



For immediate release. Monday 30th November 2015.

Festive cheer for Leeds head and neck cancer patients

A specially-adapted Christmas lunch has been served up in Leeds for people facing challenges to eating and drinking following cancer.

Head and neck cancer patients from the Leeds area were invited to the event - for some, it was the first meal they've had socially since finishing their treatment.

The Macmillan Head and Neck Rehabilitation team from Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust devised the menu with Leeds City College.

Jennifer Carne, Macmillan Speech and Language Therapist at Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust, said: "Life is very different for people when they have finished head and neck cancer treatment - for many, eating and drinking suddenly has many complications. This might mean problems with chewing, swallowing and taste, which of course has an impact on people's day-to-day lives. We wanted to organise a festive lunch to try and highlight and overcome these sort of obstacles and help people feel more at ease when they're eating in public."

Around 15 people who have finished treatment attended the lunch at Leeds City College's Printworks campus on Monday (30). They were joined by relatives and members of the Macmillan Head and Neck Rehabilitation Team. It was the first time the team has organised a Christmas lunch for people living with head and neck cancer.

Among the guests at the lunch was Stephen Turner, 66, from Kippax, who has been supported by the rehabilitation team having had a tumour in his tongue.

He said: "Getting people with eating difficulties together for a meal provides mutual support, which is important. We're very grateful."

Anton Scoones, Head Chef at Leeds City College, who developed the menu added: "We worked with Jennifer to come up with a meal which would be suitable for patients. The aim was to make them feel as comfortable as possible."

Work of the rehabilitation team is part of a region-wide initiative called Macmillan Head and Neck Cancer Redesign in West Yorkshire, which seeks to improve patient experience. The aim is for head and neck cancer patients to receive care tailored to their needs, while also giving them the support to be able to self-manage their condition and become less reliant on the healthcare system. At Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust, this work has included the introduction of Facing Forward, a programme offering free support to anyone who has had head and neck cancer - particularly around dealing with the emotional impact of the disease and its treatment.

Working with Macmillan Cancer Support on Macmillan Head and Neck Cancer Redesign in West

Yorkshire are Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust; The Mid Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust; Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust and Calderdale and Huddersfield NHS Foundation Trust.

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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. Whether it's concerns about who you can talk to, planning for the extra costs or what to do about work, at Macmillan we understand how a cancer diagnosis can take over everything.

That's why we're here. We provide support that helps people take back control of their lives. But right now, we can't reach everyone who needs us. We need your help to make sure that people affected by cancer get the support they need to face the toughest fight of their life. No one should face cancer alone, and with your support no one will.

To get involved, call 0300 1000 200 today. And please remember, we're here for you too. If you'd like support, information or just to chat, call us free on 0808 808 00 00 (Monday to Friday, 9am–8pm) or visit macmillan.org.uk