

Mac News

*The latest Weston General Hospital cancer news, views
and announcements*

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**Last Word PCS
Team**

Ruth Hendy - Lead Cancer Nurse, UHBW



Hello, I'm Ruth Hendy.

From April 2020, when the newly integrated 'University Hospitals Bristol and Weston NHS Foundation Trust' was formed, I became Lead Cancer Nurse across UHBW. I'm thrilled to have the opportunity to work more closely now with colleagues in Weston.

Prior to this, for over 30 years' I have worked in cancer care at University Hospitals Bristol NHS FT. As a staff nurse on the oncology / haematology centre wards; as a chemotherapy nurse and then a Research Nurse; moving on to be the Chemotherapy Clinical Nurse Specialist/Lead Chemotherapy Nurse. In this role, I set up the PICC service at UHBristol. My next challenge was as Cancer Matron in Bristol Haematology and Oncology Centre, a role I was fortunate enough to be able to job-share (whilst also having a young family).

Having been a Matron for six years, I then took on the newly established Lead Cancer Nurse post at UHBristol in 2011. This is a strategic Trust-wide leadership post, with the aim of ensuring consistently high quality, cancer nursing and support services across the organisation.

Ten years later, I continue to use this role to focus on improving the cancer patient experience across our organisation. I help determine and influence strategic cancer service developments and support clinical teams in implementing these initiatives, including the more recent introduction of Cancer Support Worker roles and the implementation of the cancer 'Personalised Care and Support' agenda.

Following our integration, and the impact of the pandemic, I look forward to getting to know you and your services as I'm able to come to Weston more often again now as restrictions start to ease.

Farewell to Jan Dallard - Palliative Care Nurse



Jan Dallard retired from our Palliative care team after 42 years in the NHS. We were lucky to encourage her to leave Weston hospicecare where she had worked for the last 6 years to work her final 4 years in Weston hospital. Jan spent the early years of her career working in cancer and haematology becoming a Sister at the age of 25. After a 7 year gap to have her 2 children Jan returned and became a district nurse. This is when she realised that palliative care was the area of nursing that she wished to pursue.

Horses have always been important to Jan and she is now hoping to spend more time riding them. Sadly due to covid-19 pandemic she was unable to go to California for her yearly 2 week cowboy experience on the ranch which she loves. However, she and her husband are hoping to travel more once covid-19 allows, as well as getting another dog; providing she can persuade her husband that it's a good idea! She has many friends and her monthly book club should really be named a wine club. Additionally, Jan's newest hobby is gardening and with a gift of a retirement rose and hopes for good weather, so she can spend time transforming her garden.

Jan has been a passionate and compassionate nurse in her role and was very well liked by all hospital staff. Her wicked sense of humour and kindness were her greatest assets and she will be missed so much by many.



Matron's Musings: Amanda Bessant



The time has come, to release the legs from their winter confines & embrace the summer. Some of you might be working hard in the gym & busy booking beauty salon appointments in order to prepare your 'summer body', others not so much, & they will simply be rejoicing in the warm weather & light nights, minus said preparation!

Spring may already have arrived but summer is on its way & with the hope of the weather improving & Covid restrictions being lifted there is a sense of release, to allow each other to enjoy & appreciate the simple things we previously may have taken for granted.

The long anticipated countdown has begun, which has heightened our sense of what we have missed. To meet up with family & friends, go indoors at a pub, have lunch in a restaurant, a family outing to the cinema, a weekend trip to a hotel or attend an indoor or outdoor event really is something to look forward to.

With hope in the air, June could bring a lift to all restrictions. However, some of us may now be more inclined to be comfortable in a smaller world & have a renewed sense of appreciation for what is closer to home, whereas others may want to venture far & wide in a way they never have before.

This is all dependent on our continued vigilance, following the incredible success of the Covid vaccination program which although has seen a decline in infection rates, remains dependent on the impact of coronavirus variants.

Where we may be starting to feel optimistic about our future, our thoughts go out to those around the world who remain in the grip of the Coronavirus pandemic.

The Home Working Juggle

At the start of the Pandemic, a lot of people were saying to me how brilliant it must be to work from home – almost a bit of an easy ride.

Whilst the advantages of home working were real (my daily commute was to the dining room table, no uniform to iron and I was able to stick a wash on whilst making a cup of tea) I found working from home very testing at times.

The initial challenges were getting the Tech set up at home correctly – things like getting access to systems, and working out how to block my personal mobile number when making outgoing calls to patients. The next challenge was working out how my partner and I could get in our day's work whilst looking after/entertaining/educating our (then) 2 year old daughter, who we removed from nursery for the duration of shielding.

We eventually got into a groove. I'd start work around 6am to get a couple of hours of admin work in before Flo woke, at which point I launched into 'I'm a coping lockdown Mummy' mode - baking banana bread, making salt dough trinkets, water play in the garden and toilet training. Then, at lunchtime my partner would take Flo out for their once a day 'Government approved' exercise, whilst I took advantage of a quiet house to phone patients and complete the admin work following the calls.

