



January 2016

More support for head and neck cancer patients

An innovative new clinic for people diagnosed with head and neck cancer is being piloted at the Queen's Medical Centre in Nottingham as part of a range of measures to improve outcomes for this group of patients.

The clinic – held the day after diagnosis - will bring together a range of health professionals including a clinical nurse specialist, a speech and language therapist and a dietician to pre-assess the patient and explain their treatment options.

Not only will this give patients and their loved ones more time to digest the newly received cancer diagnosis and prepare some questions so they can understand their treatment options better; but it will also help to prevent readmissions and unnecessary complications with more time to tailor care to each patient's needs.

The new clinic is part of the Head and Neck Cancer Pathways Redesign Project which is benefitting from over £100,000 of funding from the Macmillan Cancer Partnership in Nottinghamshire to improve care for people diagnosed with head and neck cancer.

Chandni Thaker, Macmillan Head and Neck Cancer Project Manager who is overseeing the work said: "Previously the patient would have their treatment options explained to them on the same day as their diagnosis and reported feeling overwhelmed by all the information and advice at that stage.

"Furthermore due to time constraints, it was not possible for all head and neck cancer patients to be pre-assessed by the dietician and speech and language therapist. However the new clinic format will enable most patients to be seen by the whole team before treatment which will further improve outcomes."

More emotional and practical support will also now be available to head and neck cancer patients, both through the new clinic and also patient supporters from the 'Heads2gether' group.

The group consists of people with previous experience of head and neck cancer who have been trained up as volunteers to offer support to current patients. A freephone

helpline has been set up which is manned by the volunteers who can answer any non-clinical questions or just listen to patient and carers' concerns. They can also help to signpost patients to appropriate services outside of their clinical care, such as benefits advice, financial support, childcare support, or help with work.

If patients would like further support, they can also be matched up with a suitable 'patient support buddy' for the length of their treatment or need.

The Head and Neck Cancer Pathways Redesign Project aims to deliver more joined up care across the whole pathway for people affected by head and neck cancer from the moment of diagnosis to beyond treatment. It is one of 19 projects under the Macmillan Cancer Partnership in Nottinghamshire which is investing more than £3million to improve cancer services and support the growing number of cancer survivors living in the county.

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For further information, please contact:

**Chloe Ingham, Regional Communications Officer, Macmillan Cancer Support, on 01904 756444 or 07720593471
cingham@macmillan.org.uk**

Notes to Editors:

About Macmillan Cancer Support

When you have cancer, you don't just worry about what will happen to your body, you worry about what will happen to your life. At Macmillan, we know how a cancer diagnosis can affect everything and we're here to support you through.

From help with money worries and advice about work, to someone who'll listen if you just want to talk, we'll be there. We are millions of supporters, professionals, volunteers, campaigners and people affected by cancer. Together we make sure there's always someone here for you, to give you the support, energy and inspiration you need to help you feel like yourself again. We are all Macmillan.

No one should face cancer alone. Call us free on 0808 808 00 00 (Monday to Friday, 9am–8pm) or visit macmillan.org.uk

