

Macmillan Benefits Advice Service – Manchester

Economic and quality case study

Service summary

This Macmillan Benefits Advice Service in Manchester is based at three hospital locations including North Manchester General Hospital, Manchester Royal Infirmary and Wythenshawe Hospital. From June 2009 to April 2011, the service operated with a combination of funding from Macmillan Cancer Support, Manchester City Council (Working Neighbourhoods Fund), and Pennine Acute Hospitals NHS Trust and University Hospital of South Manchester NHS Foundation Trust. From 2011 to 2014, the service is being funded by Macmillan Cancer Support.

Working as a partnership in the community and the wider NHS region, the service provides a route into charitable grants, benefits advice, social care services and pathways back to employment. It also provides quality assured legal advice in key areas of social welfare law for service users in Manchester.

The figure overleaf provides an overview of the service including what is required to set it up and to run it; what it delivers; and the types of benefits it generates for service users, for the healthcare system and for other local services. This case study proceeds to describe how the service helps enhance productivity in health and social care services as well as other public services, while delivering quality outcomes for service users.

Return on investment

- Improved the wellbeing and quality of life of those affected by cancer by reducing anxiety and stress.
- Contributed towards local area targets.
- In addition to these quality outcomes for service users and the locality, every **£1** invested in the service generated **£0.32** of monetised benefits to the healthcare system, **£1.59** to other local services and **£25.39** to service users.

Manchester Benefits Advice Service



BENEFITS

INPUTS

Investment

- ✓ **Set up costs: £7,528** (funded by Macmillan Cancer Support as a pilot in 2006)
- ✓ **Operational costs: £180,000 per year on average** (funded by Macmillan Cancer Support, Manchester City Council, Pennine Acute Hospitals NHS Trust and University Hospital of South Manchester NHS Foundation Trust between 2009 and April 2011, and by Macmillan Cancer Support for 2011 to 2014)

Staffing

- ✓ 0.6 FTE manager
- ✓ 4 FTE hospital-based advice workers
- ✓ 0.25 FTE finance and clerical support

Facilities

- ✓ 3 hospital-based outreach locations
- ✓ Manager's office

THE SERVICE

Referral routes

- ✓ Health professionals
- ✓ Social workers
- ✓ Other Macmillan services
- ✓ Self-referral

Delivery volume

- ✓ Approximately 887 service users in 2010

Services

Advice and information

- ✓ Social welfare including benefits, debt, housing, consumer and employment advice
- ✓ Information about other services

Practical support

- ✓ Assistance with debt management and prevention
- ✓ Applying for grants
- ✓ Assistance with claiming process
- ✓ Advice on appealing decisions

For service users

- ✓ Raised **£4,570,070** worth of welfare benefits and grants
- ✓ Alleviated stress and anxiety related to financial pressures

For healthcare system

- ✓ Productivity gains of **£56,981** by enabling CNSs to concentrate on core clinical tasks

For local services

- ✓ Savings of **£20,000** through representation at court or Appeal Tribunals
- ✓ Savings of **£266,916** by preventing debt-related mental health issues
- ✓ Contributed towards local area targets 

On an annual operational basis, every £1 invested generated £0.32 worth of monetised benefits to the healthcare system, £1.59 to local services, and £25.39 to service users

1) Benefits for the healthcare system - Productivity

- ✓ **Conservative estimate of £56,981 in productivity gains by enabling healthcare professionals to concentrate on their core clinical tasks**

Clinical Nurse Specialists (Cancer) (CNS) regularly refer patients to the service for cancer information and advice, rather than spend time researching information, offering advice or helping patients to complete forms themselves. We found that the service can help save a CNS between 2.1 to 5.8 hours, or 3.95 hours on average per patient, enabling them to focus on their core clinical tasks and contributing to the NHS 'releasing time to care' initiative¹.

Productivity gains can be calculated based on the number of clients² supported by the advice service who would otherwise have used CNS time³. **Table 1** presents the productivity gains that could be realised based on the following assumptions:

- Lower estimate: saving 2.1 hours of CNS time per client and assuming that 50% of clients would have used their CNS for non-clinical information and support.
- Mid estimate: saving 3.95 hours of CNS time per client and assuming that 75% of clients would have used their CNS for non-clinical information and support.
- Upper estimate: saving 5.8 hours of CNS time per client and assuming that 100% of clients would have used their CNS for non-clinical information and support.

Table 1:

Lower estimate	Mid estimate	Upper estimate
Productivity gain of £20,196	Productivity gain of £56,981	Productivity gain of £111,432

Using the mid estimate, the service contributed to £56,981 in productivity gains of other healthcare professionals.

Feedback and testimonials the Manchester service has received from a range of healthcare professionals attest to the fact that 89% of such respondents found having an advice worker at the hospital has either 'substantially' or 'partially' reduced their workload, enabling them to focus on their clinical workload⁴.

