

# Quarterly Report for Wessex Cancer Alliance

Patient and Public Involvement Steering Group  
and Network

April 2024 to June 2024

## Introduction

Wessex Cancer Alliance has commissioned the Involving People (IP) team at Help & Care to involve volunteers with lived experience in the work of the Alliance. Through a Steering Group (SG) and broader Network, the Alliance is able to involve people in all their work programmes in inclusive and meaningful ways.

The Steering Group acts as a critical friend to ensure patient and public involvement is effective, holding the Alliance to account in fulfilling its responsibilities in relation to public and patient involvement.

The Network enables us to invite more people with lived experience to be involved in a range of opportunities identified by the Alliance.

This report looks back on the previous quarter's work.

## Activities and outcomes

### **1. Build a robust, confident, independent forum for people who live across Wessex to have the opportunity to voice observations, participate in and contribute to service development and hold the alliance to account for the quality, influence and impact of PPI involvement on the Alliances work**

The Steering Group (SG) met in April 2024 discussing the following topics:

- Multi Cancer Blood Test - members were supportive of and interested in this potential pilot. However, a decision has since been made nationally to pause on this work until further research and analysis has been concluded.
- Update from the WCA Board meeting. The volunteer chair updated on her first attendance, as representative from the SG, at the Board meeting. This was viewed as very positive with follow up meetings with the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Integrated Care Board (ICB) now established.
- Member report – a volunteer updated on her involvement in recent months and the value she has seen in her work with the Alliance.
- Discussion about cancer statistics - members were asked to comment on the type of statistics that should be reported on the WCA website, and the way in which they should be presented. They put forward clear ideas that will be taken on board.

### **2. Oversee, manage, develop and facilitate the membership of the SG (12 – 20 people) and wider network ensuring it is fit for purpose, sustainable, that those with lived experience feel able to contribute in a meaningful way and that membership is rewarding**

The number of SG volunteers is currently 10, with strong links (currently being reviewed) to programme leads.

During the quarter we have welcomed one additional Network member taking the total number to 25 (plus the 10 SG members).

During the quarter we offered 16 opportunities for involvement (see below for those outside the SG). In response we have had 15 expressions of interest from six people (and possibly more have got involved without letting us know).

Volunteers were invited to get involved in the following:

<b>Source</b>	<b>Opportunity</b>
Wessex Cancer Alliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wessex Cancer Strategy away day</li> <li>• Multi cancer blood test discussions</li> <li>• Workshop on cancer information and signposting in Basingstoke</li> <li>• Cancer Nurse Specialists and Allied Health Professionals meeting re integrated care</li> </ul>
Local cancer partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dorset Cancer Partnership Family Breast Cancer SBRI funding application</li> <li>• UHS Blood based test for prostate cancer SBRI funding application</li> <li>• University of Southampton Sibling cancer survey</li> </ul>
National Cancer Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public and Patient Voices forum</li> </ul>
National Cancer Charity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ovacome Ovarian cancer survey</li> </ul>
NHS England	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peer leadership development scheme</li> <li>• NHS constitution consultation</li> </ul>
Local ICB (non cancer related)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dorset Women's Health survey</li> <li>• Portsmouth Hospital Patient Safety Partner role recruitment</li> <li>• University of Southampton Study of long-term conditions</li> </ul>

IP have begun to pilot volunteer software – Volunteero – with SG Volunteers. Once in use this will make communications and reporting much more efficient.

**3. Work with people and communities to ensure people from a range of backgrounds and with different lived experiences can participate in the SG and network, including providing tailored support where that enables participation**

**4. Work collaboratively with community organisations and networks to carry out targeted and inclusive recruitment for both the SG and network, linking with other initiatives such as community research projects**

We have begun our work on extending the network. Connections are being made through a range of organisations who can help to invite people to get involved. Dorset Race Equality Council, Healthwatch Dorset, Dorset County Hospital, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Community Research project and Community Action Hampshire/Communities against Cancer, and WCA's Involvement and Inclusion Lead, are all working with us to promote the Network. Cancer Nurse Specialists are being asked to advise people of the opportunities. We have a long list of other people and organisations we will contact to assist with this so our efforts will continue through the year.

Flyers and posters have been printed to circulate in a targeted way.

**5. Develop the SG as part of the overall governance approach of the WCA, including identifying where further development/training might be required, clearly communicating the purpose of the SG internally and externally and agreeing the role descriptions with and for members**

With a volunteer chair (Eileen Stonock) in place this now enables regular reporting up to the WCA Board. A first report was provided at the March meeting, and these will continue through 24/25. Clear role descriptions have been agreed and are in place for all Steering Group members.

