

Overview of Inclusion workshop

The Inclusion workshop consisted of three parts:

1. The delegates were asked to tell us about their experience of cancer care inequalities and tell us what inequalities mean to them. Through this discussion, we captured some of the most common form of cancer inequalities that people living with cancer may face during their cancer journey. Some of these inequalities were: lack of respect and dignity by health professionals, level of education impacts on comprehension of clinically-written information, low awareness of cancer symptoms and available services, little attention to rare cancers, cancer care inequalities in rural areas etc.
2. The group were asked to identify issues that they think some specific equality target groups such as 'people living in rural areas', 'people living in low income households', 'older people', and 'black and minority ethnic communities' may face in their cancer journey. The purpose of this activity was to illustrate the complexity of tackling inequalities and the cross cutting nature of equalities as people don't always fit into just one group. Some of the key issues that came up from this session were:
 - a. **People living in rural areas:** transport/travel cost, lack of mobile unit, no buddying, lack of district nurses, no family support
 - b. **People living in low income households:** Financial assistance needed, cannot afford healthy diet, access to benefit, less education less communication, isolation.
 - c. **Older people:** Fear of challenge, ageism, lack of respect and dignity, low income, not computer literate to access online information, lack of support.
 - d. **Black and minority ethnic communities:** low uptake of services by BME, cultural barriers, language/translation issues, limited outreach works.

This lead on to an overview of Macmillan's work in the area of inclusion and highlighted key projects such as the human rights project, mentoring and support systems and inclusion champions.

3. Having identified some issues, the team were asked to discuss the way forward and tell us what can be done by Macmillan and other organisation such as NHS to tackle these inequalities in cancer care. This activity aimed to priorities some of the key issues that came up during the session.

Key points

Some of the key points/ most common cases of cancer inequalities that were identified are as follows:

- Postcode lottery: Treatments vary from one area to another and areas with low socio-economic population do not get the same treatment as rich PCTs for instance.
- Cost: Living with cancer is expensive. Travel/transport cost is one of the most serious challenges encountered by people affected by cancer.
- Advocacy: Personalised information and support is needed for socially excluded communities particularly BME communities, elderly communities, people with disability and people from low income households.
- Issues around dignity and respect by health professionals. For instance ageism attitude of health professionals impact on person's chance of survival.
- Returning back to work supported by legislation. People affected by cancer faced difficulties in getting back to work because they cancer before.

Future activities

The information gathered through this workshop along with information gathered throughout the year on cancer care inequalities will be analysed by our Inclusion and Research and Intelligence Teams. They will analyse the data and information, identify trends and make recommendation for Macmillan on how to tackle cancer care inequalities in the coming year.