- *'The work undertaken by the advice worker allows us to have more time to address the clinical and physiological needs of our patients'*
- *'Macmillan professionals, cancer nurses, and members of the cancer teams are able to concentrate on clinical and other support for their patients and families knowing that financial problems are being addresses'*

2) Benefits for service users - Quality

- ✓ **Raised £4,570,070 worth of welfare benefits and grants, including over £129,000 from Macmillan and other charitable grants**

Advisers help service users to access a wide range of benefits and grants to help alleviate the negative financial consequences of cancer related situations, such as changes to living arrangements, extra costs in relation to travel and parking, heating bills and altered dietary and clothing requirements.

- ✓ **Alleviated stress and anxiety related to financial pressures**

Advisers enhance service users' and families/carers' quality of life and take away some of the stresses they experience. In 2010 the service received 195 customer satisfaction questionnaire returns⁵, with 100% reporting high levels of satisfaction with the service provided. The satisfaction stems from the substantive financial support being provided as well as the process through which the service was delivered:

✓ **The practical and psychological impact of the financial advice and support**

- *'..thank you for the £300 grant cheque. I was desperate for new clothes as I have lost quite a bit of weight and with me not able to work at present could not afford a new wardrobe, thanks again'*
- *'The adviser made being diagnosed with cancer easier as I didn't have to worry about finances as well'*

✓ **The process through which the service was delivered**

- *'I am very grateful for the advice and help I was given and the sympathetic way it was given at a sad time in my life'*
- *'It is an efficient service dealing with enquiries speedily and sympathetically at a time when it is most needed. I can't think of any way the service could possibly be improved'*

3) Benefits for other local services - Prevention

✓ **Savings for other local services of £20,000 by providing representation at court or appeal tribunals**

In 2010, the service provided representation or arranged for representation for 20 client cases at court or Appeal Tribunals. Assuming that these clients would have been eligible for Legal Aid representation, this saved the Legal Services Commission £20,000.⁶

✓ **Savings for wider local services of £266,916 by preventing debt-related mental health issues**

It is estimated that 20% of all cancer patients suffer from depression⁷. The evidence from the users of the service is for that for 100% of service users, this service prevents anxiety and stress, which may lead to depression. It is estimated that the annual cost of health and social care services for someone with debt related mental health issues is £1,508⁸. Assuming that the service prevented 20% of service users (i.e. 177) falling into depression, this saves the wider health and social care system **£266,916**.

✓ **Contributed to achieving local area targets**

While figures are not available, there is evidence⁹ demonstrating that the service also supported strategic partnership priorities by:

- Facilitating early intervention / crisis prevention by getting involved to remedy drastic measures such as fuel disconnection.
- Preventing homelessness by intervening to sort out backdated Housing Benefit when court action is started by the landlord for rent arrears.
- Preventing worklessness by referring service users to Macmillan's Employment Adviser based at The Christie: this tends to involve ensuring clients have support to work with their employers in order to keep their jobs open, or allowing time off work for treatment.

4) Economic overview

In generating the above benefits, the service:

- required **£7,528 in set up costs**¹⁰, provided by Macmillan Cancer Support in 2006.
- has **average annual operational costs of £180,000**¹¹. From June 2009 to April 2011, this was funded through a combination of contributions from Macmillan Cancer Support, Manchester City Council (Working Neighbourhoods Fund), and Pennine Acute Hospitals NHS Trust and University Hospital of South Manchester NHS Foundation Trust. From 2011 to 2014, the service is being funded by Macmillan Cancer Support.

Applying a return on investment (ROI) calculation to the monetised costs and benefits, we see that on an annual operational basis¹² **every £1 invested in** the service by Macmillan, Manchester City Council and the Pennine Acute Hospitals NHS Trust and the University Hospital of South Manchester NHS Foundation Trust generated **£25.39** worth of monetised benefits to service users, **£0.32** to the healthcare system, and **£1.59** to other local services.

5) Summary

The stress and anxiety caused by the financial implications of living with cancer can have a negative impact 'almost worse than the disease itself'¹³, in terms of living with the symptoms of the disease. Nearly 90 per cent of cancer patients' household incomes are negatively affected 'as a direct result of cancer'¹⁴. In spite of this, there is a wealth of evidence demonstrating significantly low awareness and/or take-up of financial support entitlement¹⁵ and key barriers to access¹⁶.

It is unclear where the responsibility or capacity for dealing with the financial consequences of cancer lies within the healthcare system. The boundaries between medical and social issues are often blurred, and there are no routinely available services with the expertise to deal with socio-legal issues arising from ill health¹⁷. Services such as Manchester's Benefits Advice Service therefore play a critical role.

The Manchester service is effective through working in partnership to build up a network of cancer-specific advisers who are trained to understand the impact of a cancer diagnosis on the need for financial and other support, and to use this expertise to strengthen routine support at every stage of a patient's cancer journey. The service has strong ties with a wide range of community and statutory organisations, and operates in a way that considers clients' needs holistically. In doing so, it also contributes towards the achievement of local area targets through joined-up partnership working.