The Alliance website has a page dedicated to Get Involved, where all relevant information about the SG and Network sits and is regularly updated. [Get involved - Welcome to Wessex Cancer Alliance.](#)

Communications about the Steering Group and Network (external and internal) needs to be further developed.

**6. Develop the network's role and purpose through regularly connecting with members, offering opportunities for involvement and articulating the impact of the group.**

The Network has been offered approximately five opportunities per month by the Alliance. Offers are usually sent via email and our Volunteer lead also keeps in regular contact with the network members via email, phone or Teams, thanking people for their input, encouraging involvement, checking if people want to remain involved, checking if there are any issues for anyone, solving problems. In future, contact will be streamlined using the Volunteero app.

**7. Ensure provision of appropriate training sometimes for the whole group and sometimes tailored to the individual needs of steering group members.**

**8. To ensure volunteers receive support for their role in line with their needs.**

In terms of training at present there is no formal approach beyond our "induction" where people are provided with necessary policies and background information. Volunteers are though sent opportunities such as the National Peer Leadership Scheme, in which some have shown an interest.

Volunteers receive general ongoing support from the Involving People volunteer lead. During the quarter we began to think about how to provide more specific support, given some involvement opportunities can be upsetting/triggering of difficult emotions. As a result, there is now clinical support in place for volunteers who like support before or after an involvement opportunity.

A more comprehensive training offer remains an area for development.

### **9. Provide volunteer management services including governance, expenses, communications and training**

During the quarter we ran the April Steering Group meeting and prepared for the July meeting. This involves collating the agenda in collaboration with the chair and WCA staff, planning and holding a pre meet with the Chair, ensuring all reports are available and circulated in advance, writing up minutes and circulating to all, and chasing follow up actions.

Volunteer expenses continue to be approved and paid swiftly.

### **10. Provide communication support for recruitment, the sharing of impacts of the work and public facing quarterly and annual reports on the work of the SG and network**

Quarterly reports are now produced and scheduled through the year, including impacts where tracked.

### **11. Work with WCA leads to maintain an up-to-date web page for the SG on the relevant WCA website**

While WCA is responsible for its own website, IP provides relevant information to ensure it is up to date, e.g. minutes of all meetings and governance documents.

We work collaboratively with the Alliance and volunteers to ensure the Involvement pages of the Alliance website (and the Cancer Matters Wessex website) meet everyone's needs and contain the information that is most important in an accessible and well-structured way.

## **An update on areas for further focus 2024/25**

The following were identified through the 2023/24 Impact Report. Here is a quick summary of progress:

<b>Action</b>	<b>Progress</b>	<b>To do</b>
Improving the mechanisms we use to record and measure impact	We now use the "activity log" to record known impacts – from volunteers, or WCA staff.	Build in a mechanism for programme leads.
Broadening our reach – especially growing the network in terms of numbers and diversity	Flyers and posted printed and circulated to a range of partners/colleagues who can promote to their contacts.	Write to all cancer support groups inviting them to "join" the network and forward to their members.  Consider separate approach for LD groups.
Further matching of volunteers to programme leads.	Steering Group has received presentations on each programme and requested volunteers.	Continue to encourage volunteers to come forward.

Identify a Children, Teenagers and Young Adults programme link	WCA CTYA leads in post.	Invite relevant Volunteers to be the CTYA links.
Providing a programme of involvement opportunities in advance where possible	Action for WCA.	
Developing a training approach and offer	Draft of a framework has been produced.	Develop the proposal. Discuss with volunteers (possibly at a f2f event later in the year) and finalise the "offer".
Improving our communications, internally and externally		Produce communications plan, defining exactly what we need to do, with whom.
Providing training and support on our new system - Volunteero - to improve volunteer communications, management and reporting	Volunteers have all invited to pilot the app. We are receiving feedback and are troubleshooting any issues with the system provider.	Once pilot complete, use Volunteero as default.

And two issues that were raised at the Steering Group away day:

Ensure patient stories at Board (with care)	WCA action	We now have a video of a volunteer talking about the impact of patient experience – this can be shown at Board and more produced featuring other volunteers.
Ensure some contact with and feedback from clinicians re the impact of SG ideas/ recommendations/ ideas	Chair of WCA Board attended last Steering Group	Ongoing contact to be facilitated.