessary treatments, tests and care.

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