The Manchester service is notable for the provision of quality assured legal advice in key areas of social welfare law. While this can be time-intensive, it has generated savings to other local services while providing a seamless package of support to clients.

Research into the psycho-social aspects of cancer found that patients with fewer social and economic resources had significantly higher levels of need for practical help with matters such as form-filling, and that help with financial matters was identified as a significant unmet need¹⁸.

Proactive welfare rights advice services accessed via health care settings have repeatedly been found to significantly increase benefit uptake¹⁹ and this was advocated by the Acheson report as an intervention with the potential to reduce inequalities in health²⁰. Being based at three hospital locations enables the Manchester service to extend its reach, and enables its services to be more accessible to a larger number of people.

This case study is one of 16 economic appraisals of Macmillan-funded benefits advice services, cancer information and support services, and social work services. Details of specific methods and data are discussed in a separate technical report. Overarching assessments of the 6 cancer information and support services; 7 benefits advice services and 3 social work services in terms of their impact and points of learning that have emerged are presented in separate overview reports for each service type.

Notes and references

¹ See http://www.institute.nhs.uk/quality_and_value/productivity_series/productive_ward.html

² This relates to the base figure of 887 service users.

³ Calculations are based on an average Band 7 CNS salary of £42,229 per annum, or £21.66 per hour (including on-costs (12.8% NI and 5% Pension)). Available at: <http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/details/Default.aspx?Id=766>

⁴ Macmillan Cancer Support (2010) *Local Benefits Advice Services: An Evidence Review*. Cited in Manchester Advice Annual report 2010.

⁵ Macmillan / Manchester Advice (2010) *Annual Report January – December 2010*.

⁶ http://www.legalservices.gov.uk/public/what_legal_aid.asp

Based on figures from the Legal Services Commission website relating to their annual Legal Aid budget of £2 billion which helps 2 million people a year through representation, advice on legal problems, helping people understand their rights and the law and advice to people detained in police stations. This equates to £1,000 being spent on each person in receipt of Legal Aid, for any of the above services that are funded by Legal Aid. As such, the estimated savings of £20,000 are very broad and relate only to those service users who would have been eligible for / applied for Legal Aid and to those persons who would have received representation through Legal Aid, as opposed to advice or information.

⁷ Mitchell, A J et al (2011) Prevalence of depression, anxiety, and adjustment disorder in oncological, haematological, and palliative-care settings: a meta-analysis of 94 interview-based studies, *Lancet Oncol.* 12 pp.160-74. Available here: http://mail.elsevier-alerts.com/AEM/Clients/ELA001/Articles/psych_prevalence.pdf

⁸ http://www.pssru.ac.uk/pdf/Knapp_et_al_2011_MHPMHP-Economic-Case.pdf

⁹ Macmillan Cancer Support (2010) *De-commissioning Impact Assessment: Phase 1, Macmillan Advice Project*, Manchester: Macmillan Cancer Support.

¹⁰ This covers the purchase of new computer equipment and furniture.

¹¹ Operational costs include staffing costs, employment costs, staff training, travel costs, stationery and other equipment.

¹² This excludes set up costs.

¹³ Soothill *et al.*, (2001) p. 602 cited in: Moffat, S., Noble, E. and Exley, C. (2010) "Done more for me in a fortnight than anybody done in all me life". How welfare rights advice can help people with cancer, *BMC Health Services Research*, 10:259 [online] Available at: <http://www.biomedcentral.com/1472-6963/10/259> [Accessed: 22.09.10].

¹⁴ Macmillan Cancer Support (2006) *Cancer Costs: The hidden price of getting treatment*, London: Macmillan Cancer Support.

¹⁵ For example: Chappell, A., Ziebland, S., McPherson, A. and Summerton, N. (2004) Lung cancer patients' perceptions of access to financial benefits: A qualitative study, *British Journal of General Practice*, 54(505), pp. 589–594; and, Macmillan Cancer Relief (2004) *The Unclaimed Millions*, London: Macmillan Cancer Relief.

¹⁶ Social Security Agency and Macmillan Cancer Relief (2003) *Benefits Access for People Affected by Cancer in Northern Ireland - A Joint Report for Macmillan Cancer Relief and Social Security Agency*.

¹⁷ Noble, E., Moffatt, S. and White, M. (2011) "It's a hard enough worry cancer itself, without having to worry about money as well". *The impact of a dedicated welfare rights advice service for people affected by cancer*, Newcastle: Newcastle University.

¹⁸ Peace, S., Kelly, D. and Stevens, W. (1999) 'More than just money' - widening the understanding of the costs involved in cancer care, *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 33(3), pp. 317-379.

¹⁹ Adams, J., White, M., Moffatt, S., Howel, D. and Mackintosh, J. (2006) A systematic review of the health, social and financial impacts of welfare rights advice delivered in health care settings, *BMC Public Health*, 6, pp. 81.

²⁰ Acheson, D. (1998) *Independent Inquiry into Inequalities in Health*, London: HMSO.