

Macmillan Professionals Excellence Awards

Team Excellence completed nomination example

In this category, the focus is on high-performing cancer care teams. We're looking for those who've developed their roles, relationships and processes to create high-quality and efficient service delivery for the benefit of people affected by cancer. The team should demonstrate how they have exceeded the requirements of their roles, and how this has improved outcomes for people affected by cancer.

A team can be any group of people who work together to provide a service and must include at least one Macmillan professional. They could be either unidisciplinary or multidisciplinary and must include a mixed skill set and work across boundaries.

The team should:

- have a team leader and a minimum of three other team members
- demonstrate how they work together effectively
- work effectively across teams and boundaries
- demonstrate team development to optimise the team's impact and effectiveness

Questions and example answers

For questions 1 and 2 – 7 the maximum number of characters with spacing is 1900 and 1600, respectively.

1. Outline the specific contribution, initiative or achievement the cancer care team has made to improve services for people affected by cancer, making sure you address the specific criteria for this award.

This team have provided a pivotal role in cancer support and information for over 10 years, providing excellent and diverse services for people affected by cancer to meet their wide ranging needs. They ensure they fully assess each individual so they can develop a tailored package of support that addresses the issues they have identified. They have successfully developed partnerships with other services across health and social care to enable these needs to be met. One of the biggest measures of their success is the number of people who subsequently volunteer at the service, which is all because of their own positive experience. The service provides wonderful volunteering opportunities, and is a great example of partnership and team working. The biggest partnership has been with Macmillan who enabled it all to happen by supporting the initiative in the early 1990s. The team has influenced change locally, nationally, (supporting other centres, national government initiatives, Macmillan projects etc), and internationally, (Quality of Life group at The European Organisation for the Research and Treatment of Cancer).

2. We expect all Macmillan professionals to deliver excellent practice for people affected by cancer. Please explain how the team has gone over and beyond what would normally be expected in their role as a Macmillan professional to achieve this.

This team have pushed boundaries - planning a new service where none existed, carrying out research to support the development of services, and most importantly, involving patients and carers, identifying needs and then working with other services and teams to ensure these needs were addressed.

As a multi-disciplinary team, they have individually been challenged to really change how they work and develop truly holistic services that put the patient at the heart of their approach. None are doing what would be expected of their professional group and it took real determination to improve the care of those affected by cancer to leave safe professional groups and create a new concept. The result has been the development of information and support services of the highest standard that meet the diverse needs of patients. They have published the results of their work locally and nationally, and have supported other services in the UK to develop their provision. Most team members also volunteer to raise awareness about the service and Macmillan, presenting to other organisations. All are involved in fundraising in their own time which funds services such as complementary therapies, which could not otherwise be provided.

3. Provide evidence of how the team has influenced / engaged / collaborated with key stakeholders and worked across boundaries to ensure success. Please name the key stakeholders. Examples of boundaries include:

Across acute / community / primary care

Across health and social care

Involving other sectors e.g. academic, business or voluntary

This service has been an important stakeholder with Macmillan for over 10 years and developed the original model for information and support services. They wrote the original toolkit for Macmillan centres, collaborated with patient information and more recently survivorship projects. This collaboration has seen the spreading of support and information services nationally for those affected by cancer. They held regular sessions to share learning to inform other Centres, and now learn from them. This process has led to the establishment of a vibrant support network that benefits all services.

The team is prepared to seize any useful opportunity to collaborate to improve services. This has included setting up agreements to share services with other providers to expand reach and access. Within the Trust itself they have worked with Oncology consultants and cancer management and Trust executives, which has raised the profile of the service. Their most important collaboration is with patients and carers, who inform the practice and work on service and information production.

4. Please list the specific outputs that have been achieved. Identify the main beneficiaries and reach of the service. N.B. Outputs are the products, services or facilities that result from the activities of the team.

