

The purpose of the Volunteer Conference was to bring together a variety of volunteers from across the country; to learn from one another, to build on their skills and to share their volunteering experiences. Volunteers were given the opportunity to hear from Macmillan staff and other volunteers, seek out information in our exhibition and to learn new skills in learning and development sessions. They give their time to Macmillan in many different ways and are an integral part of helping Macmillan to inspire millions.

The objectives/aims for the conference were:

- to inspire and motivate delegates about the work of Macmillan,
- to design an interactive event that is relevant and inspiring for all types of volunteers, attracting a mixture of roles from across the UK,
- to provide a range of practical skill development opportunities so that volunteers have the right tools and experience within their roles,
- to inform Macmillan volunteers about our strategy and future direction and showcase how volunteer support contributes to Macmillan's mission,
- to provide the opportunity for volunteers to seek out information on the work of Macmillan, developing knowledgeable and informed volunteers,
- to encourage volunteers to meet each other, share best practise and learn from one another and feel part of the Macmillan family, and
- to enable volunteers to feedback about their experience and let us know the areas we can improve.

'I thoroughly enjoyed the conference as a whole, and left feeling energised, inspired and on a high. I met many wonderful people and made new friends and learned a lot over the two days. As a volunteer, I felt fully appreciated and supported by Macmillan.'

87% of volunteers attending felt that the learning and development focus of the conference will help them in their volunteering role.

92% rated the learning and development sessions as excellent or good overall.

Delegates were also asked about the specific actions they would take as a result of attending the conference. The majority responded that they would encourage others to volunteer for Macmillan and attend the event, as well as share information they have learnt with other volunteers.

***'I never realised all the things that Macmillan do and the care they take to make information clear and appropriate for people. I left feeling part of a truly effective team of focused people driven by professional but caring leaders.
I feel immensely proud to be just a small part of that.'***

Volunteer Awards

There were 8 individual and group winners selected by the national awards panel, each of whom received a Macmillan UK Volunteer Award. 76% of respondents felt 'very inspired' to continue to make their time matter after attending the awards ceremony.

'I'm still buzzing.'

And finally, the laughing yoga session split the room... with 74% of delegates finding it slightly, moderately or extremely enjoyable and 26% saying it was not at all enjoyable!

'I felt really nurtured and that Macmillan cares about me as a volunteer. I have made some amazing, lasting friendships at this conference. I'm inspired to do more... Thank you to all involved.'

'Overall a thoroughly enjoyable experience, well organised and run. I came away having learned something. RESULT.'

Things to improve on

You said	We will listen
<p><i>‘Sadly, the Spotlight Stage was a brilliant idea, but the acoustics were very difficult with the noise of the Market Place!’</i></p>	<p>The Spotlight Stage was a new addition to the conference this year and while it was an opportunity for teams to update delegates on their work, the layout and audio didn’t work for everyone.</p> <p>In our planning for the Volunteer Conference, 2017 we will look at the exhibition space and ensure the Spotlight Stage is positioned so that it complements the whole event.</p>
<p><i>‘It would be good to have names of employees attending the conference on the attendees list as well as names of volunteers.’</i></p>	<p>As a result of your feedback last year we included a list of volunteer delegates that were happy to share their names with others in delegate bags. Next year we will also include Macmillan staff members and any external contributors to the delegate list.</p>
<p><i>‘The transport arrangements were good but the shuttle buses were a bit haphazard in their timing.’</i></p>	<p>In our planning for the Volunteer Conference 2016, our main priority was to find an accessible venue. While being accessible, the Hinckley Island Hotel is not easily reachable by public transport, which is why we made shuttle buses available.</p> <p>The bus timings were based around train arrival and departures in and out of Nuneaton station. We had a couple of unexpected problems with shuttle buses, but everyone managed to get to and from the venue with no delay.</p>
<p><i>‘Name badges should be a bit higher up the body so as to avoid having to look at someone’s navel area to remind me of their name. A lapel type badge would have been better.’</i></p>	<p>Thank you for this feedback, we will look at the various options available for next year’s event. The lanyards helped us to identify conference attendees, as well as inform delegates of their learning and development sessions.</p>
<p><i>‘I think Regional and Local staff need to work hard to promote the conference so that [more] volunteers are given the opportunity to attend.’</i></p> <p><i>‘Please let me have the date of 2017 conference ASAP; I will encourage other members of my fundraising group to attend.’</i></p>	<p>Fantastic! We would like as many individual volunteers as possible to attend the Volunteer Conference so we can inspire as many people as possible to make their time matter.</p> <p>It’s also important that we give everyone a chance to attend so that more people have the skills and motivation to ensure no one faces cancer alone. We will be letting Macmillan staff and professionals know about the event, but if you know of any volunteers that haven’t attended in the past, please let them know about the event and encourage them to attend.</p> <p>Information on the date and venue of the Volunteer Conference 2017 will be publicised in January 2017. To find out more information visit: macmillan.org.uk/volunteerconference</p>