

Name of the project	Macmillan Joining the Dots County Durham
Aim of the project	The service aims to improve the lives of people affected by cancer, including family, carers and friends to receive the support they need when they need it. To ensure people affected by cancer have easy, consistent and clear access to support around their holistic (e.g. practical, financial, emotional, spiritual, lifestyle) needs.
Who was involved	Macmillan Cancer Support, Primary and Secondary Care, Voluntary Agencies, Area Action Partnerships, Foundation Trusts, Hospices, CRUK.
Project approach	<p>Coproduction: “We decide together”.</p> <p>In October 2016 we hosted a Coproduction workshop where we discussed what coproduction means to us. We examined what we had already done in terms of engagement and what, to truly embrace coproduction, we needed to do going forward.</p> <p>Macmillan Cancer Support and Durham County Council’s public health team produced a Role Description for Coproduction Volunteers which was advertised through Durham Community Action (our local voluntary and community sector umbrella organisation). They wanted volunteers who had lived experience of cancer either through their own diagnosis or being the carer of someone with cancer. The application process was kept to a minimum - 300 words and an informal chat. They were successful in recruiting 10 coproduction volunteers who had their own experiences of cancer and provided valuable insights into the needs of patients and carers.</p> <p>They began by undertaking a thematic analysis of patient and carer and stakeholder information to identify what the current issues were in the area in accessing support. They then moved on to designing a service model that addresses the issues identified through the analysis. Many of the volunteers were also videoed for the promotional materials for the consultation. [insert link to YouTube]. The group continue to meet regularly.</p>
The impact of having people involved in this project	Coproduction allowed us to have the people affected by cancer and services working together as equal partners. It ensured the voices of those with lived experiences of the cancer journey were included in decision making. Our volunteers are often best placed to advise on what support and services will make a positive difference to their lives. Done well, co-production helps to ground discussions in reality, and to maintain a person-centred perspective.

Some comments on how people felt about being a volunteer in a group with professionals:

"It was daunting but it gives you a lot more confidence getting involved with cancer networks. You get involved because you are passionate"

"There is a place for everyone"

"Sometimes ordinary can become extraordinary "

"Everyone has a contribution to make"

For further information about this project

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**Macmillan
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County Durham**