The main outputs are as follows:

- Drop in Centre/ Helpline provided 7 days per week to help anyone affected by cancer to talk through any issues, receive verbal and written information including latest evidence and referral to other services where needed. Staffed by oncology health professional and specially trained volunteers. 12,964 interactions last year involving 8674 individuals.
- Pre radiotherapy and Chemotherapy sessions 3 x 2hr sessions run per week – patients learn about their treatments, and shown treatment machines, 1655 interactions last year, involving 1234 individuals.
- Benefits advice service – Advised 936 individuals last year. This resulted in new benefits of £88000 being claimed.
- Counselling service provides up to 6 sessions and helped 1484 people last year.
- Evidence based Complementary Therapies provided for 1,791 individuals last year (including relaxation classes, aromatherapy, massage, Indian head massage, reflexology and ear acupuncture)

5. Provide evidence of the specific outcomes that have been achieved and the impact the nominee has had on services for people affected by cancer. Ensure you link the outcomes to at least 3 of Macmillan's 9 outcomes. The evidence should also demonstrate the highest quality of patient experience and customer service has been achieved.

N.B. Outcomes are the changes, benefits, learning or other effects that happen as a result of the activities of the nominee. You can refer to each outcome by their number.

Organisational strategy: The team have worked to ensure that the support they provide is recognised as an important part of the cancer pathway. They used respected oncology professionals to establish the Centre and only provided services with a good evidence base. They demonstrated the added value provided to colleagues - whether dealing with distress or helping to empower patients.

National strategies: They have contributed strategically to the patient information agenda in many ways but most recently with implementation of the Information Prescriptions as a Beacon site.

Macmillan's Outcomes: They share research with colleagues, including volunteers so they can better inform our clients (outcome 2): 95% of users rate the service as good or excellent; 88% report that the onward referral met their needs; 90% of services report that the referral was appropriate.

They support relatives about early diagnosis and with patients about evidence about lifestyle influencing rates of recurrence (outcome 6): 92% agreed their questions had been answered and reported feeling less anxious about their treatment. 84% stated they had made new friends and had a better support network in place.

They discuss treatments and potential consequences to support patients to decide what to do (outcome 3): 92% of people reported feeling well supported and less anxious about their finances and better able to concentrate on their health.

- Evidence based Complementary Therapies outcomes: 95% reported feeling more relaxed, less stressed and more confident in managing their health and well-being.

6. Provide evidence of how the team has demonstrated this impact e.g. through audits and evaluation. Include evidence of effective and efficient use of resources.

Services are only introduced following the development of an evidence base that identifies the needs and likely impact of providing them. E.g:

Patients were audited about the costs of attending follow-up appointments. Selected patients now have telephone follow-up appointments, which have saved both time and money for patients. A financial audit revealed that 40% of patients were not aware of the free prescription service. As a result, this is now explicitly mentioned in consultations and posters have been placed in waiting rooms.

A Macmillan nurse specialist set up a 2 day 'moving on' workshop for post treatment patients. Positive evaluations and validated questionnaires pre and post course identified gaps in knowledge and information. The course has been developed further to address these issues. Approx. 50 patients and carers a year now attend 2 day workshop, which contributes to improved patient outcomes.

The service developed pre chemotherapy sessions so that patients feel better supported as part of a group and can support each other. Those on the course report lower anxiety levels about treatment and better able to understand and manage the impact of the treatment. They are likely to have reduced use of other services and therefore represent effective use of resources.

7. Provide evidence of how the team has ensured that achievements are sustainable. N.B. Sustainability does not just mean funding and should show how the achievements have been integrated into existing services.

This service has developed incrementally, and has been able to show how the investment has reduced the need for other services and improved the quality of life of service users. This has resulted in a commitment to fund the service in the medium term. A large measure of its sustainability is also due to the use of volunteers, as well as paid staff, which has meant that a wider range of services have been provided than would otherwise have been possible. All staff and volunteers are recruited to ensure commitment and understanding, and turnover is less than 5%, which results in consistent services and reduced management costs.

Funding comes from the NHS Trust, charitable donations, fundraising, research and other grants. By accessing funds from a range of sources, the service is able to manage when funding challenges arise.

One example demonstrating sustainability is: The team ran a trial of traditional Chinese acupuncture for breast cancer patients experiencing side-effects from hormone treatment - which was very effective - but too expensive. Another trial with auricular acupuncture was undertaken with good results, which is now a regular service. This was sustainable because it was possible to train existing staff to provide this service.