At times, I found it difficult to flip from speaking with and comforting upset/worried patients about to start Chemotherapy to showing my sheer delight over a plate of toy cake, baked beans and glitter my daughter had lovingly made for me. I had to learn to switch off mentally, and mindfulness was really helpful to me in the absence of having a natter with the girls at work.

Pros and Cons – but definitely not an easy ride!!!And we nailed the toilet training.

Sam Edwards Assitant scheduler OHDU



Michelle Syms Colorectal CNS



It's fair to say that 2020 posed many challenges for many people. For me it was supposed to be the year full of excitement and hard work as I had not long started my dream job as one of the Macmillan Colorectal Cancer/ Stoma Nurse Specialist team at Weston and was really looking forward to it. Instead was one of the most challenging and isolating times I have had in healthcare or otherwise.

When I was 8 years old I was burnt in a fire caused by a tea light. I suffered 89% burns which over the years have lead to an excess of 120 surgical reconstructions. This has left me with scarring particularly around my face, neck and chest and as a consequence any airway intervention or ventilation is very difficult, therefore I was asked to shield at home. Initially my thoughts were 'ok it's not ideal but it's the safest thing and at least I can work from home'. However this soon changed as I realised just how much I not only relied on actually seeing patients and making visual assessments rather than via the phone but also having colleagues nearby to quickly ask a question, share an idea or get advice. It was just me my laptop and the four walls of my box bedroom. Family would push food through the door and then leave. I felt isolated, quite depressed and forgotten about. I of course knew and appreciated that everyone else was going through their own struggles, that this was all in my head but I really wanted to help and be there for them. Then the feelings of uselessness and that I was letting everyone down started to set in again. Hearing stories of how busy and how broken my colleagues around the hospital were didn't help either all I wanted to do was help and be on that 'front line' with them.

Things started to change for me when I took some of the advice from the trust wellbeing pages as well as from Macmillan online and just started to make contact with people. Once I had opened up to my colleagues they of course were really supportive and working from home and doing tasks got that bit better. They helped me realise that I was off for a reason and that the work I was doing from home was still a help.

Now I'm back at work after months off finding my feet again but I couldn't have done it without the kindness of others, my lovely team and colleagues. For anyone still struggling remember we are not in this alone, Macmillan and the trust have lots of resources to help. We are much more use to our patients happy.....So keep talking.

Book Donation to the centre

Earlier in the year the Macmillan Support Centre received a very generous donation of books for children from Ewa a previous Centre user. Ewa who has young children of her own found the support provided by Centre really helpful when her young son struggled during her treatment and wanted to give something back. Ewa who has her own Usborne book shop raised the money through raffles and donations. The books are for all ages of children covering topics that will help them cope with feelings of anxiety and stress when a family member is diagnosed with cancer or is dying. If you would like to find out more about Ewa's Usborne books go to :
https://usborne.com/gb/organiser/EwasBookParadise_letschooseabooktogether



Last word: PCS Team

Contact the Macmillan Support centre on :
01934 881079
Ex 5079 or email :
WGMacmillansupportcentre@UHBW.nhs.uk



How the Macmillan Cancer Support Worker support Patients

Our main role here in the trust is to carry out Holistic Needs Assessments with patients following their diagnoses or at End of Treatment. Following their assessment, which is more about having a meaningful conversation with the patient to identify what's important to them and any concerns they may have, we will refer or signpost to the most appropriate support for them. We deliver person centered care and support.

Aside from providing Holistic Needs Assessments we provide support as needed. A patient requiring radiotherapy at BHOC had refused treatment due to the expense and travelling to Bristol daily. The support worker was able to apply for a Macmillan Grant to fund transport costs using local voluntary transport, a service that provides transport to medical appointments. With this support put in place, taking the stress out of the situation, the patient accepted and attended for treatment.

With support services being closed due to the pandemic, patients are currently being offered support that has become available via the internet. One of the team identified a patient who was interested in information on diet and exercise, did not have internet access or a mobile phone. The support worker then sourced various articles and information available on-line, printing it off to create a resource pack, and posted it to the patient.

A patient who had been shielding and so unable to use public transport to attend hospital for a pre op appointment and surgery contacted Hospital Transport Services. The patient was advised that she didn't meet the legibility criteria for transport and contacted the support worker very distressed. The support worker contacted a manager within the service who agreed that Hospital Transport could be arranged under the current shielding requirements of the COVID pandemic. This alleviated the stress caused to the patient and transport was booked for the appropriate dates and time required.

Aside from the examples above the Support Workers provide much non-clinical support to patients and the CNS teams. We can be contacted through the Macmillan Support Centre or the various CNS teams.

Edited by Emma Pugh
Macmillan Centre
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For further information
or future contributions
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For information, support or just someone to talk to, call 0808 808 00 00 or visit macmillan.org.uk