

# **2017 Cancer Voices Conference Report**

**Friday 24 March 2017**

**Radisson Blu Hotel,  
Manchester Airport**

## Executive Summary

The conference was a lively one day event this year, with keynote speeches from five speakers, a Q&A session from the floor, ten workshops, an exhibition area and a group session where delegates mapped community engagement opportunities across the cancer journey.

When asked to describe the conference in three words, delegates said the following:



The most commonly used words were **informative**, **interesting** and **friendly**.

*“Feel it was a well-run and friendly opportunity to extend and also communicate my knowledge on cancer community involvement and inclusion.”*

- Delegate feedback

## **1) Background and purpose of the conference**

The Cancer Voices conference is Macmillan's flagship national involvement conference. It is held annually, and brings together members of our Cancer Voices network to talk to and work with each other and with Macmillan staff.

### **Objectives for the 2017 conference:**

- Provide an opportunity for Cancer Voice participants to;
  - Understand what Macmillan means by 'community engagement' and use their own experience to explore ideas for community engagement in their local areas
  - Learn about emerging local decision-making structures in England (the Cancer Alliances and Vanguards) and how to influence them
  - Participate in and influence specific areas of Macmillan's work through the series of workshops
  - Meet their local Macmillan Engagement & Volunteering Managers
- Provide an opportunity for Macmillan staff to
  - Meet Cancer Voices from their region, and learn what the opportunities and challenges are for people getting involved in their local area

## 2) Key Conference Statistics:

<b>Total number of attendees</b>	<b>241</b>
<b>Total number of people affected by cancer</b>	<b>144</b>
<b>Overall event rating (respondents rating 'very good' and 'good')</b>	<b>87%</b>

### Conference outcomes

<b>To what extent do you think the following were achieved?</b>	<b>Results – either 'Strongly agree' or 'Agree'</b>
The conference was a good use of my time	84%
Macmillan values my opinion and input	82%
My expectations of the conference were met	82%
This conference was designed to explore what we mean by community engagement and how this could work in your local area. To what extent do you think this was achieved?	73%

### 3) Delegate Feedback

The majority of delegates advised that they had gained better understanding of what we mean by community engagement, how it could work in local areas and how it can improve the lives of people affected by cancer.

Delegates were pleased with the opportunity to network with people from their local areas (other delegates, Macmillan staff and NHS staff). They felt that they learnt about other people's experiences of community engagement and the needs of seldom heard groups.

Feedback suggests that focussing on the individual regions was a good approach, and that delegates learnt about local community engagement activities and opportunities, resources in their areas, and where current gaps are locally. Delegates also learnt more about NHS and Macmillan national and local approaches to community engagement.

**“It provided the chance for me to see how our ideas and comments would be considered to help others in the future, and think about what I could do in the future or take back to groups that I belong to, to help make a difference”**

#### Positive Outcomes of the Conference

1. In comparison to the 2015 event, our reach was more evenly spread across the country. The number of people affected by cancer in attendance increased by 6 people (4%) compared to the 2015 event. However, there were no attendees from Northern Ireland this year, where in 2015 5% of attendees were from Northern Ireland.
2. The keynote speakers were very well received and rated very positively overall

**“Very interesting”**  
**“Moving”**  
**“Inspiring”**  
**“Essential information”**

3. Delegates were particularly impressed with Cally Palmer's keynote speech and pleased to learn more about the Cancer Strategy.

Please click on [this link](#) to be taken to the Cancer Voices website where you will be able to view the slides from her talk.

**“Excellent”**  
**“Hugely knowledgeable speaker”**

4. Delegates were asked to map opportunities for community engagement across the cancer journey based on their own experiences of what already exists or what they would like to see. This insight will inform how Macmillan’s work to improve support in community settings.

**“Lots of opportunities for innovative work”**

5. Keeping in mind requests to include one after 2014’s conference, this year we hosted an exhibition area. There were nine stalls, two of which were hosted by external organisations. Delegates were impressed with the relevance, interactivity and variety of the stalls.

**“Appropriate connections to the conference”**

6. This year there were ten workshops and delegates chose two sessions to attend, all of which were reviewed well in terms of their content and whether participants learnt something new.

**“Great presentations with input from patient presenters”**  
**“Greatly identified with subject matter”**

7. 60% of attendees had never attended a Macmillan Conference before. This means that we reached lots of people for the first time.

## Where we can do better

You Said	We Listen
<p><b><i>“Some of the content was England focussed, so not relevant to patients in Wales, Scotland and Ireland”.</i></b></p>	<p>When developing content for future conferences, ensuring content is relevant to delegates across the United Kingdom will be a priority.</p>
<p><b><i>‘the main session was with good intentions and purpose, but complicated and a bit confusing’</i></b></p>	<p>Simpler exercises need to be used during large scale group discussion exercises, and for more in depth exercises use smaller breakout sessions. More time should also be allowed to complete the exercise.</p>
<p><b><i>“Whilst the workshops were very informative and helpful, the facilitation of the audience could have been better to enable a wider range of voices to be heard”</i></b></p>	<p>Comprehensive briefings and training for facilitators will be factored into planning for future conferences.</p>
<p><b><i>(the main session)“My ‘region’ was too widely spread for it to include anything which is happening locally to me”</i></b>  <b><i>“No one else was from my local area”</i></b></p>	<p>The objectives of the main session table exercise focussed on discussing the support that exists or is needed in local community settings. Delegates fed back that this was challenging when sat with people who did not live near them, and would work better with people from their same local area. If running this exercise again, we will consider run it as a local engagement event.</p>
<p><b><i>“Maybe too long a day, trying to cram too much in one day”</i></b></p>	<p>This year we moved from a two day format to a one day format. Feedback tells us that this made the day too long and tiring for some. For future</p>

	conferences we will consider how to build in more rest breaks and spread activity out more throughout the event.
<b><i>“How to find local groups and services” “List of local contacts”</i></b>	Delegates would like to see stands from existing support groups/community engagement initiatives, signposting to local opportunities, and a stand for regional engagement teams. When planning future conferences, these recommendations will be taken into account.
<b><i>“Inclusiveness of those members with hearing loss. It was good to be able to listen and engage in discussions with them”</i></b>	The increased inclusivity and accessibility for delegates at this year’s event was mentioned and praised throughout the feedback. This is something we will continue to ensure we embed at future conferences, including increasing support and accessibility for people with learning difficulties and learning disabilities.
<b><i>“Who are my local Macmillan community engagement team?”</i></b>	At future conferences, engagement staff could be asked to stand up and identify themselves during the keynote speeches or host an exhibition stand. We will also be sharing a list of engagement team members and their contact details with this report.

***“Lots of opportunities for innovative work”***

***“I am more aware of the diverse groups who are challenged by a whole range of issues I didn't think about”***

***“Probably the most useful and well organised event as long as Macmillan act on the suggestions made”***

***“The overall camaraderie throughout and learning from other patients”***

***“The masses of info and ideas I took home with me”***

***“Good links with people in my area, how they are linked into organisations that can help in having their voice heard”***