



Macmillan backs pioneering service for older cancer patients

An innovative project run by Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust (NUH) which has transformed life for older cancer patients living in Nottinghamshire is set to be extended thanks to funding from Macmillan Cancer Support.

The Macmillan SCOPES (Systematic Care for Older People in Elective Surgery) Oncology programme, run by NUH with support from Nottinghamshire County Council, aims to reduce unnecessary hospital stays and speed up recovery following treatment for cancer patients aged over 70.

The programme forms part of a wider scheme, which has already benefited from more than £400,000 of funding from Nottingham Hospitals Charity and has been supporting older patients facing surgery with patients reporting a marked improvement in general wellbeing and quality life after treatment.

In the past year more than 150 upper gastro intestinal patients benefitted from the scheme. Now Macmillan has invested a further £192,000 to extend the project to patients affected by lower gastro-intestinal cancer.

The cash injection forms part of the newly formed Macmillan Cancer Partnership in Nottinghamshire which brings together the county's health and social care organisations to improve local cancers services and address the growing number of people surviving and living longer with cancer.

Victor Baines, 73, from Wollaton, received support from the SCOPES team when he had an operation to remove a malignant tumour in his oesophagus last year.

It was initially feared Victor would not be strong enough to have the surgery, however he went on to be treated successfully following a SCOPES assessment.

Vic said: "SCOPES sorted me out. They ran all kinds of tests and assessments, they gave me an iron infusion, did a walking test and made sure I was fully

prepared for the surgery. A few days later, I was told I could have the operation. It was such a relief. Without SCOPES I wouldn't be here."

SCOPES continued to support Vic after his operation to help him recover.

He said: "I can only describe the SCOPES workers as angels – it's like they've got magic at their fingertips! I can't praise the team enough. The SCOPES nurse planned my care package for when I left hospital. They put everything in place – from the equipment I needed to my weekly nurse visit – when I came out of hospital the week after. Nothing was too much trouble. I had a SCOPES worker there to meet me at every follow-up hospital appointment – it really took a lot of pressure from me and my wife during that difficult time."

The programme brings together clinicians, therapists and social care staff at the earliest possible stage in a patient's cancer journey to first ensure they are in the best possible health before any treatment or care begins and then continue to support that patient when they return home. The aim is to help the patient recover more quickly from surgery and reduce the chance of re-admission to hospital.

Heather McCormack, Macmillan Project Manager for the Macmillan SCOPES Oncology programme, said: "Our ultimate goal is to help the patient have a better quality of life either with or without treatment, so they're not just surviving, but living well with or beyond their cancer diagnosis. Our team first carry out a Comprehensive Geriatric Assessment which looks at an individual's physical and psychological health, their level of dependence and social support and from there we create a package of care to support them through their cancer journey."

Rob Morris, Consultant Geriatrician and Clinical Lead for SCOPES, Nottingham University Hospitals said: "We are very grateful to Macmillan Cancer Support for this additional funding. This builds on the continued support from Nottingham Hospitals Charity, and will mean more older cancer patients benefit from a better recovery programme after surgery."

Councillor Muriel Weisz, Chair of Nottinghamshire County Council's Adult Social and Care Health, said: "I've spoken to patients who have benefitted from this service and it has been a vital lifeline supporting them at every step of their medical journey. Whilst major surgical operations are traumatic at any age, people aged over 70 often struggle to make a full recovery due to other health or social issues, so this extra support helps them to get them back on their feet and regain their independence."

The Macmillan SCOPES Oncology programme is one of 14 individual projects and pilots which are all aimed at testing and developing new ways to support people affected by cancer as part of the Macmillan Cancer Partnership in Nottinghamshire.

Elaine Wilson, Senior Macmillan Development Manager, said: “SCOPES Oncology has already made a huge difference to so many people affected by cancer and we want to make sure their fantastic work continues. With more people surviving and living longer with cancer it's even more important that they can enjoy a good quality of life after treatment. The work carried out by Macmillan SCOPES Oncology programme helps to make that possible.”

The Macmillan Cancer Partnership is comprised of Nottingham City CCG, Newark and Sherwood CCG, Mansfield and Ashfield CCG, Macmillan Cancer Support, Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust, Sherwood Forest Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, Self Help Nottingham and Notts County FC Football in the Community.

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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. 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

